DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

I. IN-STATE UNDERGRADUATE TUITION AND FEES

- Limits increases for in-state undergraduate tuition and general fee increases for FYs 2026 and 2027, as follows:
  - For each state university and university branch campus, tuition and fee increases for student cohorts entering each of those years may not increase more than 3% of what was charged to the student cohort entering in the previous academic year;
  - For each community, state community, and technical college, tuition and fees may not increase more than $10 per credit hour over what they charged in the previous academic year.

II. STUDENT FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS

Ohio College Opportunity Grant Program

- Establishes maximum Ohio College Opportunity Grant amounts for FYs 2026 and 2027, as follows:
  - For students at state institutions of higher education, $4,000;
  - For students at private nonprofit colleges and universities, $5,000;
  - For students at private for-profit colleges and schools, $2,000.

Governor's Merit Scholarship

- Extends, with changes, the operation of the Governor's Merit Scholarship Program to FYs 2026 and 2027, including expanding eligibility to students enrolled in nonchartered nonpublic schools who meet the other criteria to receive a scholarship.

Ohio Work Ready Grant Program

- To qualify for a first-time Ohio Work Ready grant on or after September 30, 2025, requires a student to be enrolled in a program that meets alternative criteria established by the Chancellor of Higher Education based on Ohio's emerging workforce needs.

Rural Practice Incentive Program

- Revises the Rural Practice Incentive Program's operation by expanding eligibility for the program, modifying the factors used to determine underserved communities, and requiring a participating attorney to sign a promissory note payable to the state for failing to satisfy service obligations.

III. CONTINGENT SSI FUNDING (PARTIALLY VETOED)

- Earmarks $75 million in FY 2027 from the State Share of Instruction (SSI) funds reserved for the university traditional SSI formula to be distributed based on each state university's percent share of traditional SSI formula funding.

- Prohibits the Chancellor from distributing the FY 2027 set-aside funds to a state university unless the university has fully complied in the prior fiscal year with requirements enacted by S.B. 1 of the 136th General Assembly.
- Requires each state university to submit, by March 1, 2026, a report demonstrating compliance with the S.B. 1 requirements.
- Would have required the House and Senate higher education committees each to determine, by March 31, 2026, whether each state university is in full compliance and report that determination to the Office of Budget and Management (VETOED).
- Would have subjected the funds' release to Controlling Board approval (VETOED).

IV. STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Credential and work experience

- Requires each state institution to consider an applicant's work experience and credentials as part of its admissions process and grant credit for prior learning or experience or detail the opportunities and required documentation to gain that credit.

General education requirements

- Requires each state institution board of trustees to formally review, evaluate, and adjust its general education criteria in specified subject areas.

American civic literacy course exemptions

- Requires each state institution board of trustees to adopt a resolution specifying the conditions under which the institution's president or the president's designee may grant an exemption from the American civic literacy course requirement to a student.
- Eliminates the exemption after the 2030-2031 academic year.

Guaranteed admission

- Guarantees each high school graduate in the top 10% of their graduating class admission to a state institution.
- Permits a state university to delay main campus admission and admit a high school graduate in the top 10% of the graduating class to a regional campus if the student does not meet the standards for unconditional admission.
- Guarantees admission to the main campus of a state institution of higher education for students who graduate in the top 5% of their graduating class, provided the student meets the application and acceptance deadlines for admission to the main campus.
- Requires the Chancellor, in consultation with the Director of Education and Workforce, to identify a process to provide each state institution with a list of all students who are eligible for guaranteed admission.

Co-Op Internship Program

- Requires state institutions to develop and implement a Co-Op Internship Program by the 2027-2028 academic year,.
- Requires the Chancellor to consult with JobsOhio and other appropriate stakeholders to develop the goals, structure, and parameters of the program.
- Requires state institutions annually to report specified metrics.
- Eliminates the annual report on the academic and economic impact of the Co-Op/Internship Program.

Curricular approval process

- Requires each state institution board of trustees to adopt a curricular approval process to establish and modify academic programs, curricula, courses, general education requirements, and degree programs.
- Grants a state institution board ultimate authority to establish new academic programs, schools, colleges, institutes, departments, and centers at the institution.
- Prohibits a state institution board from delegating its authority to adopt a curricular approval process or to approve or reject academic programs.

Fiscal caution status

- Requires the Chancellor, in consultation with OBM, to adopt rules regarding:
  - Criteria for determining when to declare a state institution under fiscal caution;
  - Requirements for a state institution on fiscal caution to submit a financial recovery plan, submit a three-year forecast of revenues and expenditures, consult with the Auditor of State regarding steps to bring its financial accounting and reporting into compliance with the Auditor's requirements, and submit regular reports related to the fiscal caution; and
  - Criteria for determining when to terminate a fiscal caution.
- Permits the Chancellor to impose limitations on a state institution that fails to comply with requirements related to a fiscal caution or fails to take decisive action to improve the institution's financial condition.
- Expressly permits the Chancellor, OBM, or the Auditor of State to conduct any audit or analysis necessary to assess the fiscal condition of any state institution.

Use of financial indicators to evaluate institutions

- Requires the Chancellor to use specified financial indicators to determine whether a state institution board of trustees has taken any action related to pausing or stopping enrollment, submitted a withdrawal of accreditation, or taken any other action indicating the institution will undergo a wind-down and dissolution.

Governance authorities

- Requires a governance authority appointed for a state institution under conservatorship to include one member with expertise in academic affairs and accreditation and one member with expertise in either state agency budgets or state institution finances.
- If the governance authority determines closure is necessary or is appointed to facilitate an orderly closure, requires the governance authority to include in its quarterly report all matters related to compliance with institution closure requirements specified by the Chancellor.

V. HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM REVIEW

- Requires each state institution and private nonprofit college or university annually to submit specified information to the Chancellor, including accreditation status, a plan for the indefinite preservation of student records in case of closure, external degree program evaluations, and degree programs eliminated in the previous year.
- Requires each for-profit career college or school to submit the same information to the State Board of Career Colleges and Schools and the Chancellor.
- Permits the Chancellor to rescind program approval or institutional authorization if a college, university, or state institution does not submit the required information.
- Permits the State Board to suspend, withdraw, or revoke a career college's or school's certificate of registration or program authorization if it fails to submit the required information.
- Requires each college, university, state institution, and for-profit career college or school to notify the Chancellor, and, in the case of a for-profit career college or school, the State Board, if specified events occur related to federal government or accrediting organization monitoring, accreditation findings, and financial issues.

VI. EASTERN GATEWAY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- Repeals the law establishing Eastern Gateway Community College on September 30, 2025, and requires the Chancellor to ensure continuity of postsecondary educational access in Eastern Gateway's former service district.
- Requires the Chancellor, or a third party authorized by the Chancellor, to serve indefinitely as the records custodian for Eastern Gateway upon that college ceasing operations.

