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Bill Analysis

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Primary Sponsor: Sen. Koehler

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SUMMARY

- Requires the Department of Education and Workforce to develop professional skills standards aligned to the essential workplace skills needed by employers in Ohio.
- Requires the Department, in consultation with career education and workforce development stakeholders, to establish a statewide career coaching framework.
- Eliminates the student success plan requirement public schools must develop for students who are at risk of dropping out of high school.
- Requires the Department, in consultation with the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, to develop career pathways resources for students and requires each school to annually distribute it to grades 6 to 12.
- Requires each eighth-grade student, beginning with students that enter eighth grade for the first time in the 2026-2027 school year, to complete an academic and career plan.
- Requires schools to develop a graduation planning addendum to the career and academic plan for each student who is at risk of not qualifying for a high school diploma.
- Requires each public school to offer at least one-half unit in the study of career exploration to students in grades 6 to 8 that aligns with the professional skills standards and career coaching framework established by the Department.
- Requires the Department to identify professional development resources to support the career exploration course requirement and to facilitate compliance with that requirement.
- Requires the Department to establish the Education and Workforce Return on Investment Initiative to make education and workforce data more useful, applicable, and beneficial to Ohio citizens.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Career coaching framework

The bill requires the Department of Education and Workforce, by September 30, 2026, to develop professional skills standards aligned to the essential workplace skills needed by employers in Ohio and, in consultation with career education and workforce development stakeholders, establish a statewide career coaching framework. The framework must include:

1. Indicators of quality career coaching sessions, including length, timing, and frequency recommendations;
2. Career-coaching session objectives, including assessment interpretation, career pathway exposure, reflect on hands-on learning, and plan development; and
3. Career coach qualifications and training.

Under the bill, the Department must provide guidance to districts and schools on how to use the framework and how to work with business advisory councils and career-technical planning districts (CTPD) to implement the framework and comply with the middle school career exploration course requirement.¹

Student success plans and career passports

The bill eliminates a law that requires public schools to develop student success plans for students who are at risk of dropping out of high school. That law requires a school to develop a plan that addresses the student's academic pathway to a successful graduation and the role of career-technical education, competency-based education, and experiential learning in that pathway.²

Instead, the bill requires the Department, in consultation with the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, to develop career pathways resources for students and requires each school to annually distribute the resource in a manner determined by the Department to grades 6 to 12.³

Additionally, the bill eliminates law that expressly permits school districts to provide assistance to any student to develop a written career plan and to provide an individual career passport to any student upon the successful completion of high school coursework.⁴

Academic and career plans

The bill requires each eighth-grade student, beginning with students that enter eighth grade for the first time in the 2026-2027 school year, to complete an academic and career plan.

¹ R.C. 3301.0733(A).

² R.C. 3313.6020; conforming changes in R.C. 3313.603.

³ R.C. 3313.6020(C).

⁴ R.C. 3313.607, repealed.

The plan must be evaluated annually to monitor progress and make adjustments and must include:

1. A list of the student's strengths, interests, and aptitudes.
2. An explanation of planned and completed career exploration activities aligned to the student's career pathway, including career coaching.
3. Academic and career goals, financial and life goals, and action plans.
4. A description of the pathway the student will take to meet the requirements for high school graduation prescribed under continuing law and the post-graduation career goals outlined in that plan.
5. A description or record of any work-based and other career-based learning opportunities the student plans to participate in to inform their academic and career plan. The learning opportunities must be integrated into a student's academic instruction.
6. A plan for the development of a student's professional skills and how the student will practice those skills through both in- and out-of-school experiences.

An academic and career plan for a student who enters twelfth grade for the first time in a school year must require that student to develop a professional resume based on the plan, by January 1 of that school year.

The bill requires each public school (school district, community school, STEM school, and college-preparatory boarding school) to involve parents and guardians in the development of an academic and career plan. The parent or guardian must provide a written signature in approval of the final plan. If a parent or guardian is unable to participate or provide written approval, the school must designate a career coach to provide the student with additional career coaching that is aligned to the quality career coaching framework developed by the Department.

