



S.B. 110

123rd General Assembly
(As Introduced)

Sens. White, Gardner, Latta

BILL SUMMARY

- Establishes the Ohio Alternative Schools Grant Program under which the Department of Education will award grants for the operation of alternative disciplinary schools.
- Directs the Department to appoint an advisory committee of three of its employees and three Department of Youth Services employees to develop criteria for awarding grants and to advise the Department regarding the program.
- Requires the Department to contract with an independent research entity to conduct an evaluation of the program and to report the results to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

CONTENT AND OPERATION

Alternative schools grant program

(sec. 3313.536)

The bill establishes the Ohio Alternative Schools Grant Program under which the Department of Education will award competitive grants to school districts for the operation of alternative disciplinary school projects. The schools will provide alternative educational environments for students who have been suspended or expelled from school, are on probation or parole, are at risk of dropping out of school, or have other particular disciplinary needs. Grants may be awarded to alternative schools that will be or are already established under current law (see **COMMENT**).

Amount of award

(sec. 3313.536(B) and (C))

The bill limits the amount of each grant to \$1,000 per full-time equivalent student for each year. Any school receiving a grant under this program must obtain additional funding from another public or private source as the bill specifies that no project will receive all of its operational or set-up funding from a grant awarded under the program.

Criteria for awarding grants

(sec. 3313.536(D)(1))

The grants will be awarded on the basis of criteria to be developed by a committee that the Department of Education establishes, to consist of three employees of the Department of Education and three employees of the Department of Youth Services. The committee will also provide advice to the Department of Education in administering the program.

Priority in awarding grants

(sec. 3313.536(D)(2))

In awarding grants, the Department is directed to give priority to projects that:

- (1) Demonstrate collaboration among schools, juvenile courts, law enforcement agencies, and other appropriate private and public organizations;
- (2) Include strategies that ensure enforcement of the state's attendance laws;
- (3) Ensure that data necessary for evaluating the project will be collected.

Minimum standards may be waived

(sec. 3313.536(E))

The Department of Education may waive compliance with any of the state's minimum education standards upon the recommendation of the advisory committee that a waiver would enable a program to more effectively benefit students enrolled in an alternative school.¹

¹ Section 3301.07 gives the State Board of Education the power to formulate and prescribe minimum standards for the elementary and secondary schools in the state.

Evaluation of the implementation of the program

(Section 2)

Within 18 months after awarding the initial grants under the bill, the Department of Education must contract with an independent research entity to conduct a formative evaluation examining the implementation of the program. The Department must report the results of that evaluation to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives no later than 24 months after the awarding of the initial grants under the program.

COMMENT

Current requirements for alternative schools for disciplinary problems

Section 3313.533 of the Revised Code, not in the bill, enables boards of education to establish alternative schools "to serve students who are on suspension, who are having truancy problems, who are experiencing academic failure, who have a history of class disruption, or who are exhibiting other academic or behavioral problems" that the board specifies. The section establishes the requirements for the planning and operation of such a school.

Section 3313.534 of the Revised Code, not in the bill, requires that by July 1, 1999, each big eight school district must establish at least one alternative school to meet the educational needs of students with "severe discipline problems, including, but not limited to, excessive truancy, excessive disruption in the classroom, and multiple suspensions or expulsions." Additionally, any district that attains a significantly substandard graduation rate after July 1, 1999 must also establish such an alternative school.

HISTORY

ACTION	DATE	JOURNAL ENTRY
Introduced	03-16-99	p. 205
S0110-I.123/jc		

