



# Ohio Legislative Service Commission

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## Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

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**Bill:** [H.B. 407 of the 128th G.A.](#)

**Date:** March 9, 2010

**Status:** As Introduced

**Sponsor:** Rep. Zehringer and Okey

**Local Impact Statement Procedure Required:** No — Permissive

**Contents:** Allows school districts and STEM schools to make up excess calamity days by requiring students to complete lessons posted online

### State Fiscal Highlights

- The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) expects little to no additional expenditures as a result of reviewing plans submitted by school districts or STEM schools requiring students to make up excess calamity days online.

### Local Fiscal Highlights

- School districts and STEM schools choosing to make up excess calamity days online will likely experience costs and savings related to that decision.
- Any potential costs or savings for teachers will likely depend on contract negotiations that substitute the preparation of the required online lessons for the possibility of making up five days.
- Costs and savings may occur in other areas as well, including IT equipment and personnel, transportation, and facility usage.

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## Detailed Fiscal Analysis

### Local fiscal effects

Calamity days are days during the regularly scheduled school year that schools are closed due to such things as hazardous weather or disease epidemics. A certain number of calamity days are excused (up to five most years and up to three in the 2010-2011 school year). Under current law, calamity days missed in excess of the number of excused days must be made up by adding days or hours to the school calendar. Schools must have a contingency plan that provides for making up at least five unexcused days. The bill gives school districts and STEM schools another option, namely to make up unexcused calamity days through online lessons. Any school district or STEM school choosing to require students to make up excess calamity days online must submit a plan to ODE by the first of August in each school year. As a component of the plan, by the first of September each year, each classroom teacher must submit online lessons to cover the make-up days.

School districts and STEM schools that choose to take advantage of the bill's option will likely experience costs and savings related to that decision. The net fiscal effect will depend on the circumstances of each district or school. Presumably, districts and schools would renegotiate their contracts with teachers to substitute the preparation of the required online lessons for the possibility of making up five days. Any potential costs or savings for teachers would depend on these contract negotiations. According to the Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA), it may take up to two and a half days to develop five online lessons because online lessons must accommodate different types of learners and give many examples – more so than traditional classroom lesson plans which allow teachers to adapt and react to their students during the lesson. Also, many school districts and STEM schools do not begin work by September 1st – the date by which teachers must submit their online lessons. Therefore, teachers may need to develop the lessons during the previous school year or the summer to meet the deadline imposed by the bill.

Costs and savings may occur in other areas as well. Depending on their current capabilities, districts and schools taking advantage of the bill's option may need to upgrade their information technology (IT) equipment and personnel. The bill requires that students without access to computers at home be given access to computers at school before or after the regularly scheduled school day to complete the online lessons. This would require facilities to be open and personnel to be available to provide supervision. On the other hand, the current requirement of adding days or hours to the school calendar requires traditional transportation of students to and from school, as well as the use of facilities. Savings on transportation will vary greatly for each district or STEM school depending on such variables as the price of gas, how agreements with

distributors are structured, the number of students transported and busses in service, how many miles the busses travel, and the quality of the roadways.

### **State fiscal effects**

The bill requires that ODE review plans submitted by school districts and STEM schools to ensure all requirements are met. Under the bill, ODE has little discretion in granting approval to district and STEM school plans and therefore, according to ODE, there will be little to no additional costs as a result of this new responsibility.