VII. CENTERS FOR CIVICS, CULTURE, AND SOCIETY

- Requires the directors of the Centers for Civics, Culture, and Society to approve the center's courses that meet the state university's general education requirements, in addition to overseeing, developing, and approving the center's curriculum.
- Eliminates the requirement that the Civics Centers be physically located in a specific college at the university.

- Requires each university to provide adequate and appropriate space for its respective Civics Center.
- Establishes the Ohio Civics Board, consisting of the directors of the Civics Centers, to support the Civics Centers to more effectively pursue their missions of teaching and research.

VIII. OTHER

Student record preservation plans

- Requires each state institution and each private nonprofit college or university annually to certify to the Chancellor, and each private for-profit career college or school annually to certify to the State Board of Career Colleges and Schools, a plan to preserve student records indefinitely if the institution were to close.

Contracts with online program managers

- Establishes requirements for private nonprofit institutions of higher education, for-profit career colleges or schools, and state institutions of higher education that enter a contractual agreement with an online program manager to receive certain services to support an online degree program.

College credit for military training, experience, and coursework

- Permits the Chancellor to require higher education institutions and schools to establish a process to evaluate military training, experience, and coursework and to award appropriate equivalent college credit to veterans.

Strategic Square Footage Reduction Fund

- Creates the Strategic Square Footage Reduction Fund to make revolving loans to state higher education institutions for voluntary physical square footage reduction.
- Requires the Treasurer of State to transfer funds from the Ohio Tuition Reserve Fund to the Strategic Square Footage Reserve Fund.

Direct Admissions Pilot Program

- Establishes the Direct Admissions Pilot Program to notify students in participating high schools if they meet the admissions criteria for participating postsecondary institutions.

Higher Education Public Policy Research Consortium (PARTIALLY VETOED)

- Requires the Chancellor, in consultation with specified entities, to establish the Higher Education Public Policy Research Consortium to develop and maintain a biennial statewide research agenda.
- Establishes a process under which the Chancellor awards competitive research grants for faculty and post-graduate students whose research aligns with the biennial statewide research agenda.

- Would have limited research grant awards to a maximum of $10,000 (VETOED).

Accelerated College and Career Pathways Program

- Establishes the Accelerated College and Career Pathways Program under which each state university must establish at least one accelerated 90-hour degree program that is aligned to an in-demand career area by the 2027-2028 academic year.
- Requires each state university to develop, in consultation with local and regional primary and secondary education partners, model College Credit Plus (CCP) pathways that are aligned with the university's accelerated 90-hour degree programs and regional and state workforce needs.
- Requires each public and participating nonpublic secondary school to include those CCP pathways in its CCP information annually provided to students and parents.
- Prohibits the Chancellor from distributing SSI allocations to a state university in any fiscal year in which the university does not comply with the program requirements.
- Requires the Chancellor to establish criteria for approval of accelerated degree programs, provide technical assistance to universities for the program, identify how previously earned credit may apply to an accelerated degree program, and annually publish program data online.

AI Integration in Community Colleges Pilot Grant Program

- Establishes the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Integration in Community Colleges Pilot Program.
- Requires the Chancellor to award five $100,000 competitive grants in each fiscal year to community colleges, with preference to those with a strong commitment to integrating AI into education, workforce development, and industry alignment.
- Prescribes permissible uses of grant funds and requires the Chancellor to monitor performance and submit a report to the General Assembly.

Funding for Ohio Veterans Education Council members

- Requires the Chancellor to award scholarships in FY 2026 and FY 2027 to students who serve as Military Community Advocates.
- Requires the Chancellor to provide grants to military and veterans offices at institutions of higher education to support growth in private philanthropy, in collaboration with the National Veterans Leadership Foundation (NVLF), and sponsor staff from those offices to attend the NVLF's Advancement Institute.
- Requires the Chancellor to use appropriated funds to support NVLF administrative costs, create a website to connect veterans to programs and offerings at Ohio Veterans Education Council-member colleges and universities, administer membership and Ohio Purple Star status, facilitate information sharing, and support any other expenses as determined appropriate by the Chancellor, in consultation with NVLF.

Campus Community Grant Program

- Eliminates the Campus Community Grant Program.

Statewide FAFSA support system

- Eliminates the statewide system of regional FAFSA support teams.

"Teach CS" Grant Program

- Expands the scope of teachers to whom the "Teach CS" Grant Program applies.
- Clarifies the purposes for which grant funds may be used.

Reports and data reporting

- Reinstates the requirement that the Chancellor issue an annual report on College Credit Plus Program outcomes.
- Eliminates the annual report regarding the progress the state is making in increasing the percentage of adults in the state with a postsecondary degree or credential.
- Requires the Chancellor, in collaboration with the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, to establish the level of attainment necessary to achieve identified performance targets across a range of degrees and credentials by December 31, 2025.
- Requires the Chancellor to submit reports regarding the Campus Security Support Program and the Campus Student Safety Grant Program to chairpersons of the House and Senate higher education committees by July 1, 2026.
- Permits the Chancellor to use data already submitted to the Higher Education Information System and other public data exchanges, if the information is materially consistent, to fulfill reporting requirements.

As used in this chapter of the analysis:

A **state institution of higher education** means any of the 14 state universities and each community college, state community college, technical college, and university branch campus.

The **state universities** are the University of Akron, Bowling Green State University, Central State University, University of Cincinnati, Cleveland State University, Kent State University, Miami University, Northeast Ohio Medical University, Ohio University, Ohio State University, Shawnee State University, University of Toledo, Wright State University, and Youngstown State University.

Ohio technical centers are career-technical centers and schools that provide adult education and are recognized as such by the Chancellor of Higher Education.

I. IN-STATE UNDERGRADUATE TUITITION AND FEES

(R.C. 3345.48; Section 381.260)

State universities

Under law unchanged by the act, each state university must establish an undergraduate tuition guarantee program. Under that program, each entering cohort of in-state undergraduate students pays an immediate increased rate for tuition and general fees, but that rate is guaranteed not to increase again for that particular cohort for the next four years.

For cohorts entering in the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 academic years, the act requires each state university and university branch campus to limit tuition and fee increases to not more than 3% over what was charged to the cohort that entered in the previous academic year.

Community colleges

For the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 academic years, the act prohibits each community, state community, and technical college from increasing its tuition and general fees by more than $10 per credit hour over what it charged in the previous academic year. Those limits explicitly exclude student health insurance, fees for auxiliary goods or services provided to students at the cost incurred to the college, fees assessed to students as a pass-through for licensure and certification exams, fees for elective courses associated with travel experiences, elective service charges, fines, and voluntary sales transactions.

II. STUDENT FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS

Ohio College Opportunity Grant Program

(Section 381.490)

The act establishes maximum Ohio College Opportunity Grant award amounts for FY 2026 and FY 2027 for each higher education institutional sector. Specifically, for both years, the maximum amounts are as follows:

Institutional sector	Award amount
State institution of higher education	$4,000
Private nonprofit college or university	$5,000
Private for-profit career college or school	$2,000

The Ohio College Opportunity Grant Program is the state's main needs-based financial aid program for higher education students. For more information about the program, see the LSC Ohio College Opportunity Grant: Q&A (PDF) Members Brief, which is available on LSC's website: lsc.ohio.gov/publications.

