



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

FISCAL NOTE

HOUSE BILL NO. 265

PRINTERS NO. 2579

PRIME SPONSOR: Staats

COST / (SAVINGS)

| FUND | FY 2019/20 | FY 2020/21 |
|--------------|-------------------|------------|
| General Fund | 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 significant changes are summarized by section below. The bill also makes hundreds of technical changes by eliminating or replacing outdated terms such as "vocational-technical," "vocational homemaking" and "home economics" with more current terminology.

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 1842. Advisory Committees - Changes to this section require an occupational advisory committee be established for each career and technical education program or cluster of related programs offered by an area career and technical school or school district. The occupational advisory committee must be appointed by the board of directors of the area career and technical school or school district, as applicable. A majority of the members of the committee must be

employees and employers in the occupation for which the career and technical education program is provided. Each advisory committee must meet at least twice each year to advise the board of directors, administrators and staff on curriculum, equipment, instructional materials, safety requirements, program evaluation and other related matters. The committee will also verify that the programs meet industry standards and, if appropriate, licensing board criteria, and that the programs prepare students with occupation-related competencies.

The legislation also permits multiple area career and technical schools or school districts operating career and technical education programs within the same intermediate unit to establish a shared occupational advisory committee to serve all participating schools and districts.

Section 1842.1. PAsmart Online Career Resource Center – this new section requires the Department of Education and the Department of Labor and Industry, in consultation with and the Department of Agriculture, to establish a central online clearinghouse database. The database must include, at a minimum, the following: postsecondary pathways and options; career and technical education and workforce opportunities; career pathways; data and statistics on employment opportunities and compensation; statewide and regional articulation agreements; and other relevant career resources. The online database must be easily accessible by students, parents, educators, school officials and the public, and must be updated at least annually.

The participating state agencies may utilize existing resources or clearinghouses available from other agencies to compile the information, and the agencies must explore the possibility of Federal or private funding to support the clearinghouse.

Section 1842.2. Workforce Development Program Clearinghouse – This new section concerns a workforce development clearinghouse. It requires the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board, with assistance from the Department of Education (PDE), to conduct a survey to determine the number and types of workforce development programs offered at secondary and postsecondary institutions. The Board may, in consultation with PDE, compile a clearinghouse of model programs discovered during the survey. The Department of Labor and Industry and PDE must also encourage the use of the model programs by secondary career and technical education programs, postsecondary programs, and business and industry to expand existing programs into areas of this Commonwealth where there is a need; and foster business-education partnerships.

The Board must report its findings and actions to the majority and minority chairs of the Appropriations and Education committees of the House and Senate one year after the effective date of this legislation.

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 XVIII-A. Schools-to-Work Program – This new article requires the Department of Labor and Industry must, in consultation with the Department of Education, establish a Schools-to-Work Program to award grants on a competitive basis to support the establishment or enhancement of workforce development partnerships between schools, employers, organizations or associations to create employment and training pathways.

Upon the initial appropriation of sufficient money to carry out the provisions of this article or a determination by the department that sufficient money is available from existing sources to carry out the provisions of this article, the department shall transmit notice that the program will be implemented with available funds to the Legislative Reference Bureau for publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin.

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:

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.

PREPARED BY: Jeff Miller
House Appropriations Committee (R)

DATE: September 25, 2019

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