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H.B. 591
135th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Brennan and Baker

Holly Gilman, Attorney

SUMMARY

- Requires the Department of Education and Workforce to also include the following on each community school’s annual report card:
 - A link to the community school sponsor’s website and the sponsor’s report card;
 - If the community school has an operator, the operator’s name, whether that operator is a nonprofit or for-profit entity and a link to the operator’s website and the operator’s report card.
- Modifies the law regarding the community school sponsor evaluation system to:
 - Exclude information used by the Department to determine the sponsor’s rating on the academic performance of students enrolled in community schools sponsored by the same entity from the ten-day notice review by a sponsor prior to the Department’s publication of the sponsor’s final ratings; and
 - Eliminate the requirement that sponsors with an overall rating of “exemplary” or “effective” for the three most recent years that the sponsor was evaluated by the Department be evaluated only every three years, instead of annually.
- Requires the Department to issue an annual report card reflecting the performance of community school sponsors that contains certain information.
- Requires the Department to issue an annual report card reflecting the performance of all community school operators that contains certain information, instead of an annual community school operator performance report.
- Eliminates the requirement that the Department consider the Ohio Council of Community Schools to have received the same sponsor rating as the University of Toledo for the 2016-2017 school year.
- Titles the bill as the Charter School Sponsor and Operator Rating Act.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Community school report cards

Continuing law requires the Department of Education and Workforce to issue an annual state report card for each school district and other public school, including community schools, that measures the district's or school's academic performance. The bill requires the report card issued to a community school to also include the following information:

- A link to the community school sponsor's website and the sponsor's report card (see "**Sponsor report cards**" below);
- If the community school has an operator, the operator's name, whether that operator is a nonprofit or for-profit entity, and a link to the operator's website and the operator's report card (see "**Operator report cards**" below).

The information listed above is also required to be included on the home page of the community school report card, presented with other basic information on the community school.¹

A "sponsor" is a school district, educational service center, or other entity approved by the Department to sponsor community schools, or that is exempt from needing the Department's approval, and with which the governing authority of a community school enters into a contract. An "operator" is either of the following: (1) an individual or organization that manages the daily operations of a community school pursuant to a contract between the operator and the school's governing authority, (2) a nonprofit organization providing programmatic oversight and support to a community school under a contract with the school's governing authority and that retains the right to terminate its affiliation with the school if the school fails to meet the organization's quality standards.²

Sponsor evaluations

Continuing law requires the Department to develop and implement an evaluation system meeting certain requirements specified in law that annually rates and assigns an overall rating of "exemplary," "effective," "ineffective," or "poor" to each entity sponsoring a community school. A separate rating must also be given for each component of the evaluation system. The bill maintains existing law regarding the community school sponsor evaluation system other than to:

- Exclude information used by the Department to determine the sponsor's rating on the academic performance of students enrolled in community schools sponsored by the same entity from the 10-day notice review by a sponsor prior to the Department's publication of the sponsor's final ratings; and

¹ R.C. 3312.012(E).

² R.C. 3314.02(A)(1) and (8), not in the bill.

- Eliminate the requirement that sponsors with an overall rating of “exemplary” or “effective” for the three most recent years that the sponsor was evaluated by the Department be evaluated only every three years, instead of annually.³

Sponsor report cards

The bill requires the Department to issue an annual report card reflecting the performance of community school sponsors in the prior school year. The report card must be issued not later than November 15 of each year, or the preceding Friday when that day falls on a Saturday or Sunday. The report card must present information about each sponsor and be posted on the Department’s website in a similar manner to a state report card issued for public schools under current law. The sponsor’s report card is also required to include detailed information about the sponsor and the sponsor’s evaluation, including its overall rating (see “**Sponsor evaluations**” above), presented as follows:

- For an overall rating of “exemplary” and any of ten through 12 total points on the evaluation, the Department must assign the sponsor a performance rating of four stars and include a descriptor of “exemplary”;
- For an overall rating of “effective” and any of seven through nine total points on the evaluation, the Department must assign the sponsor a performance rating of three stars and include a descriptor of “effective”;
- For an overall rating of “ineffective” and any of three through six total points on the evaluation, the Department must assign the sponsor a performance rating of two stars and include a descriptor of “ineffective”;
- For an overall rating of “poor” and either one or two total points on the evaluation, the Department must assign the sponsor a performance rating of one star and include a descriptor of “poor”;
- For an overall rating of “poor” and zero total points on the evaluation, the Department must assign the sponsor a performance rating of zero stars and include a descriptor of “failed.”