Parents and guardians must receive at least one update annually on their student's progress on implementing the plan. An update must include a copy of the plan and contact information for a person who can answer questions about the plan. The plan must also be accessible to parents and guardians throughout the year and be transferable between schools to follow the student.

Additionally, the bill requires the Department to develop a template and guidance for career and academic plans.⁵

Graduation planning addendum

The bill eliminates the requirement that public and chartered nonpublic schools develop a graduation plan for each student enrolled in grades 9 to 12. Instead, it requires each public school to develop a graduation planning addendum to the career and academic plan of each student in grades 9 to 12 who is at risk of not qualifying for a high school diploma. As with graduation plans under current law, the addendum must address the student's academic

⁵ R.C. 3313.6115, 3314.03, 3326.11, and 3328.24.

pathway to meet the curriculum requirements and satisfy the graduation conditions. The bill requires the addendum to also identify post-graduation career goals and align the student's high school experience to those goals.

The bill requires the addendum to be developed jointly by the student and a representative of the school, or a representative of an organization the district or school partners with for career planning and advising supports. The addendum must be updated by the student and the representative each school year.

Additionally, the bill requires the addendum to be included in a student's academic and career plan and must conform to a school's policy on career advising. As with graduation plans under current law, the bill permits a school to use the IEP developed for a student in lieu of developing a graduation planning addendum, if the IEP contains academic goals substantively similar to the addendum.⁶

Middle school career exploration course requirement

Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, the bill requires each public school to offer at least one-half unit (60 hours of course instruction) in the study of career exploration to students in grades 6 to 8. The course must align with the professional skills standards and career coaching framework established by the Department. Public schools must ensure that all students, beginning with the students who enter sixth grade for the first time in the 2026-2027 school year, complete the one-half unit in the study of career exploration by the end of eighth grade.

The bill requires each course to include:

1. Career field exploration, including an overview of the 16 career clusters identified by the Department for Ohio;
2. Hands-on learning opportunities, such as research projects, guest speakers, and job shadowing;
3. Life budgeting and financial planning exercises;
4. Interest and aptitude assessments;
5. Professional skills development;
6. At least one quality career coaching session per student that aligns with the career coaching framework and documents learning in the student's career and academic plan; and
7. Career and academic planning, including the completion of the student's academic and career plan or a preliminary plan if the course is completed before eighth grade.

The bill permits a public school to submit an alternative career exploration plan to the Department, in collaboration with the school's CTPD and its business advisory council, in lieu of offering the career exploration course. An alternative plan must address how the school will

⁶ R.C. 3313.617.

satisfy the course criteria for students in grades 6 to 8. Under the bill, a plan approved by the Department is valid for two years and may be renewed in the form and manner prescribed by the Department.⁷

Department of Education and Workforce

The bill requires the Department to identify professional development resources to support the career exploration course requirement, such as online learning modules from which schools may select when preparing educators and coaches.⁸

The bill also requires the Department to facilitate compliance with the middle school career exploration course requirement by:

1. Issuing guidance on acceptable course delivery models, funding eligibility, and reporting requirements, including which current or new courses may be used to satisfy the requirement;
2. Publicly reporting which schools are enrolling students in courses that meet the requirements, which schools have approved alternative career exploration plans, and which schools are out of compliance with the course requirements and do not have an approved alternative career exploration plan;
3. Developing and releasing a template for the alternative career exploration plan that schools may submit in lieu of offering the career exploration course;
4. Reviewing, approving, and posting alternative career plans; and
5. Auditing up to 5% of schools annually to monitor compliance and enforcing compliance through intervention and support measures when necessary. Audits may be conducted by the Department or another qualified entity, as determined by the Department, including regional entities with expertise in career education.⁹

Education and Workforce Return on Investment Initiative

The bill requires the Department to establish the Education and Workforce Return on Investment Initiative to make education and workforce data more useful, applicable, and beneficial to Ohio citizens. The initiative must work to secure linkages of cross-agency data and build system capacity to support research that gives insight to the education and workforce pipeline to students, families, educators, workforce leaders, employers, policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders. The initiative must also provide collaborative policy leadership on education and workforce data and publicly share tools, dashboards, and research insights while protecting data privacy and system security.¹⁰

⁷ R.C. 3313.6034, 3314.03, 3326.11, and 3328.24.

