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Bill Analysis

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Version: As Reported by Senate Education

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 sixth-grade student, beginning with students that enter sixth grade for the first time in the 2027-2028 school year, to complete a career and academic plan by the end of the student's eighth-grade year.
- Requires schools to develop a graduation and career plan or graduation planning addendum to a 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 60 hours 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 instruction 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.

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DETAILED ANALYSIS

Career coaching framework

The bill requires the Department of Education and Workforce, by March 15, 2027, 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, reflections on experiential learning, and plan development; and
3. Qualifications and training for individuals that provide career coaching, including the role of a valid Ohio school counselor license and other licensed educators.

Under the bill, the Department must provide guidance to districts and schools on how to use the framework, including how the framework may apply to and enhance a district's or school's existing career coaching program, 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]

[1] R.C. 3301.0733(A).

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. The bill also revises the requirement under existing law for a district or school's policy on career advising to include a plan to provide career advising to students in grades 6 to 12. Under the bill, the plan must be developed in consultation with the district's or school's career technical planning district and business advisory council.[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]

Career and academic plans

The bill requires each public school to require each sixth-grade student, beginning with students that enter sixth grade for the first time in the 2027-2028 school year, to complete a career and academic plan by the end of the student's eighth-grade year. 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. Career and academic goals, financial and life goals, and action plans, including how students will identify and update these goals as they move through high school and beyond.
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 pathway. The plan must also include how the student will consider pathway experiences such as career-technical education programming, the College Credit Plus Program, the Accelerated College and Career Pathways Program, or other similar state or local programs. Future updates to the plan must address these options in more detail.

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

[3] R.C. 3313.6020(C).

[4] R.C. 3313.607, repealed.

5. A description or record of any work-based and other career-based learning opportunities the student plans to participate in to inform their career and academic 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.

A career and academic 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 to involve parents and guardians in the development of a career and academic 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.

The bill also permits a school district to provide a career and academic plan to students in any grade beginning in the 2027-2028 school year.[5]

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

The bill requires the plan 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 plan must be updated by the student and the representative each school year.

If a student identified as at risk of not qualifying for a diploma has a career and academic plan developed under current law, the student's district or school must develop a graduation

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

planning addendum to the career and academic plan instead of a separate graduation and career plan. The addendum must meet the same requirements as a graduation and career plan.

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 and career plan or graduation planning addendum, if the IEP contains academic goals substantively similar to the addendum.[6]

Middle school career exploration course requirement

Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, the bill requires each public school to provide at least 60 hours of instruction in the study of career exploration to students at any point during grades 6 to 8. Each district or school must provide instruction in the study of career exploration by either (1) offering a career exploration course at some point during grades 6 to 8 for all students that addresses all the essential components of career exploration instruction, or (2) submitting a career exploration plan to the Department for approval.

A career exploration plan must be developed in collaboration with the district's or school's partners, including the district's or school's career-technical planning district and business advisory council, and must document how the district or school will address the essential components of career exploration instruction in a series of experiences for all students in a cohort in a single year or across grades 6 to 8. An approved plan is valid for at least two years, but no longer than five, and may be renewed in a form and manner determined by the Department. The bill permits the Department to work with career pathway support networks to approve plans.

The bill requires career exploration instruction to include the following essential components:

1. Career field exploration, including an overview of the 16 career clusters identified by the Department for Ohio;
2. Experiential 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 that aligns with Ohio's professional skills standards;
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 development of the student's career and academic plan or a preliminary plan if the course is completed before eighth grade.

[6] R.C. 3313.617.

If a school district or school provides students with a career-technical education course in grades 7 or 8, and the course satisfies the essential components required for a career exploration course, then that course may fulfill both the career exploration instruction requirement and the requirement under continuing law to provide career-technical education instruction.

The bill permits a public school to assign district or school personnel, including counselors, career coaches, or teachers, to provide all or part of the career exploration instruction and planning required for students. Public schools may also partner with outside organizations to provide all or part of the career exploration instruction required for students.[7]

The bill explicitly authorizes the lead district of a CTPD to use career awareness and exploration funds for the development, provision, or support of the career exploration instruction required under the bill.[8]

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.[9]

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

1. Issuing guidance on high-quality career exploration instruction and activities, delivery models using courses and multi-year year approaches, including which current or new courses may be used to satisfy the requirement, free tools and resources schools may use for career exploration instruction, and potential funding sources such as career awareness and exploration funds;
2. Updating the professional development provided for the middle school career-technical education license validation to align with the career exploration instruction requirements;
3. Publicly reporting how each school is providing career exploration instruction to students, including the number of students served in grades 6, 7, and 8. The Department must report which schools are enrolling students in a course that meets the requirements, which schools are enrolling students in a career-technical education course that also meets the career exploration instruction requirement, which schools are providing career exploration through an approved plan, and which schools are out of compliance with the course requirements;
4. Developing and releasing a template for the career exploration plan that schools may submit to describe how the district or school will provide career exploration instruction;
5. Reviewing, approving, and posting career exploration plans; and

[7] R.C. 3313.6034, 3314.03, 3326.11, and 3328.24; see also R.C. 3313.90, not in the bill.

[8] R.C. 3317.014.

[9] R.C. 3301.0733(A)(4).

6. 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.[10]

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.[11]

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

[10] R.C. 3301.0733(B).

[11] R.C. 3301.14(A).

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.[12]

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. 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.[13]

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:

[12] R.C. 3301.14(B) to (E).

[13] R.C. 3301.141(A).

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

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.[14]

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;[15]

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

[14] R.C. 3301.141(B) and (C).

[15] R.C. 3333.952, not in the bill.

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.

6. Coordinate the creation of tools, dashboards, reports, and research that use existing cross-agency education and workforce data. Beginning on December 1, 2027, and annually thereafter on a date determined by the report's lead agency, 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 and annual wages 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;

    d. A higher education graduate report that documents the employment, wage, and retention outcomes of graduates for each institution of higher education in Ohio; and

    e. A workforce program outcomes report that documents completion rates, and the employment, wage, and retention outcomes after exit, of participants in workforce training programs in Ohio that are included on the workforce inventory of education and training or its successor and on any analogous training provider lists managed by local workforce development areas.

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.[16]

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 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.[17]

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	11-18-25
Reported, S. Education	05-13-26

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[16] R.C. 3301.142.

[17] R.C. 3301.141(D) and (E).