Governor's Merit Scholarship

(R.C. 3333.1210; Section 381.400)

The act extends the Governor's Merit Scholarship Program to FY 2026 and FY 2027. Under the program, the Chancellor of Higher Education awards merit-based, four-year, $5,000 scholarships to Ohio students in the top 5% of their high school graduating class who attend state institutions of higher education or private nonprofit colleges or universities in Ohio.

In addition to extending the program, the act:

1. Permits the Chancellor to use the program's appropriations to pay for the program's administrative costs;

2. Clarifies that, to qualify, a student must be in the top 5% of the student's graduating class at the end of the student's *junior year*;

3. Expands eligibility to students enrolled in nonchartered nonpublic schools who meet the other criteria to receive a scholarship;

4. Clarifies that public or nonpublic schools must determine student eligibility using criteria established by the Chancellor, in consultation with the Director of Education and Workforce;

5. Requires school districts and nonpublic high schools to provide information requested by the Chancellor regarding scholarship eligibility determinations;

6. Prohibits the Chancellor from placing per-institution limits on the number of students receiving a scholarship.

Additionally, beginning with first-time scholarships awarded for FY 2027, a student who accepts a scholarship must sign a statement of commitment to reside in Ohio for the three years following the individual's graduation.

Ohio Work Ready Grant Program

(R.C. 3333.24)

The act changes student eligibility requirements for the Ohio Work Ready Grant Program. Beginning with first-time recipients on and after September 30, 2025, a student must be enrolled in a program that meets alternative criteria established by the Chancellor, in consultation with the Office of Workforce Transformation, based on Ohio's emerging workforce needs. Under prior law, a student had to be enrolled in a credit or noncredit program that leads to an industry-recognized credential and prepares a student for a job that is in-demand or critical as determined by the Office or submitted by a specified educational institution to meet approved regional workforce needs.

The act also specifies that the industry-recognized credential metric reported by the Chancellor includes technician-aligned associate degrees.

Rural Practice Incentive Program

(R.C. 3333.131, 3333.132, 3333.133, 3333.134, and 3333.135)

The act revises the operation of the Rural Practice Incentive Program. Under that program, the Chancellor may repay up to $50,000 of an educational loan taken by an attorney in exchange for the attorney's employment as a service attorney in an underserved community.

Expand attorney eligibility

The act expands eligibility for the program in several ways. Generally, in addition to meeting certain other conditions, continuing law qualifies for the program any attorney who agrees to employment in an underserved community and works in such a community for a specified amount of time each service year as a public defender, prosecuting attorney, or counsel appointed by a court or selected by an indigent person. The act expands eligibility by:

1. Qualifying an attorney who engages in the private practice of law, practices civil law, and works in an underserved community for a minimum of 520 hours each service year to participate;

2. Permitting an attorney to agree to *practice* in an underserved community, instead of agreeing to *employment* in it to participate;

3. Permitting an attorney who has been admitted to the practice of law in Ohio for less than 12 years, rather than eight years as under prior law, to participate; and

4. Permitting an individual enrolled in any other state or federally funded student loan repayment or debt forgiveness program to also participate in the Rural Practice Incentive Program, so long as the other program is not the federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness or the John R. Justice Loan Repayment programs. Prior law disqualified any individual enrolled in another state or federal program from participating.

Loans eligible for repayment

Continuing law limits the Chancellor to making repayments only for educational loans to attend law school. Under the act, the law school must meet accreditation standards established by the Ohio Supreme Court. Prior law required that the law school be either a U.S. law school accredited by the American Bar Association or a foreign law school for which an individual received a foreign equivalency evaluation.

Underserved community designation

Under continuing law, once every two years the Chancellor must designate by rule a county as an "underserved community" based on a ratio of attorneys to total county population. The act changes the factors in determining that ratio to include only attorneys who have trust accounts in which to deposit client funds (IOLTA accounts), and to change the ratio of these attorneys to county population to 1:1,500 from 1:700.

Approval of an application

The act eliminates the requirement that the Chancellor approve individuals for the program in a manner that is proportionate to the number of different types of attorneys who

apply to the program, with an aim toward disbursing loan repayments equitably among attorneys employed by a county prosecuting attorney, attorneys employed by a state, county, or joint county public defender, and attorneys employed as a service attorney.

Repayment under a promissory note

The act eliminates law that permitted the Chancellor to contract with an attorney participating in the program to establish the attorney's service obligations and obligation to repay the state in the event the attorney does not satisfy those obligations. Instead, it requires a participating attorney to sign a promissory note payable to the state if the individual does not satisfy those service obligations.

The amount payable to the state in the event the individual does not satisfy the service obligation must be the corresponding amount to the service obligation agreed upon in the promissory note – up to $30,000 for a three-year service obligation and up to an additional $20,000 for an additional fourth or fifth year of service.

The act requires an individual to remain employed and working as a service attorney in the underserved community for a time specified in the promissory note. The promissory note must include terms as prescribed by the Chancellor, including the individual's length of service in the underserved community and the maximum amount the Chancellor will repay on behalf of the individual.

The act eliminates the requirement that a contract include the number of weekly or yearly hours an attorney will be engaged in practice in the underserved community.

III. CONTINGENT SSI FUNDING (PARTIALLY VETOED)

(Section 381.250)

The act earmarks $75 million from the remainder amount of the State Share of Instruction (SSI) line item reserved for the university traditional SSI formula to be distributed based on each state university's percent share of traditional SSI formula funding. The act prohibits the Chancellor from distributing funds from the set-aside amount unless the state university has fully complied with specified laws enacted by S.B. 1 of the 136th General Assembly, which took effect on June 27, 2025. The specified laws require the following:[75]

1. Completion of required trustee training provided by the Chancellor;

2. Syllabus posting requirements;

3. Incorporating specified statements into a statement of commitment;

4. Adopting a policy containing specified requirements and prohibitions regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), intellectual diversity, and other concepts at the institution;

[75] See R.C. 3333.045, 3345.029, 3345.0216, 3345.0217, 3345.451, 3345.453, and 3345.591, not in the act, and R.C. 3345.382.

5. Developing an American civic literacy course and requiring completion of the course beginning with students graduating in the spring semester of the 2029-2030 academic year;

6. Establishing a written system of faculty evaluations;

7. Adopting and periodically updating a post-tenure review policy; and

8. A prohibition on accepting gifts or donations from the People's Republic of China and other related prohibitions and requirements.

The act requires each state university to submit a report demonstrating its compliance by March 1, 2026.

The Chancellor must distribute earmarked FY 2027 funds to compliant universities in monthly payments in the same manner as other SSI funds, and must reduce SSI payments for universities found noncompliant by the share of the earmarked FY 2027 funds calculated for that university.

