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OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

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and Drafting

Legislative Budget
Office

H.B. 577
134th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Fraizer and Holmes

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SUMMARY

- Establishes the Ohio STEM Gateway Program under the College Credit Plus Program, which requires the creation of STEM pathways for high school students to earn college credit.
- Establishes the Ohio STEM Retention Program, which provides college students an annual tuition waiver of \$2,000 for up to three years if they meet certain conditions.
- Establishes the Ohio IT Promise Program, under which individuals are eligible for up to \$4,000 in student loan forgiveness if they meet certain conditions.
- Makes appropriations.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Ohio STEM Gateway Program

The bill establishes the Ohio STEM Gateway Program under the College Credit Plus Program (see background description below). The Ohio STEM Gateway Program requires each public high school to partner with at least one public college or university to develop 30-credit hour pathways in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and healthcare fields. Partnering public colleges and universities are required to award a one-year technical certificate in the appropriate field of study to each student that completes one of the pathways created under the program.¹

¹ R.C. 3365.131(A).

Ohio STEM Retention Program

The bill also establishes the Ohio STEM Retention Program, under which students are eligible for an annual tuition waiver of \$2,000 for up to three academic years, if they meet all of the following conditions:

1. Complete one of the pathways developed under the Ohio STEM Gateway Program;
2. Enroll in a public college's associate or bachelor's degree or certification program that is approved by the Chancellor of Higher Education; and
3. Pursue a degree in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, or healthcare.

The bill requires public colleges and universities that enroll students participating in the Ohio STEM Retention Program to report to the Chancellor of Higher Education, by July 1 each year, the number of such students enrolled during the preceding year. The Chancellor is then required to calculate and provide the appropriate grant to each college or university for the tuition waivers.²

The bill appropriates \$75 million for FY 2022 for the program.

Ohio IT Promise Program

The bill establishes the Ohio IT Promise Program, under which individuals are eligible for up to \$4,000 in student loan forgiveness if they meet all of the following conditions:

1. Participate in the Ohio STEM Retention Program;
2. Graduate with a Chancellor-approved certificate, an associate degree, or a bachelor's degree in a science, technology, engineering, mathematics, or healthcare field; and
3. Maintain continuous Ohio residence for five years after graduating.³

The bill appropriates \$100 million for FY 2022 for the program.

Background on the College Credit Plus Program

The College Credit Plus (CCP) Program allows high school students and 7th and 8th grade students who are enrolled in public or nonpublic high schools or who are home-instructed to enroll in nonsectarian college courses to receive high school and college credit. Generally, the program governs arrangements in which the student receives transcribed credit from the college. CCP courses may be taken at any state institution of higher education (except the Northeast Ohio Medical University) or any participating private or out-of-state college or university.

Each student may choose to participate under "Option A" (the student is responsible for all costs related to participation) or "Option B" (the state, through the Department of

² R.C. 3365.131(B).

³ R.C. 3365.132(A).

Education, pays the college or university on the student's behalf). The amount of state payments depends upon several factors, including the type of high school and college in which the participant is enrolled, how the participant receives instruction, and whether the high school and college are operating under the default payment structure or an agreement specifying an alternative payment structure. Generally, however, payments on behalf of a public school student are deducted from the state funds computed for that school, and payments for a nonpublic school or a homeschooled student are made out of funds appropriated specifically for that purpose.

All public high schools must participate in the program and any nonpublic high school may participate in the program.

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	02-22-22