Additionally, the Department must establish a method to assign performance ratings for each sponsor evaluation component. The resulting ratings and descriptors must be as follows:

- A performance rating of four stars and a descriptor of “exceeds standards;”
- A performance rating of three stars and a descriptor of “meets standards;”
- A performance rating of two stars and a descriptor of “progressing towards standards;”
- A performance rating of one star and a descriptor of “below standards;”

³ R.C. 3314.016(B)(1), (6), and (7)(b).

- A performance rating of zero stars and a descriptor of “significantly below standards.”

The sponsor’s report card is not to be construed to conflict with, or override, a sponsor’s evaluation. The sponsor’s evaluation is to be used to determine any sanctions or incentives that are based on evaluations.⁴

Operator report cards

The bill modifies the current law community school operator annual performance reports that must be developed and published by the Department in the following ways:

- Requires the Department to issue an annual report card reflecting the performance of all community school operators in Ohio for the previous school year, rather than developing and publishing an annual performance report of all operators in Ohio based on their performance for the previous school year;
- Requires the report card to be issued not later than November 15 of each year, or the Friday preceding November 15, when that date falls on a Saturday or Sunday, rather than simply not later than November 15 of each year;
- Adds that the report card must present information about each operator, and be posted on the Department’s website, in a similar manner to the state report card for public schools under continuing law;
- Adds that the Department must establish an overall operator rating system in a manner similar to the sponsor evaluation system (see “**Sponsor evaluations**” above) that includes both overall ratings and individual category ratings;
- Requires the report card for each operator to be made available on the Department’s website in an easily accessible format, instead of the report being only made available on the Department’s website.

The Department is required to include the operator report card, rather than the annual performance report, in the Department’s annual report on community schools.⁵

Rating for sponsor that succeeded University of Toledo

H.B. 583 of the 134th General Assembly (effective September 23, 2022) enacted a requirement that the Department, when determining whether a sponsor qualifies to be evaluated every three years rather than annually, to consider the Ohio Council of Community Schools (OCCS) to have received the same sponsor rating as the University of Toledo for the 2016-2017 school year. The bill eliminates that requirement.⁶

⁴ R.C. 3314.0111; R.C. 3302.03, not in the bill.

⁵ R.C. 3314.031; R.C. 3302.03 and 3314.015(A)(4), not in the bill.

⁶ R.C. 3314.021(E).

The University was eligible to serve as a sponsor in the original Lucas County community school pilot project in 1997.⁷ In 1999, the law was changed to permit the University to designate an authority to act as a sponsor in its place.⁸ Effective in 2003, the law was further amended to permit to a tax-exempt entity to succeed the University as sponsor of its schools.⁹ In 2003, the University also named the OCCS as its independent designee.¹⁰ According to its website, OCCS has succeeded the University as a sponsor.¹¹

Bill title

The bill is titled as the Charter School Sponsor and Operator Rating Act.¹²

Background

Authorized in R.C. Chapter 3314, community schools (often called “charter schools”) are public, nonprofit, nonsectarian schools that operate independently of any school district but under a contract with a sponsoring entity. The schools often serve a limited number of grades or a particular purpose. The schools are directly financed with state funds. Many community schools are run by separate, private for-profit or nonprofit operators.

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	05-15-24

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⁷ Section 50.52 of H.B. 215 of the 122nd General Assembly.

⁸ R.C. 3314.02, as amended by H.B. 282 of the 122nd General Assembly.

⁹ Section 12 of H.B. 364 of the 124th General Assembly, which was later codified as R.C. 3314.021 by S.B. 2 of the 125th General Assembly.

¹⁰ See the [timeline](#) prepared and posted by the Ohio Council of Community Schools on its website: ohioschools.org.

¹¹ See the “[Ohio Council of Community Schools Succeeds the University of Toledo](#)” press release at the OCCS’s website: ohioschools.org.

¹² Section 3 of the bill.