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S.B. 144
136th General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

[Click here for S.B. 144's Bill Analysis](#)

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsor: Sen. Ingram

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

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Highlights

- The bill restores former law, in effect prior to H.B. 33 of the 135th General Assembly, regarding educator license grade bands by expanding the number of grade bands from two (grades pre-K through 8 or grades 7 through 12) to three (grades pre-K through 5, grades 4 through 9, or grades 7 through 12).
- Restoring the educator license grade bands in effect prior to H.B. 33 of the 135th General Assembly may decrease school district and other public school flexibility in responding to certain staffing needs. The State Board of Education may incur minimal administrative costs to revert to the prior grade band specifications.
- State institutions of higher education may incur costs to align teacher preparation programs to the educator license grade bands prescribed by the bill. The bill also avoids administrative costs for the State Board to oversee the development of revised educator licensure tests.

Detailed Analysis

The bill restores former law, in effect prior to H.B. 33 of the 135th General Assembly, regarding educator license grade bands by requiring the State Board of Education, when issuing resident, professional, senior professional, and lead professional educator licenses, to specify whether the educator is licensed to teach grades pre-K through 5, grades 4 through 9, or grades 7 through 12. Current law specifies two grade bands: pre-K through grade 8 or grades 7 through 12. The rules implementing the H.B. 33 provisions went into effect on August 20, 2024.

According to the Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA), restoring educator license grade bands in effect prior to H.B. 33 may reduce school district and other public school flexibility in responding to staffing needs. However, the bill includes a provision that permits a

person who holds a license issued in grade bands specified under certain prior laws to either renew under the grade bands of the prior license or the grade bands specified by the bill. In addition, continuing law allows districts and schools to designate educators to teach up to two grade levels outside the grade bands for which they are licensed for up to two years at a time, which may further assist with staffing flexibility. The State Board of Education may incur minimal administrative costs to restore the previous license structure and the administrative rules that governed it. The State Board funds its operations through educator license fees paid into the Occupational Licensing and Regulatory Fund (Fund 4K90).

Under continuing law, educator preparation programs at higher education institutions must be approved by the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) to offer programs leading to specific types of educator licenses. Since the educator license grade bands enacted in H.B. 33 have been in effect for over one year, state institutions of higher education may incur costs associated with realigning teacher preparation programs to the educator license grade bands in effect prior to H.B. 33, to the extent that the realignment work toward the current license structure has progressed, as well as any additional program reauthorization costs. Institutions are responsible for all costs associated with the program review and reauthorization progress (remittances from the institutions pay for ODHE reimbursements to consultants who review and evaluate degree programs).

In addition to completing an educator preparation program, prospective educators generally must pass licensure tests prescribed by the State Board that assess a candidate's knowledge of pedagogy and content knowledge. Vendors provide and score the tests, which are supported by testing fees paid by the candidates taking them. Based on information available on the test vendor's website, it appears the tests have not yet been aligned to the license grade band structure in current law. Consequently, the bill avoids potential administrative costs the State Board may incur to oversee the development of revised tests aligned to the current law educator license grade bands.