The Governor vetoed provisions that would have done the following:

1. Required the compliance determination to be made by the House and Senate committees that consider higher education legislation;

2. Required state universities to submit reports on compliance to the committee chairs;

3. Required each committee to make a determination on compliance by March 31, 2026;

4. Permitted the Controlling Board to consider the release of the earmarked FY 2027 funds only for institutions found compliant; and

5. Subjected the release of earmarked funds to the Controlling Board's approval.

IV. STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Credential and work experience

(Section 381.740)

The act requires each state institution of higher education, prior to admitting any students applying after July 1, 2025, to consider the applicant's work experience and credentials as part of the institution's admissions process. The act states that an applicant's experience and credentials need not align to the program or discipline the applicant is pursing to be considered a positive reason for the state institution to admit the student.

Upon a student's acceptance, a state institution must either grant credit for prior learning or experience or detail the potential opportunities and required documentation to grant such credit based on the review of the information the student provided in an application.

General education requirements

(Section 381.750)

Under the act, each state institution board of trustees must formally review and evaluate the components of its general education curriculum and adopt a resolution acknowledging it has done so by December 31, 2026. Each board must submit its resolution to the Chancellor.

By March 31, 2027, each board of trustees must formally evaluate its general education curriculum to enhance content that furthers the state's postsecondary education attainment and workforce goals. In conducting the evaluation, the board must consider adjusting that curriculum in:

1. Civics, culture, and society, including U.S. and Ohio history, the foundations of American representative government, how to disagree in a civil manner, and the principles of civil discourse;

2. Artificial intelligence, STEM, and computational thinking;

3. Entrepreneurship and the principles of innovation;

4. Workforce readiness, including fundamental skills necessary for Ohio's graduates to gain employment in in-demand occupations.

Each board of trustees must adopt a resolution by June 30, 2027, summarizing the changes made to its general education curriculum as a result of the evaluation process. A copy of that resolution must be submitted to the Chancellor. The act subjects any adjustments to the curriculum to the Chancellor's program approval process as well.

The Chancellor must provide a copy of each resolution to the Governor, Speaker of the House, and the Senate President.

American civic literacy course exemptions

(R.C. 3345.382)

The act requires each state institution board of trustees to adopt a resolution specifying the conditions under which the institution's president or the president's designee may grant an exemption from the American civic literacy course requirement to a student who has completed at least three credit hours, or the equivalent, in a course in American history or American government. The act limits this exemption by requiring the alternative course to include the study of the same documents required for the American civic literacy course and by eliminating the exemption after the 2030-2031 academic year.

Guaranteed admission

(R.C. 3345.06)

The act guarantees each high school graduate who is in the top 10% of their graduating class as determined by the Chancellor admission to any state institution. If the student does not meet the standards for unconditional admission, a state university may delay main campus admission and instead admit the student to a university branch campus.

The act also guarantees admission to the main campus of any state institution for each student who is in the top 5% of their graduating class, provided the student meets the application and acceptance deadlines for admission to the main campus.

The act requires the Chancellor, in consultation with the Director of Education and Workforce, to identify a process to provide each state institution with a list of all students who are eligible for guaranteed admission.

Co-Op Internship Program

(R.C. 3345.83)

The act requires each state institution to develop and implement a Co-Op Internship Program by the 2027-2028 academic year. The program must align with JobsOhio's target economic sectors and connect students with Ohio-based employers to facilitate work-based learning opportunities related to the student's course of study. This may include apprenticeships, internships, externships, and co-ops. The act requires institutions to work with JobsOhio to develop and implement their program, including identifying industry and employer partners.

The Chancellor must consult with JobsOhio and other appropriate stakeholders to develop the goals, structure, and parameters of the program. The Chancellor may consult with other stakeholders as well.

Each institution annually must issue a report to the Chancellor on the status of the program beginning June 30 following the academic year in which the program is implemented. This report must include the number of participating students, which employers are partnering with the institution, and the number of participating students who have received or accepted offers of post-graduation employment as a direct result of their participation in the program.

Co-Op/Internship annual report

(R.C. 3333.041)

The act eliminates the annual report on the academic and economic impact of the Ohio Co-Op/Internship Program.

Curricular approval process

(R.C. 3345.457)

The act requires each state institution board of trustees to adopt a curricular approval process to establish and modify academic programs, curricula, courses, general education requirements, and degree programs. It declares that a board of trustees has ultimate authority to establish new academic programs, schools, colleges, institutes, departments, and centers at the institution. Further, the act prohibits a board of trustees from delegating its authority to adopt a curricular approval process or to approve or reject academic programs. The curricular approval process must do the following:

- Grant the faculty senate, or comparable representative body, the opportunity to provide advice, feedback, and recommendations on the establishment and modification of academic programs, curricula, courses, general education requirements, and degree programs;
- Clarify that all feedback and recommendations by the faculty senate, or comparable representative body, is advisory in nature; and
- Retain the board's final, overriding authority to approve or reject any establishment or modification of academic programs, curricula, courses, general education requirements, and degree programs.

Each board of trustees must develop its initial curricular approval process by March 30, 2026, and update it every five years. The act permits the state institution's president to grant a one-month extension to the initial six-month deadline. The board must submit each completed version of the curricular approval process to the Chancellor.

Fiscal caution status

(R.C. 3345.71 and 3345.721)

The act requires the Chancellor, in consultation with OBM, to adopt rules that include:

1. Criteria for determining when to review and declare a state institution of higher education under fiscal caution which may include:

a. A significant drop in enrollment from the prior year;

b. A decline in enrollment for consecutive years;

c. A significant increase in enrollment;

d. A significant increase in adjunct faculty;

e. An increase in student complaints;

f. A substantial increase in the number of third-party service providers who are paid based on success;

g. Federal financial aid processing delays;

h. Reduced or increased reliance on SSI;

i. Receipt of substantial nonrecurring revenue, from any source, that could signify a structural budget deficit;

j. Failure to reconcile or file annual reports promptly, which may cause a delay in completing a yearly audit even if granted an extension;

k. A lack of proper institutional segregation of critical duties, functions, or responsibilities;

l. Significant turnover of faculty, staff, or administrators;

m. A significant amount of past due student receivables;

n. A significant increase in tuition or fee waivers;

o. Change in accreditation status by a nationally recognized accrediting agency;

p. A significant increase in indebtedness;

q. A federal program review or actions taken by a federal agency that adversely affects the institution's finances, cash management, or educational program offerings; and

r. Significant changes in an institution's educational program eligibility or compliance with satisfactory academic progress requirements in federal law, including an increase in the use of correspondence or asynchronous learning materials.[76]

2. A requirement that a state institution declared to be on fiscal caution submit a financial recovery plan, within a defined period of time after the declaration as determined by the Chancellor, that may include:

a. Projections of revenue and expenditures over a three-year time horizon and on other time horizons requested by the Chancellor;

b. A comprehensive review of current staffing levels, a comparison of staffing levels to the number of enrolled students, and a five-year historical summary of staffing levels;

c. A review of the most recent submission of institutional recommendations for courses and programs based on enrollment and duplication with other state institutions, as required under continuing law,[77] and submission of revised recommendations;

d. A review of any approved tuition waivers, tuition guarantees, reciprocity agreements, or scholarship programs;

e. A plan to reduce expenditures over a 6-month, 12-month, 18-month, and 24-month period, to align ongoing revenue with ongoing expenses;

f. A review of contracts that are the largest portion of the state institution's expenditures; and

g. A program viability analysis, or analyses.[78]

3. A requirement that a state institution declared to be on fiscal caution submit a three-year forecast of revenues and expenditures, approved in a resolution adopted by the institution's board of trustees. The three-year forecast must be structurally balanced based on a set of underlying assumptions, including enrollment projections, tuition revenue, and state funding levels, that are evidence-based and practicable.

