

- In FY 2009, the bill redirects \$4.2 million of state funding for teacher assessments from state and regional activities to subsidies for school districts, community schools, and chartered nonpublic schools.
- The bill increases the currently required entry-year program from one to two years, effectively doubling the number of entry-year teachers in the program starting in FY 2010. Based on current state funding for the program, costs could increase by approximately \$3.9 million to \$4.7 million each year, assuming the same services currently provided continue to be provided to the additional teachers. Subject to appropriations, this increase in expenditures may be offset by an increase in state revenues.
- The bill requires that districts, community schools, and chartered nonpublic schools develop teacher assessments locally to replace the current assessment (Praxis III). This will likely result in a one-time cost to these schools.
- The bill requires that the locally developed assessments be conducted by a team of at least three individuals and consist of at least three classroom observations each year of the two-year entry-year program. Given that the current assessment is conducted by one assessor once for each entry-year teacher, the costs of these assessments is likely to offset and potentially exceed the increase in revenue in FY 2009. In future years, any offsetting revenue is subject to state appropriations.

Detailed Fiscal Analysis

Currently, a teacher with a provisional license must complete a one-year entry-year program and get a satisfactory score on the Praxis III¹ assessment in order to obtain a professional license. The bill changes these requirements. First, it increases the length of the entry-year program to two years. Second, it replaces the Praxis III assessment with a series of assessments developed by the school or school district.

Entry-year program

An entry-year program is defined in the Ohio Administrative Code as a minimum one-year "formal structured program of support, including mentoring" by an experienced teacher. All public and chartered nonpublic schools are required to offer an entry-year program to their beginning teachers. The bill codifies the entry-year requirement and expands the program from one to two years. This expansion effectively doubles the number of entry-year teachers in any given year. The cost of the program is primarily related to the provision of mentoring services to each entry-year teacher, therefore, assuming schools maintain the same services for teachers in the second year of the program, the cost is likely to increase.

Districts and schools with entry-year teachers may apply for state funding to help defray the cost of their programs. In FY 2007, according to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), approximately \$4.6 million of state funding was provided to support the approximately 5,800 entry-year teachers participating in the entry-year program throughout Ohio. The total cost to districts and schools of the current program is not known, as there may be additional costs that are not compensated by the state. The current state cost, however, can be used as an estimate of the lower end of the statewide cost. In FY 2007, this cost is approximately \$790 per entry-year teacher (\$4.6 million/5,800 teachers). The number of new teachers entering the entry-year program each year ranges from approximately 5,000 to 6,000 teachers. Based on these estimates, therefore, expanding the program from one to two years could increase costs by approximately \$3.9 million (5,000 x \$790) to \$4.7 million (6,000 x \$790) each year starting in FY 2010.

Current guidelines for entry-year programs are built around the knowledge and skills measured by the Praxis III assessment. The bill requires the entry-year programs be built around the knowledge and skills measured by the new locally developed assessments required by the bill. These assessments are to measure the teacher's attainment of the Ohio Standards for the Teaching Profession as adopted by the State Board of Education. Districts and schools may incur one-time costs of updating their entry-year programs to reflect these new locally developed assessments.

Teacher assessments

¹ The Praxis III assessment was developed by the Educational Testing Service.

In FY 2007, ODE spent approximately \$4.2 million on the Praxis III assessment system. ODE hires regional coordinators who are trained by the Educational Testing Service and who in turn train assessors and assign them to perform the Praxis III assessments for each entry-year teacher. There are currently about 1,300 trained Praxis III assessors statewide. The Praxis III assessment consists of a pre- and post-interview and a classroom observation not to exceed 60 minutes. According to ODE, the assessor is paid a stipend of \$400 per assessment. The rest of the funding supports the regional coordinators and assessor training. Currently, districts and schools are only responsible for scheduling the Praxis III assessment for their entry-year teachers and otherwise are not responsible for any costs.

Beginning in FY 2009, the bill replaces the Praxis III assessment with locally developed assessments. This requirement will likely result in a one-time cost for each district and school to develop these assessments. Furthermore, the bill specifies that these assessments be conducted by a team of at least three individuals and consist of at least three classroom observations each year of the two-year entry-year program. The number of assessor-hours required for each entry-year teacher, therefore, increases from 1 under the Praxis III system to 18 (3 assessors x 3 assessments x 2 years) under the bill's system. In addition, as already stated, the responsibility for and cost of conducting the assessments shifts under the bill from the state and region to the district or school. It is possible that as part of an entry-year program or as part of a principal's normal supervision of the teachers, individuals are already performing classroom observations and assessments for beginning teachers. In this case, the additional assessor-hours may not be as significant.

The bill specifies that in FY 2009 the \$4.2 million budgeted to support the Praxis III assessment system based on FY 2007 expenditures, instead be distributed to districts and schools on a per entry-year teacher basis. Districts may be able to perform the assessments at a lower cost than the \$400 stipend currently paid to Praxis III assessors, however, given the number of assessors and assessments required under the bill, this increase in revenue may not be sufficient to cover the increased cost of the assessments.

ODE assistance

ODE has provided guidelines and assistance to schools for entry-year programs based on using the Praxis III. Presumably, these materials will need to be updated to reflect the bill's requirements. Also, ODE may need to provide additional assistance to schools in the development of the bill's required teacher assessments. Therefore, the bill may increase ODE's administrative burden for the first few years of its operation.

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