

Executive

As Reported By House Finance

OSBCD3 St. Rita's School for the Deaf

R.C. 3325.01, 3301.0711, 3325.011, 3325.012, 3325.03, 3325.08, 3325.09, 3325.11, 3325.12, 3325.13, 3325.15, 3325.18, 3365.01, 3365.032, 3365.07, Section 207.60.

No provision.

Permits the ODBES Superintendent to create additional divisions to meet the educational needs of students throughout the state who have multiple disabilities if one of the disabilities is vision related, hearing related, or related to communication such that the student would benefit from the use of American Sign Language ("ASL").

No provision.

Generally includes students with multiple disabilities as described above in all continuing law provisions regarding services and funding overseen by ODBES for students who are blind, visually impaired, deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind.

No provision.

Designates Rita Community School, currently operating as St. Rita School for the Deaf, a chartered nonpublic school in Hamilton County, as a division of ODBES and subjects the school to regulations adopted by DEW. Clarifies that Rita Community School is not considered a "community school" (also known as a charter school nationally) under continuing law.

No provision.

Subjects students in Rita Community School to the same assessment requirements as other public school students.

No provision.

Permits students at Rita Community School to participate in the College Credit Plus Program in the same manner as students at the State School for the Deaf and the State School for the Blind.

No provision.

Requires the ODBES Superintendent to grant a diploma or honor's diploma to a student enrolled in Rita Community School who fulfills the requirements for that diploma that apply to students enrolled in the State School for the Blind or the State School for the Deaf under continuing law.

No provision.

Requires ODBES to use funds in the Ohio Deaf and Blind Education Services Student Activity and Work-Study Fund for Rita Community School in addition to the fund's other purposes under continuing law.

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No provision.

Requires purchases from the food service program of Rita Community School to be paid into the Ohio Deaf and Blind Education Services Employees Food Service Fund for the purposes of that fund under continuing law.

No provision.

Permits ODBES to receive and administer any gifts, donations, or bequests given to it for Rita Community School.

No provision.

Requires money deposited with the ODBES Superintendent by parents, relatives, guardians, and friends for the special benefit of any student at Rita Community School to remain in the hands of the Superintendent accordingly. Requires the ODBES Superintendent to deposit that money into one or more personal deposit funds for the student and to keep itemized accounts of the receipt and disposition of the money. Requires the ODBES Superintendent, if a student is no longer enrolled in Rita Community School and has not claimed the money for at least one year, to transfer that money to the Rita Community School Educational Program Expenses Fund.

No provision.

Establishes the Rita Community School Educational Program Expenses Fund to be used for educational programs, after-school activities, and expenses associated with student activities and clubs at Rita Community School.

No provision.

Declares the intent of the General Assembly that the State of Ohio purchase St. Rita School for the Deaf for an amount to be determined. Requires the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to determine the amount of funding needed for the state to purchase the building in which the school is housed and the accompanying 20 acres of land on which the building is located so that the school may become a public school under the supervision of ODBES.

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Fiscal effect: The bill earmarks up to \$500,000 in FY 2026 from GRF ALI 226321, Operations, to support the transition of St. Rita School for the Deaf to Rita Community School (see OSBCD4). Increases state expenditures to purchase the building and land, at an amount that DAS will determine, and on ongoing basis depending on enrollment, student needs, and educational programming beginning in FY 2027, when the transition is complete. In FY 2025, the school's enrollment is 58 students. Of those, 25 are on either an Autism or Jon Peterson Special Needs state scholarship. State costs to operate the school will be partially offset by lower scholarship costs since the state would not pay for scholarships for the students once the school becomes a public school. In FY 2025, scholarships for the students likely total in the \$500,000 to \$600,000 range.

OSBCD1 Diploma requirements

R.C. 3325.08

Requires the Superintendent of Ohio Deaf and Blind Education Services (ODBES) to award a diploma or honors diploma to a student enrolled in the Ohio State School for the Blind or Ohio School for the Deaf who has successfully completed the curriculum in any high school and meets additional existing requirements for that diploma.

Fiscal effect: None. The aim of this provision is to align the ODBES law with general graduation requirements.

R.C. 3325.08

Same as the Executive.

Fiscal effect: Same as the Executive.

OSBCD2 Program Expenses Fund investment earnings

R.C. 3325.16, 3325.17

Requires investment earnings on money in the Educational Program Expense funds of the State School for the Deaf (Fund 4M00) and the State School for the Blind (Fund 4M50) be credited to the funds.

Fiscal effect: Annual gain to Funds 4M00 and 4M50 depending on the interest rate environment and their respective fund balances.

R.C. 3325.16, 3325.17

Same as the Executive.

Fiscal effect: Same as the Executive.

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OSBCD4 Operations

No provision.

Section: 391.20

Earmarks up to \$500,000 in FY 2026 from GRF ALI 226321, Operations, for ODBES to transition the staff, contracts, subscriptions, and equipment of St. Rita School for the Deaf to a public school known as Rita Community School under the supervision of ODBES. Requires the transition to be completed by June 30, 2026 and the school to be fully under the supervision of ODBES beginning with the 2026-2027 school year.