4. A requirement that a state institution declared to be on fiscal caution consult with the Auditor of State regarding any necessary or appropriate steps to bring the books of account, accounting systems, and financial procedures and reports of the institution into compliance with requirements prescribed by the Auditor of State regarding desirable modifications and supplementary systems and procedures pertinent to the institution. The Auditor of State must provide a written report to the institution's board of trustees outlining the nature of the financial accounting and reporting problems of the institution and recommendations for actions to be undertaken to correct the financial accounting and reporting problems. If requested by the

[76] 34 C.F.R. 668.34.

[77] R.C. 3345.35, not in the act.

[78] R.C. 3333.073, not in the act.

institution or recommended by the Chancellor, the Auditor of State may additionally perform a performance audit of the institution.

5. A requirement that for the duration of a fiscal caution, a state institution must submit regular reports on any of the above matters or new matters identified by the Auditor of State or the Chancellor as contributing to the reason for the declaration, preventing the recovery of the institution, or the inability to be removed from fiscal caution; and

6. Criteria for determining when to declare the termination of the fiscal caution of a state institution.

The act requires a state institution to provide the Chancellor with all information requested in the time and manner determined by the Chancellor. Failure to comply in a satisfactory manner, as determined by the Chancellor, may result in a declaration of a fiscal watch.[79] The act also permits the Chancellor to impose limitations on a state institution that fails to comply with the law or rules adopted regarding fiscal cautions or that fails to take decisive action to improve the institution's financial condition. Those limitations may include:

1. Limitations on eligibility to participate in grants and programs administered by the Chancellor;

2. Limitations on approval of a new degree program or associated certificates;

3. Suspension of additional enrollment in an educational program;

4. Restriction of an increase in any special fee or a creation of a new fee;

5. Limitations on the power of the board of trustees to enter into any new or renewed contracts without prior approval from the Chancellor; and

6. Withholding approval of any Controlling Board request for capital projects.

Finally, the act expressly permits the Chancellor, OBM, or the Auditor of State to conduct any audit or analysis necessary to assess the fiscal condition of any state institution.

Use of financial indicators to evaluate institutions

(R.C. 3345.74)

The act requires the Chancellor to use the financial indicators and standards adopted by the Chancellor under continuing law to determine if a state institution board of trustees has taken any action related to pausing or stopping enrollment, submitted a withdrawal of accreditation, or taken any other action indicating it will no longer offer educational activity or will undergo a wind down and dissolution of existence.

[79] R.C. 3345.72, not in the act.

Under continuing law, the Chancellor must adopt financial indicators and standards to determine whether a state institution under a fiscal watch is experiencing sufficient fiscal difficulties to warrant the appointment of a conservator.[80]

Governance authorities

(R.C. 3345.75)

The act requires a governance authority appointed for a state institution under conservatorship to include one member with expertise in academic affairs and accreditation and one member with expertise in either state agency budgets or state institution finances.

The act also requires a governance authority to include in its quarterly report if the governance authority determines closure is necessary or, if the governance authority is appointed to facilitate an orderly closure, all closure compliance as specified by the Chancellor.

V. HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM REVIEW

(R.C. 1713.041, 3332.21, and 3333.074)

Annual reporting

The act requires each state institution of higher education, private nonprofit college or university, and for-profit career college or school to annually report information to the Chancellor and, for for-profit career colleges and schools, to the State Board of Career Colleges and Schools. This information includes the following:

1. Verification of current accreditation status and a copy of the most recent institutional report from the Higher Learning Commission, for state institutions, or from the institution's accrediting organization, for private nonprofit colleges or universities and for-profit career colleges and schools;

2. A plan to preserve student records indefinitely in the event of closure of the institution or discontinuation of service. The plan must include a method by which students and alumni of the institution may retrieve student records by request. The plan also must include a designation and signed confirmation of an official custodian of student records. Student records preserved under the plan must include academic transcripts, financial aid documents, international student forms, and tax information.

3. The results of any external degree program evaluations that occurred in the last year;

4. Any degree programs eliminated in the last year; and

5. Any other information requested by the Chancellor or, for for-profit career colleges and schools, the State Board.

Private nonprofit colleges and universities and for-profit career colleges and schools must also provide a list of current degree programs offered in Ohio and the latest financial statement

[80] R.C. 3345.73, not in the act.

for the most recent fiscal year compiled and audited by an independent certified public accountant, including any management letters provided by the independent auditor.

If a state institution fails to submit the required information, or if the Chancellor finds the information is insufficient, the Chancellor may rescind program approval. If a private nonprofit college or university fails to submit the required information or the Chancellor finds the submitted information is insufficient, the Chancellor may suspend, withdraw, or revoke the college or university's institutional authorization or a program's authorization. If a for-profit career college or school fails to submit the required information or the State Board or the Chancellor finds the submitted information is insufficient, the State Board may suspend, withdraw, or revoke a school's certificate of registration or program authorization.

Notice requirements

The act requires each state institution, private nonprofit college or university, and for-profit career college or school to immediately inform the Chancellor and, for for-profit career colleges and schools, the State Board, if the institution does any of the following:

1. Receives notice from the federal government or an institutional accrediting organization that the institution is subject to heightened reporting standards or special monitoring status, such as the U.S. Department of Education's heightened cash monitoring process;

2. Receives preliminary or final accreditation findings;

3. Becomes the subject of an investigation by a government agency related to the institution's academic quality, financial stability, or student consumer protection;

4. Fails to make any payments to applicable retirement systems. For state institutions, the act presents the Public Employees Retirement System or the State Teachers Retirement System as examples;

5. Fails to make any scheduled payroll payments;

6. Fails to make any payments to vendors when due as a result of a cash deficiency or a substantial deficiency in the payment processing system of the institution;

7. Fails to make any scheduled payment of principal or interest for short- or long-term debt;

8. Makes budget revisions resulting in a substantially reduced ending fund balance or larger deficit; or

9. Becomes aware of significant negative variance between the most recently adopted annual budget and actual revenues or expenses as projected at the end of the fiscal year.

A state institution must also immediately notify the Chancellor if the institution requests an advance of a state subsidy.

