

Bill addresses school discipline, bullying and hazing

Legislation (H.B. 360) introduced in September by Rep. Dave Greenspan (R-Westlake) has been subject to change, with the substitute bill under consideration by the House Education and Career Readiness Committee.

Greenspan offered sponsor testimony on the bill, which he says would “provide a standard general protocol for addressing acts of bullying and hazing while continuing to respect the concept of local control.”

Sub. H.B. 360 would require public school students (with the exception of K-3 students and students with developmental disabilities) to be suspended for up to 10 days for a first offense of harassment, intimidation or bullying, up to 30 days for a second offense in the same school year, and up to 182 days for a third offense.

Community service would be mandatory for students suspended or expelled for harassment, intimidation or bullying.

Schools would be required to provide tutoring and academic support for suspended or expelled students and to allow them to take all required state assessments. Schools would also be obligated to offer counseling services for victims, and for students expelled or suspended upon parental consent.

The legislation also establishes advance notice procedures, an appeals process, and return-to-school procedures for students who are suspended or expelled.

Greenspan characterizes the bill, also known as the “Ohio Anti-Bullying and Hazing Act,” as taking a “firm yet fair approach to addressing and changing the behavior of the bully and by providing an appropriate punishment along with corrective measures.”

