



Ohio Legislative Service Commission

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Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

Bill: Sub. S.B. 126 of the 128th G.A.

Date: November 10, 2009

Status: As Introduced

Sponsor: Sen. Fedor

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: Yes

Contents: Requires public schools to establish policies prohibiting bullying by electronic means and requires annual training on such policies

State Fiscal Highlights

- No direct fiscal effect on the state.

Local Fiscal Highlights

LOCAL GOVERNMENT	FY 2010	FY 2011	FUTURE YEARS
School Districts			
Revenues	- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -
Expenditures	Minimal increase in administrative costs to expand and annually review bullying policies and to make policies available to students and parents		
	Potential increase in disciplinary costs		
	- 0 -	Increase in costs for annual training on bullying policy	

Note: The school district fiscal year is July 1 through June 30.

- School districts, community schools, and STEM schools may incur costs to expand and annually review bullying policies currently required by law.
- School districts, community schools, and STEM schools may incur minimal administrative costs to make available to students and their parents and guardians bullying policies and an explanation of the seriousness of bullying by electronic means.
- School districts, community schools, and STEM schools may incur additional disciplinary costs if the number of bullying cases covered by their policies increases due to the bill's required policy expansion.
- School districts, community schools, and STEM schools may incur an additional cost for developing and annually providing training on the districts' bullying policies.

Detailed Fiscal Analysis

Bullying policy requirements

Under current law, school districts, community schools, and STEM schools are required to establish policies prohibiting written, verbal, or physical bullying on school property or at school-sponsored events. The bill requires a number of additions to these policies, most notably that they be expanded to include bullying by electronic means, also known as cyberbullying, bullying on school buses, and bullying off school property if it disrupts the educational environment. The bill also requires these policies be reviewed annually. Schools and districts may incur administrative costs to modify and annually review their policies, but these costs are not likely to be significant. Under continuing law, a school must include the bullying policy in its student handbook. The bill further requires the policy and an explanation of the seriousness of cyberbullying be made available to all students and their parents and guardians. Again, any potential administrative costs associated with this additional requirement are not likely to be significant.

If the bill's required policy expansion results in an increase in the number of covered bullying incidents, schools' disciplinary costs may also increase. Continuing law requires the policy to include procedures for reporting, documenting, investigating, and disciplining the perpetrators of all bullying incidents. These procedures may be costly for schools. The following table shows the number of different types of discipline occurrences for incidences of harassment or intimidation reported statewide. These data are from the Department of Education's Interactive Local Report Card. As can be seen from the table, the number of discipline occurrences resulting from bullying has increased since FY 2005. However, as a percentage of total discipline occurrences, those resulting from bullying still remain low. In FY 2005, this percentage was 2.0%. It increased to 3.8% in FY 2009.

Number of Discipline Occurrences for Harassment or Intimidation Statewide					
Type of Discipline	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009
Expulsion	164	189	312	395	325
Out-of-School Suspension	5,515	6,698	8,593	11,114	10,923
In-School Suspension	3,235	3,271	3,159	4,444	3,859
In-School Alternative Discipline	854	1,259	1,506	2,197	2,053
Emergency removal by district personnel	185	312	291	401	413
Total	9,953	11,729	13,861	18,551	17,573

Bullying policy training

Under current law, school districts, community schools, and STEM schools are required to provide training on the districts' bullying policies to the extent that state or federal funds are appropriated for that purpose. The bill eliminates the provision that makes the required training contingent on state or federal funding. In addition, the bill requires that the training be given each school year. According to the Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA), the cost of hiring a consultant to provide such training is approximately \$500 per session. Public school educators are currently required to complete an amount of professional development each year dictated by their collective bargaining agreements. The bill specifies that time spent in training relating to the bullying policy applies toward any mandated continuing education requirements. Presuming training relating to districts' bullying policies is included within the contractual professional development days, no resulting increase in salary costs is expected. If a school fails to conduct the required training annually, the bill requires notification be sent to students' parents and guardians by ordinary mail. In the event that a district does not comply with the training requirement, the district would incur the cost of parental notification depending largely on the number of students enrolled in the district.