The act clarifies that a document received by the Chancellor from a state institution, private nonprofit college or university, or for-profit career college or school pertaining to heightened reporting standards, special monitoring status, accrediting findings, or government

investigations that is confidential under federal law is not subject to release under a public record request until that document is released publicly by the appropriate entity. Further, for private nonprofit colleges and universities and for-profit career colleges and schools, financial documentation received by the Chancellor is not considered a public record under the act.

VI. EASTERN GATEWAY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

(R.C. 3354.24, repealed; R.C 3333.053; conforming change in R.C. 3354.19; Sections 381.730 and 733.40)

The act addresses the recent decision to dissolve Eastern Gateway Community College, which had its main campus in Steubenville, in several ways. First, it repeals the law establishing Eastern Gateway. The Chancellor, or a third party authorized through an agreement with the Chancellor, must serve indefinitely as the records custodian for the college upon the college ceasing operations. The Chancellor also must, in consultation with postsecondary educational institutions and other stakeholders, monitor and evaluate the ongoing availability of postsecondary educational offers in Eastern Gateway's former four-county service district – Jefferson, Columbiana, Mahoning, and Trumbull counties.

To the extent practicable, the Chancellor must seek to ensure strong continuity of postsecondary educational access to residents of the district, with a particular focus on access to programs aligned with regional workforce priorities. The Chancellor may seek favorable outcomes by engaging with other postsecondary educational institutions to encourage access to educational opportunities, including outcomes associated with academic program offers, program-related equipment, or physical facilities.

Finally, the act specifically states that nothing prohibits any other community, state community, or technical college from serving Eastern Gateway's former district. Though, such college is still subject to the Chancellor's academic program approval process and must seek approval under rules adopted by the Chancellor.

Eastern Gateway announced a pause in registration and enrollment for future semesters on February 21, 2024. On May 15, 2024, it further announced it would dissolve by October 31, 2024. Its last day of instruction was July 28, 2024.[81]

VII. CENTERS FOR CIVICS, CULTURE, AND SOCIETY

(R.C. 3335.39, 3339.06, 3344.07, 3345.58, 3352.16, and 3364.07)

The act makes several changes regarding the operation of the Cleveland State University Center for Civics, Culture, and Society; the Miami University Center for Civics, Culture, and Society; the Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society at Ohio State University; the Institute of American Constitutional Thought and Leadership at the University of Toledo; and the Wright State University Center for Civics, Culture, and Workforce Development ("Civics Centers").

[81] See Eastern Gateway Community College Information on the Department's website, highered.ohio.gov, and The College is Closed on Eastern Gateway's website, egcc.edu.

Curriculum

The act requires the directors of the Civics Centers to approve the center's courses that meet the university's general education requirements, in addition to overseeing, developing, and approving the center's curriculum.

Civics Centers location

The act eliminates the requirement that the Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society within Ohio State University, the University of Toledo Institute of American Constitutional Thought and Leadership, the Miami University Center for Civics, Culture, and Society, and the Cleveland State University Center for Civics, Culture, and Society be physically located in the College of Public Affairs, the College of Law, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Levin College of Public Affairs and Education, respectively.

The act requires each university to provide adequate and appropriate space for its respective Civics Center, as jointly determined by the center's director and either the university president or provost, and prohibits each university from charging or assessing overhead or indirect fees, costs, expenses, or charges to the center.

The act also eliminates the requirement that the director of each Civics Center must consult with a respective faculty member as follows: for Ohio State University, the Dean of the College of Public Affairs, for University of Toledo, the Dean of the College of Law, for Miami University, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, for Cleveland State University, the Dean of the College of Public Affairs.

Ohio Civics Board

The act establishes the Ohio Civics Board, consisting of the directors of the Civics Centers as ex officio members. No additional appointment or confirmation by any authority is required for membership.

The board must:

1. Support the Civics Centers to more effectively pursue their missions of teaching and research in the historical ideas, traditions, and texts that have shaped American and Ohio constitutional order and society;

2. Aid voluntary cooperation coordination between the centers, including coordinating intercollegiate efforts and initiatives among the centers to promote collaboration and serve the entire state of Ohio;

3. Advise the General Assembly and Chancellor on matters pertaining to civic education, including best practices, program development, and statewide initiatives to enhance civic literacy and engagement;

4. Advise the General Assembly and Chancellor on curriculum development and standards at state institutions of higher education and public primary and secondary education providers, and on the centers' operations;

5. Assist the academic councils of the centers in fulfilling their statutory duties, including facilitating the selection process for directors;

6. Serve without compensation, but requires a member be reimbursed for a member's actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of official board member duties;

7. Annually appoint a chair, who must preside over meetings and serve as the primary liaison to the Chancellor and the General Assembly, and a vice-chair; and

8. Meet as necessary at the call of the chairperson or on written request of three or more members of the board but must meet at least twice per year.

The board must submit an annual report to the General Assembly and the Chancellor by the December 1 each year. The report must detail the board's activities, recommendations, and findings related to civic education, higher education curricula, primary and secondary public education curricula, and the operations of the centers.

The board may, in consultation with the Chancellor, adopt rules as necessary to fulfill its requirements.

VIII. OTHER

Student record preservation plans

(R.C. 1713.033, 3332.17, and 3345.601)

The act requires each state institution and private nonprofit college or university to annually certify to the Chancellor, and each private for-profit career college or school to annually certify to the State Board of Career Colleges and Schools, a plan to preserve student records indefinitely if it were to cease operations. The plan must include the designation and signed confirmation of an official custodian of student records. If the Chancellor determines it necessary for a state institution or nonprofit college or university, or if the State Board determines it necessary for a career college or school, the Chancellor or the State Board may require an institution to produce an executed agreement with the designated custodian of students that is paid in full, to ensure the institution's plan can be implemented.

The act permits the Chancellor to consult with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), the State Board of Career Colleges and Schools, and other appropriate entities to establish plans, processes, and procedures for institutions and schools to provide indefinite access to student records. Similarly, the State Board's Director may consult with the Chancellor, the HLC, and other appropriate entities for the same purposes.

Contracts with online program managers

(R.C. 1713.03, 1713.032, 3332.22, and 3333.0420)

The act defines an "online program manager" as an entity that is not an institution of higher education as defined under The Higher Education Act of 1965[82] that enters into an

[82] 20 U.S.C. 1001.

agreement with (1) a private nonprofit institution of higher education, (2) a for-profit career college or school, or (3) a state institution of higher education, to provide marketing and recruitment services and at least one additional service, including course design, technology, or faculty training, to support an online degree program.

The act requires any institution that enters into a contract with an online program manager, to:

1. Ensure the contract is in compliance with relevant program standards and requirements;

2. Post on each online degree program website it maintains that it utilizes an online program manager for services; and

3. Require the online program manager to identify itself when providing services to students.

Further, the act prohibits any of those institutions from permitting an online program manager to control, make decisions regarding, administer, or disburse student financial aid.