⁸ R.C. 3301.0733(A)(4).

⁹ R.C. 3301.0733(B).

¹⁰ R.C. 3301.14(A).

Leadership team

The leadership team of the initiative must consist of:

1. The Director of Education and Workforce;
2. The Director of Children and Youth;
3. The Chancellor of Higher Education;
4. The Director of Job and Family Services;
5. The Director of Development; and
6. The Director of the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation.

The bill permits the Governor to designate additional cabinet directors, data and technology experts, researchers, or stakeholder representatives to the leadership team. All members of the leadership team serve at the pleasure of the Governor and do not have terms.

The leadership team must select one of its members to convene the Initiative's meetings and to provide logistical support to the initiative in collaboration with partner organizations. Each member of the leadership team must attend meetings of the initiative. When a director is not able to attend a meeting, the director may appoint a temporary designee to serve in the director's place. The temporary designee must be a senior leader from that director's department who has decision-making authority over the agency's data and policy functions, such as deputy director or chief of staff.

The bill permits the leadership team to invite other directors, agency staff, data and technology experts, researchers, or stakeholder representatives to participate in the initiative in working groups or advisory boards. However, the bill prohibits members of the initiative from having access to personally identifiable information only by virtue of being members of the initiative.

Within 270 days after the bill's effective date, the members of the initiative must develop a vision, mission, and strategic plan that must be reviewed at least once every five years. Members of the initiative must adhere to all relevant state and federal privacy and data security laws.¹¹

The bill requires the leadership team to identify and secure the means to implement its activities and objectives. The leadership team must identify the entity or entities that will support the initiative and implement those activities and objectives, which could include state agency staff, universities, or other external entities.

The bill permits the leadership team to recommend the creation of a single, independent entity to implement the activities and objectives of the initiative. The recommendation must specify a governance structure for the entity so that it is not governed by one state agency.

¹¹ R.C. 3301.14(B) to (E).

However, the entity may be housed within an agency and use shared services. If an independent entity is created under this division, the leadership team of the initiative must:

1. Identify the entity's roles and responsibilities;
2. Secure funding and support for the entity;
3. Appoint and oversee the leader of the entity; and
4. Designate a cross-agency governance structure to oversee the operations and regulatory compliance of the entity.¹²

Meetings

The bill requires the initiative to meet at least quarterly in a public setting. The member designated to convene the initiative's meetings must publish notice of each meeting's date, time, and location at least one week in advance and post meeting materials and, if possible, recordings to a dedicated website for the initiative following each meeting.

Members of the initiative are prohibited from publicly reviewing personally identifiable information during meetings or posting personally identifiable information as part of the meeting materials. The leadership team may invite stakeholders and researchers to present and offer feedback during initiative meetings.

The bill requires leadership team members to engage the stakeholders their agencies represent in the work of the initiative. Each leadership team member must do all of the following at least once per year:

1. Hold a public meeting, which may be part of an existing stakeholder meeting, with a broad range of agency stakeholders to share:
 - a. The strategic plan and research framework for the initiative, including recent accomplishments and planned work;
 - b. The agency's role and priorities related to the initiative's strategic plan and research framework; and
 - c. The progress the agency and overall initiative are making toward implementing the strategic plan and research framework, including new research, reports, and data tools developed within the initiative.
2. Solicit formal feedback from a broad range of stakeholders on all of the following in one or several public or private meetings:
 - a. The information and outcomes stakeholders want to know more about, including potential research questions related to longitudinal data, student outcomes, and return on investment;
 - b. The research, reports, and data tools that would help stakeholders in their work; and

¹² R.C. 3301.141(A).

