



Ohio Legislative Service Commission

Bill Analysis

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H.B. 362

130th General Assembly
(As Introduced)

Reps. Scherer and Derickson, Anielski, Blessing, Butler, Roegner, Young

BILL SUMMARY

- Creates a new designation of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) school equivalent that may be granted to a community school or chartered nonpublic school that satisfies certain requirements.
 - Specifies that a STEM school equivalent is not eligible for any of the operating funding that is provided to STEM schools.
 - Specifies that the existing STEM Committee is a committee of the Department of Education.
 - Permits the governing authority of a chartered nonpublic school to submit a proposal to receive a grant for a STEM program of excellence that serves students in any of grades kindergarten through eight in that school.
 - Permits a community school, a chartered nonpublic school, or both to be part of a partnership of public and private entities that submits a proposal for the establishment of a new STEM school.
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CONTENT AND OPERATION

STEM school equivalent

The bill creates a new designation of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) school equivalent.¹ This designation may be granted to a community school or chartered nonpublic school that submits a proposal for

¹ R.C. 3326.032.

designation to the STEM Committee. A STEM school equivalent is not subject to any of the requirements that apply to STEM schools except for those regarding a STEM school's curriculum and working partnerships with outside public and private entities.² Additionally, a STEM school equivalent is not eligible for any of the state operating funding that is provided to STEM schools.³

(Under current law, a regular STEM school is a stand-alone public school that offers a rigorous curriculum for any of grades 6 through 12 that integrates STEM disciplines with arts and humanities. A STEM school receives state funds on a per-pupil basis through one of two distinct funding methods.)

Proposal for designation as a STEM school equivalent

The bill requires a community school or chartered nonpublic school seeking designation as a STEM school equivalent to submit a proposal to the STEM Committee that is established in current law (see "**STEM Committee**" below). The proposal must include all of the following:

(1) Assurances that the community school or chartered nonpublic school submitting the proposal has a working partnership with both public and private entities, including higher education entities and business organizations;

(2) Assurances that the school submitting the proposal will operate in compliance with the bill's provisions and the provisions of the proposal as accepted by the STEM Committee;

(3) Evidence that the school submitting the proposal will offer a rigorous, diverse, integrated, and project-based curriculum to students in any of grades 6 through 12, with the goal to prepare those students for college, the workforce, and citizenship, and that does all of the following:

(a) Emphasizes the role of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in promoting innovation and economic progress;

(b) Incorporates scientific inquiry and technological design;

(c) Includes the arts and humanities;

(d) Emphasizes personalized learning and teamwork skills.

² R.C. 3326.032(C)(1) and 3326.09.

³ R.C. 3326.032(C)(3).

(4) Evidence that the school submitting the proposal will attract school leaders who support the curriculum principles outlined above;

(5) A description of how each school's curriculum will be developed and approved in accordance with the STEM school curriculum requirements, which apply to a STEM school equivalent under the bill's provisions;

(6) Evidence that the school submitting the proposal will utilize an established capacity to capture and share knowledge for best practices and innovative professional development;

(7) Assurance that the school submitting the proposal has received commitments of sustained and verified fiscal and in-kind support from regional education and business entities.⁴

These requirements are very similar to the requirements for a proposal for a STEM school, except that STEM school proposals must also provide that the school will be under the oversight of a governing body and specify how the school's assets will be distributed upon its closing. These additional requirements are unnecessary for STEM school equivalents because the bill specifies that a community school or chartered nonpublic school that is designated as a STEM school equivalent is still subject to the requirements that already apply to that type of school, including requirements pertaining to school governance and distribution of the school's assets upon its closing.⁵

Curriculum requirements

The bill specifies that the curriculum of a STEM school equivalent is subject to the requirements that apply to the curriculum of a STEM school under current law. The curriculum must be developed by a team that consists of at least the school's chief administrative officer, a teacher, a representative of the higher education institution that is a collaborating partner with the STEM school equivalent, and a member of the public with expertise in the application of science, technology, engineering, or mathematics, and it is subject to approval by the school's governing authority.⁶

Applications for grants and additional funds

The bill expressly permits a STEM school equivalent to apply for any of the grants and additional funds that a STEM school may apply for under current law, as

⁴ R.C. 3326.032(B).

⁵ R.C. 3326.032(C)(1).

⁶ R.C. 3326.032(C)(1) and 3326.09.

long as the STEM school equivalent is eligible for those grants or additional funds.⁷ This apparently means a STEM school equivalent may use its designation to (1) apply to any state or federal agency for grants under federal or state law or any "appropriations act of the General Assembly" and (2) apply to any private entity or foundation for additional funds.⁸

Additional requirements

Contract between a community school and its sponsor

If the governing authority of a community school is planning to seek designation for the school as a STEM school equivalent, the bill requires that fact be stipulated in its contract with the school's sponsor.⁹

Notification upon closure of a chartered nonpublic school

If the governing authority of a chartered nonpublic school that has been designated as a STEM school equivalent intends to close the school, the bill requires the governing authority to notify the STEM Committee of that intent prior to the school's closure.¹⁰ The bill does not provide a similar requirement for STEM school equivalent community schools.

(Under current law, not changed by the bill, a closing chartered nonpublic school must notify the Department of Education, the school's accrediting agency, and the school district that receives state Auxiliary Services Funds for the school's students.)

STEM Committee

The bill specifies that the STEM Committee, which is established under current law, is a committee of the Department of Education.¹¹ The STEM Committee currently consists of seven members: the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Chancellor of the Board of Regents, the Director of Development, and four members of the public who have expertise in business or STEM fields (two appointed by the Governor, one appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and one appointed by the President of the Senate).

⁷ R.C. 3326.032(C)(3).

⁸ R.C. 3326.38, not in the bill.

⁹ R.C. 3314.03(A)(26).

¹⁰ R.C. 3301.162.

¹¹ R.C. 3326.02.



STEM programs of excellence

The bill permits the governing authority of a chartered nonpublic school to submit a proposal to the STEM Committee to receive a grant for a STEM program of excellence that serves students in any of grades kindergarten through eight in that school.¹² Currently, city, exempted village, and local school districts and community schools may submit proposals for this purpose. Current law requires the STEM Committee to award grants to support the operation of STEM programs of excellence, but money has not been appropriated for this purpose for several years.

Proposal to create a new STEM school

The bill permits, but does not require, a community school, a chartered nonpublic school, or both to be part of a partnership of public and private entities that submits a proposal for the establishment of a new STEM school.¹³ Current law requires this partnership to consist of at least (1) a city, exempted village, local, or joint vocational school district or an educational service center, (2) higher education entities, and (3) business organizations.

HISTORY

ACTION	DATE
Introduced	11-26-13

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¹² R.C. 3326.04.

¹³ R.C. 3326.03.

