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H.B. 545
136th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Robinson and Tims

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SUMMARY

- Increases the weights assigned to community and chartered nonpublic school bus riders for the purposes of calculating a school district's transportation funding.
- Requires the Department of Education and Workforce to reestablish a program to distribute bus purchasing grants to school districts.
- Requires a school district to establish tiers of windows of time that work best for the district in transporting eligible students to and from a chartered nonpublic school.
- Establishes a new procedure under which the Department of Education and Workforce must monitor school district compliance with the state's student transportation laws and determine penalty fees for a consistent or prolonged period of noncompliance.
- Appropriates a total of \$38 million in additional GRF funding in FY 2027 for the purposes of student transportation and also appropriates \$50 million in FY 2027 to fund school bus purchasing grants.
- Entitles the bill the "School Busing Improvement Act."

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Weights for community and nonpublic school riders

The bill increases the weights assigned to community and chartered nonpublic school bus riders for the purposes of calculating a school district's transportation funding in FY 2025 from (1) 1.5 to 2.0 for a community school student and (2) 2.0 to 3.0 for a chartered nonpublic school student.¹

¹ R.C. 3317.0212

School bus purchasing grants

The bill requires the Department of Education and Workforce to reestablish a program to distribute bus purchasing grants of not less than \$45,000 to city, local, and exempted village school districts for any fiscal year that the General Assembly appropriates sufficient funds to operate the program. Previously, that program had operated in FY 2022 and FY 2025.²

School district transportation times

The bill addresses the transportation of chartered nonpublic school students by city, local, and exempted village school districts. Specifically, it requires each district that receives start and end times from a chartered nonpublic school under continuing law to establish tiers of windows of time that work best for the district in transporting students who are enrolled in that school and eligible for transportation services. The bill requires the district to notify the school whether its start and end times fall within one of the tiers. If a school's start and end times do not fall within one of those tiers, the district must provide the opportunity for the school to change its start and end times. If a school does not change its start and end times, the district is not required to transport the students to and from school.³

Transportation penalty fees

The bill repeals the current law procedure under which the Department of Education and Workforce monitors each school district's compliance with the state's school transportation laws and, instead, establishes a new procedure for the Department to follow. Under the new procedure, if the Department determines a consistent or prolonged period of noncompliance, the Department must deduct from the district's payment for student transportation the daily amount of that payment for the number of students that did not receive the required transportation (including students who arrived to school late) for each day the district is not in compliance. A district is exempt from paying a penalty fee if the Department determines that extenuating circumstances caused the failure to comply. The bill requires the Department to establish a process under which districts may submit information explaining the extenuating circumstances and on how the Department may determine that those circumstances caused the failure.⁴

The bill provides that these provisions do not affect the authority of a school district to provide payment in lieu of transportation.

² R.C. 3317.071.

³ R.C. 3327.016; conforming in R.C. 3327.01.

⁴ R.C. 3327.021

Appropriation

in FY 2027, the bill appropriates a total of \$38 million in additional GRF funding to support student transportation. It also appropriates \$50 million in FY 2027 to fund school bus purchasing grants.⁵

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	10-22-25

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⁵ Sections 4, 5, and 6.