- c. The challenges stakeholders experience trying to access and use longitudinal and outcomes data.
3. Compile a summary of the stakeholder feedback into a written brief and present it during a meeting of the initiative.¹³

Activities and objectives

The bill requires the initiative to work to achieve the following objectives:

1. Create a research framework that reflects the broad, cross-agency policy areas that are priorities for policy leaders and state agencies related to education and workforce. The research framework must guide where research is needed and help prioritize state research and data access requests. The members of the initiative must do all of the following for the research framework:
 - a. Integrate stakeholder feedback collected by the initiative's leadership team;
 - b. Ensure that the necessary data connections exist to implement the research framework;
 - c. Align with other research frameworks and agendas, including the Higher Education Public Policy Research Consortium;¹⁴
 - d. Discuss the progress implementing the research framework at each meeting; and
 - e. Update the framework every two years with stakeholder input.
2. Develop and recommend agencies adopt a data access and use policy for cross-agency data requests that streamlines data access for stakeholders. The policy must be guided by and adhere to all relevant state and federal privacy and data security laws and all members of the initiative's leadership team must adopt the data access and use policy.
3. Identify and implement strategies to make data collection and reporting more efficient for local and regional education and workforce entities to reduce duplication of efforts and make reporting easier for local schools and other institutions.
4. Take actions to increase the capacity of the state to securely process cross-agency data access and research requests with the goal of reducing the time and cost required to fulfill such requests.
5. Support other critical education and workforce initiatives adopted by the state that rely on cross-agency data and, when possible, support local and regional education and workforce initiatives.

¹³ R.C. 3301.141(B) and (C).

¹⁴ R.C. 3333.952, not in the bill.

6. Coordinate the creation of tools, dashboards, reports, and research that use existing cross-agency education and workforce data. Beginning on December 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, this must include the following reports:
 - a. A high school graduate report for each public school that includes postsecondary enrollment and workforce outcomes of recent graduates, including how well the performance measures found in the college, career, workforce, and military readiness component of a school's report card predict success after graduation;
 - b. A talent gap report that compares the job openings for in-demand sectors with the number of graduates from related programs each year on a statewide and regional basis;
 - c. An industry-recognized credential outcomes report that includes workforce outcomes for common industry-recognized credentials earned in the state, which shall include at least the credentials on the state's approved list; and
 - d. A higher education graduate report that documents the employment, wage, and retention outcomes of graduates for each institution of higher education in this state, disaggregated by students on scholarships and need-based aid.
7. Share and promote the tools, dashboards, reports, and research created by the members of the initiative using cross-agency education and workforce data. Additionally, the bill permits members of the initiative to share and promote similarly aligned resources created by other entities, including state agencies, with the permission of the originating entity.
8. Discuss and direct the implementation of enhancements to education and workforce data systems, technologies, data security, and privacy.¹⁵

Report

The bill requires the initiative to annually submit a report to the Governor, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the President of the Senate that includes:

1. The initiative's mission, vision, and progress implementing its strategic plan and its plans for the next year;
2. The research framework created by the initiative and progress implementing the framework;
3. A digest of the tools, dashboards, reports, and research produced using cross-agency education and workforce;
4. Metrics on the access and use of education and workforce data overseen by the leadership team of the initiative, including the number of access requests fulfilled, not

¹⁵ R.C. 3301.142.

fulfilled, reasons the requests were not fulfilled, and average time for access requests to be resolved; and

5. Any recommendations for improving the governance, administration, or system security of the data systems that support the initiative's mission and research framework the initiative's leadership team chooses to include.

The leadership team or designated members of the leadership team must present the report and any additional information to the Governor's Executive Workforce Board at least once a year.¹⁶

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	11-18-25

ANSB0328IN-136/ks

¹⁶ R.C. 3301.141(D) and (E).