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## OHIO DEAF AND BLIND EDUCATION SERVICES

### Rita Community School

- Declares the intent of the General Assembly to purchase St. Rita's School for the Deaf to operate as a public school under the supervision of Ohio Deaf and Blind Education Services (ODBES).
- Designates the school as Rita Community School and a division of ODBES, and generally subjects it to the same laws as the State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.
- Establishes the Rita Community School Educational Program Expenses Fund for educational programs, after-school activities, and expenses associated with student activities and clubs at the school.

### Students with multiple disabilities

- 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.
- Permits ODBES to receive and administer federal funds, gifts, donations, or bequests for programs or services related to the education of those students.
- Extends eligibility for those students to participate in ODBES career-technical education and work training programs for secondary and post-secondary students and to receive funding to participate in the program.
- Permits residents of Ohio who have multiple disabilities if one of the disabilities is hearing related to enroll in the State School for the Deaf or Rita Community School.

### High school diploma requirements

- Permits a student enrolled in the State School for the Blind or State School for the Deaf to qualify for a high school diploma by completing the curriculum of any high school in lieu of completing the student's individualized education program (IEP).

### Expense funds investment earnings

- Requires investment earnings on money in the educational program expense funds of the State School for the Deaf and the State School for the Blind be credited to the funds.

### Rita Community School

(R.C. 3325.012, 3325.03, 3325.08, 3325.11, 3325.12, and 3325.13; conforming in R.C. 3301.0711, 3365.01, 3365.032, 3365.07; Section 207.60)

The bill declares the intent of the General Assembly to purchase St. Rita's School for the Deaf, which is currently operating as a chartered nonpublic school in Hamilton County, so that it

may become a public school under the supervision of Ohio Deaf and Blind Education Services (ODBES). The bill requires the Department of Administrative Services to determine an amount of funding to purchase the building and land of St. Rita's. Furthermore, it designates the school as Rita Community School and as a division of ODBES. The bill requires Rita Community School to be open and operate under regulations adopted by the Department of Education and Workforce and generally subjects the school to the same laws that apply to the State School for the Deaf and State School for the Blind, including those regarding:

- State assessments;
- Awarding of high school diplomas and honor's diplomas;
- The College Credit Plus Program;
- The ODBES Student Activity and Work-Study Fund;
- The ODBES Employee Food Service Fund.

The ODBES Superintendent may, in the same manner as permitted for students enrolled at the State School for the Deaf or Blind under continuing law, return a student enrolled in Rita Community School to the student's resident school district if the student is not making sufficient progress to justify continued enrollment at Rita Community School.

The bill clarifies that Rita Community School is not considered a "community school" (also known as a charter school nationally) under continuing law.

### **Rita Community School Educational Program Expenses Fund**

(R.C. 3325.18)

The bill establishes the Rita Community School Educational Program Expenses Fund for educational programs, after-school activities, and expenses associated with student activities and clubs at Rita Community School. ODBES must credit to the fund any money received for Rita Community School from donations, bequests, student fundraising activities, fees charged for camps and workshops, gate receipts from athletic contests, the student work experience program operated by the school, and any other money designated for deposit in the fund by the ODBES Superintendent. The Department's approval is not required to designate money for deposit into the fund. All investment earnings on money in the fund also must be credited to the fund.

### **Students with multiple disabilities**

(R.C. 3325.01, 3325.011, 3325.09, and 3325.15)

The bill permits the Ohio Deaf and Blind Education Services (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). The bill also permits ODBES to receive and administer federal funds, gifts, donations, or bequests for programs or services related to the education of those students.

The bill extends eligibility for those students to participate in ODBES' career-technical education and work training programs for secondary and post-secondary students. Under continuing law, the program is open to students who are blind, visually impaired, deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind. A student participating in the program may receive funding for room and board, training in mobility and orientation, activities that teach daily living skills, rehabilitation technology, activities that teach group and individual social and interpersonal skills, work placement in the community by the school or a community agency, transportation to and from work sites or locations of community interaction, and supervision and management of programs and services.

The bill also permits residents of Ohio who have multiple disabilities if one of the disabilities is hearing related to enroll in the State School for the Deaf or Rita Community School. Under current law, enrollment in the State School for the Deaf is open to persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind.

### **High school diploma requirements**

(R.C. 3325.08)

To qualify for a high school diploma under continuing law, a student enrolled in the State School for the Deaf or Blind must complete the student's individualized education program (IEP) and complete the other high school graduation requirements established for public school students.

Under the bill, in lieu of completing an IEP to qualify for a diploma, a student may complete the curriculum of any high school.

### **Expense funds investment earnings**

(R.C. 3325.16 and 3325.17)

The bill requires that all investment earnings on money in the State Schools for the Deaf and Blind educational program expenses funds to be credited to the respective fund.