



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

FISCAL NOTE

HOUSE BILL NO. 265

PRINTERS NO. 2241

PRIME SPONSOR: Staats

COST / (SAVINGS)

FUND	FY 2018/19	FY 2019/20
General Fund	\$0	See Fiscal Impact

SUMMARY:

House Bill 265 amends the Public School Code concerning transfers of credits between institutions of higher education and provides for other career and technical education related provisions. Effective dates vary by provision.

ANALYSIS:

House Bill 265 amends the Public School Code concerning career and technical education. The changes are summarized by section below.

Section 128. Career Information and Recruitment - This new section requires school entities to treat career presenters equally and requires career presenters to comply with the background check requirements relating to volunteers having contact with children. Presenters must also provide at least 30 days' notice when requesting access to a school. The Department of Education (PDE) must develop guidelines, and age appropriate career informational materials and earnings potential for students to access at a school scheduled educational or career fair.

Section 1549.1. Commission for Agricultural Education Excellence - The bill adds to the powers and duties of the commission for agricultural education excellence the responsibility to issue guidelines and update them every five years to identify the circumstances when a student who successfully completes an academic course, program or activity for credit may apply the credit toward completion of an agriculture education program. This must be done in consultation with and with the approval of the Department of Education. The guidelines must be posted on the Department of Education's website within 15 days of approval.

Section 1855. Career and Technical Education Equipment Grants - Changes to this section codify PDE guidelines regarding Career and Technology Education Equipment Grants and clarify that grant awards can be used to purchase an entire set of tools.

Section 1856. Utilization of Credits - requires the Department of Education to issue guidelines and update them every five years to identify the circumstances when a student who successfully completes a course, program or activity in science, technology, engineering or mathematics for

credit may apply the credit toward the completion of a course, program or activity offered by any area career and technical school, technical institute or career and technical school or department.

Article XIX-H. Classification of Program Code - This new article added to the Public School Code concerns the classification of vocational program codes. The Department of Education must establish a standard application form for a public school entity seeking approval to establish or renew a classification of program code. The form must be published on the Department's website, and must collect the information enumerated in the bill. The new article also establishes an annual timeline for the Department's approval or denial of the program codes.

Section 2001-C. Definitions and Section 2003-C. Duties of Institutions of Higher Education and Public Schools - These sections are amended concerning transfers of credits between institutions of higher education. Definitions are added for the following terms: industry-recognized credential, institution of higher education, public school, and rural regional college. The definition for institution of higher education (IHE) includes community colleges, the universities of the State System of Higher Education, a rural regional college, a state-related institution, and the Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology. It does not include private colleges or universities. These IHEs must submit interim reports on the use of transfer and articulation agreements to the Department of Education (PDE), the contents of which are detailed in the legislation. These reports must be submitted 180 days after the effective date of this legislation, and each September 30 thereafter.

The legislation requires all IHEs, as defined above, and public schools to submit copies of all articulation agreements to the Department of Education within 180 days of enactment, for inclusion in an existing database. In addition, copies of any future articulation agreements must be provided within 30 days of their completion.

Section 2005-C. Duties of Department - The Department must extract transfer information from each agreement and enter the information into the database and provide a meaningful, user-friendly and interactive search engine for access to the information. This must be done within 60 days of the receipt of an articulation agreement.

House Bill 265 also adds to the duties of the Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee by requiring that it meet on a regular basis, at least quarterly.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Enactment of this legislation will cost the Commonwealth \$1.2 million in 2019-20.

According to the Department of Education, the expansion of the provisions related to the transfer and articulation of credits between institutions of higher education and schools will require it to collect and manage articulation agreements from at least an additional 785 schools at a cost of \$1,200,000. This includes: staff costs of approximately \$300,000 for salary and benefits for two additional staff members to manage the expanded program and \$900,000 for expansion of the website, database and portal to include the additional schools. The department routinely has excess funding available in its General Government Operations Appropriation

and should be able to accommodate the additional staffing costs. In addition, the department has a separate appropriation of nearly \$4 million for information technology costs. The costs for the information technology updates are likely to occur across multiple fiscal years and should be able to be accommodated within existing appropriation levels.

The other provisions in this legislation should have a minimal cost to the agencies involved.

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DATE: June 28, 2019

Estimates are calculated using the best information available. Actual costs and revenue impact incurred may vary from estimates.