Each private nonprofit institution must also disclose on its annual report to the Chancellor any contract entered with an online program manager. The act states that a contract specifically between a private nonprofit institution and an online program manager is not subject to the public records law.

College credit for military training, experience, and coursework

(R.C. 3333.164)

The act permits the Chancellor to require a state institution of higher education, private nonprofit college and university, and private, for-profit career college and school to establish a process to systematically evaluate military training, experience, and coursework and to award appropriate equivalent college credit to a student who is a veteran of the armed forces.

Strategic Square Footage Reduction Fund

(R.C. 3333.96 and 3334.11)

The act creates in the state treasury the Strategic Square Footage Reduction Fund to make revolving loans to state institutions of higher education that enable the voluntary reduction of physical square footage. The fund must consist of money credited or transferred to it, grants, gifts, and contributions made directly to it, or any funds transferred from the Ohio Tuition Trust Reserve Fund.

The Chancellor must administer and award the revolving loans, in consultation with the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (FCC), and establish:

1. Procedures and forms by which state institutions may apply for a loan;

2. A competitive process for ranking applicants and awarding the loans, with priority consideration given to state institutions that have experienced a decrease in their general student population, as determined by the Chancellor; and

3. Procedures and timelines for distributing loans and collecting payments for the Strategic Square Footage Reduction Fund.

Application

The act requires each state institution to include in its application:

1. The extent to which the square footage may have value if sold or reallocated to serve other purposes, which may include K-12, career-technical, or adult educational purposes, community interests, or business and industry partnerships;

2. The relative age and condition of the facilities to be deconstructed;

3. Historical enrollment patterns as well as future enrollment projections;

4. The composition of classes offered in person versus in an online format;

5. The level of deferred maintenance;

6. The prior level of state investment;

7. The amount of annual operating expenses defrayed by eliminating the square footage; and

8. A report from OBM detailing the extent and status of past capital budget appropriations supporting the project and the existence of any outstanding bonded debt derived from that support.

The Chancellor and the FCC must consider this information supplied by a state institution in its application when making final awards.

Loan requirements

Each state institution that receives a loan must certify to the Chancellor a summary of financial information regarding the loan. Prior to a state institution using the loan to pay demolition costs of a facility, the following must occur:

1. The state institution board of trustees must adopt a resolution approving the demolition; and

2. Any net proceeds received from any demolition of property must, at the direction of the OBM Director, be credited to the Strategic Square Footage Reduction Fund.

The act prohibits each state institution receiving a loan for the reduction of physical square footage from constructing any new facility during the period in which demolition is occurring.

Transfer of funds from the Ohio Tuition Trust Reserve Fund

The act requires the Treasurer of State, upon request by the Chancellor and approval by the OBM Director, to transfer funds from the Ohio Tuition Reserve Fund to the Strategic Square Footage Reduction Fund.

Direct Admissions Pilot Program

(Section 381.770)

Purpose

The act requires the Chancellor, in consultation with the Director of Education and Workforce, to establish the Direct Admissions Pilot Program. Under the pilot program, the Chancellor must determine whether high school seniors in participating schools meet the admissions criteria for participating postsecondary institutions. The Chancellor then must notify participating students of the determination. The act expressly prohibits requiring any student, school, or institution to participate in the pilot program.

Operation

To facilitate the pilot program, the Chancellor must establish a process that uses a student's academic record to determine whether the student meets the admissions requirements. To the extent practicable, and in accordance with applicable law, the Chancellor must use existing student information systems to automate the process. The Chancellor also must use information held by the student's school to minimize the need for a student to provide additional information.

The Chancellor may establish eligibility requirements for students, schools, and postsecondary institutions who elect to participate in the pilot program. The Chancellor also may consult with stakeholders and form advisory councils as necessary to design and operate the pilot program.

The Chancellor must "endeavor" to implement the pilot program so students graduating in the 2026-2027 school year may participate in it. Conversely, the act also authorizes the Chancellor to terminate the pilot program if it is impracticable to operate.

Participating schools and institutions

The act permits any public or chartered nonpublic school to apply to participate in the pilot program. Similarly, any state institution of higher education, private nonprofit college or university, or Ohio technical center may apply to participate. The Chancellor must approve the application of any school or institution that meets any eligibility requirements established by the Chancellor.

The governing body of a participating school may adopt a policy authorizing any high school it operates to participate in the pilot program. Within 90 days of adopting a policy, the governing body must transmit it to the Chancellor and the Director. The governing body also must develop a procedure to determine whether a student who wants to participate in the pilot program meets any eligibility requirements established by the Chancellor.

Report

The Chancellor, in consultation with the Director, must issue a report on the pilot program at least once each school year. The report must include information about the number of students who participate in the program. It also must evaluate, to the extent practicable, the impact of the pilot program on postsecondary outcomes for students from populations

traditionally underserved in higher education. The Chancellor must submit the report to the Governor, the Senate President, the Speaker of the House, the Director of Education and Workforce, the OBM Director, and the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation.

Higher Education Public Policy Research Consortium (PARTIALLY VETOED)

(R.C. 3333.952)

The act requires the Chancellor, in consultation with the Department of Education and Workforce, Department of Job and Family Services, the Inter-University Council, the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, and other relevant entities, to establish the Higher Education Public Policy Research Consortium. The Consortium must develop and maintain a biennial statewide research agenda that identifies key policy challenges and research priorities that are crucial to the state's future, drawing on input from policymakers, practitioners, and community stakeholders. The goals of the agenda are to:

1. Provide policymakers and practitioners with timely, relevant, and rigorous research findings on problems of significant importance to the state's citizens, enabling informed decision-making and effective policies;

2. Increase the active engagement of the state's higher education institutions in addressing real-world issues of direct relevance to the state's social, economic, and civic well-being, fostering a stronger connection between academia and public service; and

3. Cultivate the next generation of policy-focused researchers and practitioners by providing valuable research and opportunities to faculty and post-graduate students.

The act requires the Chancellor to:

1. Award competitive research grants to faculty and post-graduate students whose research aligns with the biennial statewide research agenda, with half of the grant to be disbursed upon grant approval and the remaining half released upon successful completion of the research and submission of the final report;

2. Award grants in a tiered structure based on project scope and complexity;

3. Establish a clear rubric to evaluate proposed research projects that contains a peer-reviewed process, involving both academic experts and relevant practitioners; and

4. Manage the grant process and disseminate research findings through the Department's website, policy briefs, annual presentations to the higher education committees of the House and Senate, and community forums.

The Governor vetoed a provision that would have limited research grant awards to $10,000.

Accelerated College and Career Pathways Program

(R.C. 3333.97 and 3345.89)

The act establishes the Accelerated College and Career Pathways Program, under which each state university must establish at least one accelerated 90-hour degree program aligned to

an in-demand career area by the 2027-2028 academic year. Each university has authority over the number and types of accelerated degrees to be offered.

