



Ohio Legislative Service Commission

Edward M. Millane

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

Bill: [S.B. 284 of the 130th G.A.](#)

Date: February 25, 2014

Status: As Introduced

Sponsor: Sen. Coley

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

Contents: Provides schools additional calamity day relief in FY 2014, authorizes the Superintendent of Public Instruction to delay return of student assessment scores in FY 2014, and declares an emergency

State Fiscal Highlights

- No direct fiscal effect on the state.

Local Fiscal Highlights

- The bill eliminates the expenditures school districts and STEM schools may otherwise incur in making up four days that they are closed due to a public calamity.
- The bill also offers these schools the option of making up any days closed beyond the five excused calamity days in current law, the five days in the schools' contingency plans, and the four additional days provided under the bill by lengthening the school day, which is likely a less costly alternative to adding full days.

Detailed Fiscal Analysis

For FY 2014 only, the bill provides additional calamity day relief for district schools, STEM schools, and chartered nonpublic schools, delays the return date for grades three through eight student assessments, and excuses seniors from attending school for making up calamity days after their graduation ceremony. These provisions are discussed below in more detail.

Additional calamity day relief

For FY 2014, current law requires a minimum school year of 182 days,¹ except that schools may be closed for up to five days due to public calamities such as hazardous weather, without making up the lost instructional time. Each school district must adopt an annual contingency plan that includes adding at least five whole days to the school year if needed to make up any days missed in excess of the excused calamity days. The plan must be submitted to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) by August 1 of each year. Schools that do not meet the minimum school year requirements for this school year will not qualify for state operating funds in the next school year.

The bill makes three changes to the provisions mentioned above. First, the bill permits schools to update their contingency plans for this school year and requires ODE to accept applications for online lessons and paper lesson blizzard bags that schools may want to consider using in making up days in their contingency plans. Second, the bill gives schools an additional four excused calamity days as long as they first make up the days or hours specified in their contingency plans. Therefore, the bill eliminates the expenditures schools may incur in making up these four days. Finally, the bill permits schools that use the four additional excused calamity days to make up any additional lost time by lengthening the remaining instructional days in half-hour increments instead of adding full days. For these schools, lengthening the school days in this manner is likely a lower cost alternative to adding full days, particularly in the areas of busing, food service, and utilities.

Delayed return of assessment scores

In early February, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) announced they were adding one week to the testing window (now April 21 to May 16) for districts and schools to administer the grades three through eight Ohio Achievement Assessments. In response to ODE's action, the bill delays the dates for which scores for these assessments must be returned to districts and schools. Generally, under continuing law, assessment scores are to be returned no later than June 15 of each year. The bill delays this deadline for this school year by one day for assessments administered to third grade students and by 15 days for assessments administered to fourth through eighth

¹ These days include four days for teacher preparation and reporting and parent conferences.

grade students. Delaying the return date for assessment scores may permit the contractor scoring the assessments more flexibility to grade and return the results of the assessments to districts and schools.

High school seniors

The bill also permits a school district to excuse graduating 12th grade students from attending school for any time added to the regular school year in order to make up calamity days, if that time is after the district's scheduled graduation ceremony. Under the bill, schools excusing these students in this manner would still meet the requirements of a minimum school year and would still qualify to receive state operating funds in the next school year.

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