The act requires each state university to:

- Include accelerated 90-hour degree programs in course and program catalogues;
- Ensure accelerated 90-hour degree programs are properly accredited and meet the requirements set by the Chancellor for those programs; and
- Work collaboratively with local and regional business community partners to identify in-demand career areas during program development;

Each state university also must report to the Chancellor data related to accelerated degree programs, including:

- The accelerated 90-hour degree programs the state university offers;
- The number of students participating in each program;
- The number of students who complete each program;
- Any additional information required by the Chancellor.

Model College Credit Plus pathways

The act requires each state university to develop, in consultation with local and regional primary and secondary education partners, model College Credit Plus (CCP) pathways that are aligned with the university's accelerated 90-hour degree programs and regional and state workforce needs. Each public and participating nonpublic secondary school must include those model CCP pathways as part of the CCP information schools must provide to students enrolled in grades 6-11 and their parents prior to February 1 each year under continuing law.

The act prohibits the Chancellor from distributing SSI funds to a state university in any fiscal year that the university does not comply with the Accelerated College and Career Pathways Program.

Program criteria and technical support

The Chancellor must determine and provide the criteria for approving accelerated 90 hour degree programs established under the program. The Chancellor also must provide technical assistance to each state university during the development of accelerated 90-hour degree programs and aligned model CCP pathways. Finally, the Chancellor must publish annually on the Chancellor's website the information reported by the state universities.

Credit transfer

The Chancellor also must identify how students can count credit earned in high school, a nontraditional training program, another state institution of higher education, or work experiences as part of a state university's 90-hour degree programs. Each university must then accept credit from incoming students that meet the Chancellor's criteria.

AI Integration in Community Colleges Pilot Grant Program

(Section 381.165)

The act requires the Chancellor to create the Artificial Intelligence Integration in Community Colleges Pilot Grant Program to provide financial assistance to community colleges to implement artificial intelligence (AI) initiatives. It requires the Chancellor to award five competitive grants of $100,000 each in each year to community colleges, technical colleges, and state community colleges.

The Chancellor must establish procedures and criteria for awarding the grants, with preference given to community colleges that show a strong commitment and track record to integrating AI into education, workforce development and industry alignment. The act permits the funds to be used for:

1. Integrating AI curriculum into credential programs;

2. Establishing AI-based College Credit Plus Program offerings;

3. Training faculty and staff on the uses of AI technologies relevant to local industry or state needs;

4. Supporting students with practical AI skills through certifications and project-based learning;

5. Purchasing AI hardware and software;

6. Utilizing AI in streamlining administrative functions and student services; and

7. Contracting with vendors to provide any or all of these services.

The Chancellor must monitor grant recipient performance and submit a report with legislative recommendations for further development of the pilot program to the General Assembly upon the completion of the program.

Funding for Ohio Veterans Education Council members

(Section 381.215)

The act requires the Chancellor to use appropriated funds to support higher education institutions that are members of the Ohio Veterans Education Council in FY 2026 and FY 2027. The Chancellor may consult with the Director of Veterans Services as needed.

The act requires the Chancellor to use up to $213,750 in each fiscal year to provide awards of $2,500 per student to students working as Military Community Advocates at institutions of higher education that are members of the Ohio Veterans Education Council. Specifically, the Chancellor must provide awards to up to six students at state universities and up to three students at community colleges or private nonprofit universities or colleges.

The Chancellor must use $255,000 in each fiscal year to provide grants for military and veterans offices at institutions of higher education to support growth in private philanthropy, in collaboration with the National Veterans Leadership Foundation.

The Chancellor must use $91,800 in each fiscal year to sponsor staff from military and veterans offices at institutions of higher education to attend the National Veterans Leadership Foundation's Advancement Institute.

The act requires the remaining funds to be used to:

1. Support the administrative costs of the National Veterans Leadership Foundation;

2. Create a website to connect veterans to programs and offerings at all colleges and universities that are members of the Ohio Veterans Education Council;

3. Administer membership and Ohio Purple Star status;

4. Facilitate information sharing; and

5. Support any other expenses as determined appropriate by the Chancellor, in consultation with the National Veterans Leadership Foundation.

Campus Community Grant Program

(R.C. 3333.801, repealed)

The act abolishes the Campus Community Grant Program. Under the program, the Chancellor provided funding to institutionally sanctioned student organizations at state institutions of higher education and private colleges to support intergroup and interfaith outreach and cultural competency between institutionally sanctioned student organizations.

Statewide FAFSA support system

(R.C. 3333.303, repealed)

The act eliminates the statewide system of regional Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) support teams established to support public schools with FAFSA completion and college access programming.

"Teach CS" Grant Program

(R.C. 3333.129)

The act expands the scope of teachers to whom the "Teach CS" Grant Program applies. It revises the stated purpose of the program as "to support increasing the number of teachers who qualify to teach computer science or expanding the knowledge of existing teachers." Under former law, the purpose was to fund coursework, materials, and exams to support the increasing number of existing teachers who qualify to teach computer science.

The act also clarifies that grant funds may be used for coursework, materials, exams, teacher stipends, performance-based incentives, and other purposes as determined by the Chancellor to support the expansion of computer science education.

Reports and data reporting

Annual College Credit Plus Program outcomes report

(R.C. 3365.15)

The act eliminates the December 2023 sunset on the law requiring the Chancellor and the Department of Education and Workforce to submit a report on the outcomes of CCP to the Governor, the Senate President, the Speaker of the House, and the chairs of the Senate and House education committees. As a result, the act permanently reinstates the requirement that that report be submitted by the end of December each year.

Attainment level report

(R.C. 3333.0415, repealed and reenacted)

The act eliminates the requirement for the Chancellor, in collaboration with the Department of Education and Workforce, to prepare an annual report regarding the progress Ohio is making in increasing the percentage of adults in the state with a college degree, industry certificate, or other postsecondary credential to 65% by 2025. Instead, the act requires the Chancellor, in collaboration with the Department and the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, to establish the level of attainment necessary to achieve identified performance targets across a range of degrees and credentials by December 31, 2025.

Campus security and safety programs reports

(Section 381.220)

The act requires the Chancellor to submit reports by July 1, 2026, regarding both the Campus Student Safety Grant Program and the Campus Security Support Program to the chairpersons of the House and Senate higher education committees. Each report must include at least information about the number of award recipients and how the funds have been spent under each program.

Under the Campus Security Support Program, the Chancellor distributes funds to institutionally sanctioned student organizations located on or off campus and affiliated with communities that are at risk for increased threats of violent crime, terror attacks, hate crimes, or harassment to enhance security measures and increase student safety.

Under the Campus Student Safety Grant Program, the Chancellor awards grants to institution of higher education to enhance security measures and increase student safety, with priority given to institutions that demonstrate increased threats of violent crime, terror attacks, hate crimes, or harassment toward students and institutionally sanctioned student organizations.[83]

[83] R.C. 3333.80, not in act.

Higher education data reporting

(R.C. 3333.04)

The act permits the Chancellor, to reduce duplicative reporting, to use data or information submitted to the higher education information system and other public data exchanges, to fulfill reporting requirements, so long as the information is materially consistent.