



# Senate

General Assembly

**File No. 637**

January Session, 2025

Substitute Senate Bill No. 1

*Senate, April 10, 2025*

The Committee on Education reported through SEN. MCCRORY, D. of the 2nd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

## **AN ACT INCREASING RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS, SCHOOLS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1       Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) As used in this section,  
2       sections 2 to 9, inclusive, of this act and section 10-505b of the general  
3       statutes, as amended by this act:

4       (1) "Designated beneficiary" means an early care and education  
5       program offered by an eligible board of education or a licensed provider  
6       of child care services;

7       (2) "Eligible board of education" means a local or regional board of  
8       education that (A) is eligible to receive a grant under the Connecticut  
9       Smart Start competitive grant program pursuant to section 10-506 of the  
10      general statutes, (B) offers a full-day preschool program, and (C) does  
11      not charge tuition to the parents or guardians of children enrolled in  
12      such full-day preschool program, unless such tuition is required as part  
13      of a state or federally funded subsidy or grant program;

14 (3) "Child care services" has the same meaning as provided in section  
15 19a-77 of the general statutes;

16 (4) "Covered child" means any child who is enrolled in an early care  
17 and education program offered by a designated beneficiary;

18 (5) "Eligible expense" means expenses incurred by a designated  
19 beneficiary and authorized under section 4 of this act for reimbursement  
20 by the trust;

21 (6) "Unpaid portion" means the difference between (A) the total  
22 amount of tuition charged for a covered child's enrollment in an early  
23 care and education program offered by a designated beneficiary, and (B)  
24 the sum of (i) any state or federal child care subsidies received for such  
25 covered child, and (ii) an amount not to exceed seven per cent of the  
26 annual household income of the family for such covered child that is  
27 paid by such family to such designated beneficiary; and

28 (7) "Trust" means the Universal Preschool Trust.

29 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) Commencing on July 1, 2025,  
30 there is established the Universal Preschool Trust. The trust shall  
31 constitute an instrumentality of the state and shall perform essential  
32 governmental functions as provided in sections 2 to 9, inclusive, of this  
33 act. The trust shall receive and hold all payments and deposits or  
34 contributions intended for the trust, as well as gifts, bequests,  
35 endowments or federal, state or local grants and any other funds from  
36 any public or private source and all earnings until disbursed in  
37 accordance with section 5 of this act.

38 (b) The amounts on deposit in the trust shall not constitute property  
39 of the state and the trust shall not be construed to be a department,  
40 institution or agency of the state. Amounts on deposit in the trust shall  
41 not be commingled with state funds and the state shall have no claim to  
42 or against, or interest in, such funds. Any contract entered into by or any  
43 obligation of the trust shall not constitute a debt or obligation of the state  
44 and the state shall have no obligation to any designated beneficiary or

45 any other person on account of the trust and all amounts obligated to be  
46 paid from the trust shall be limited to amounts available for such  
47 obligation on deposit in the trust. The amounts on deposit in the trust  
48 may only be disbursed in accordance with the provisions of section 5 of  
49 this act. The trust shall continue in existence as long as it holds any  
50 deposits or has any obligations and until its existence is terminated by  
51 law and upon termination any unclaimed assets shall return to the state.  
52 Property of the trust shall not be governed by section 3-61a of the  
53 general statutes.

54 (c) The Treasurer shall be responsible for the receipt, maintenance,  
55 administration, investing and disbursements of amounts from the trust.  
56 The trust shall not receive deposits in any form other than cash.

57 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) For the fiscal year ending June  
58 30, 2025, after the accounts for the General Fund have been closed and  
59 the Comptroller has determined the amount of unappropriated surplus,  
60 if any, in said fund, the amount of such surplus to a maximum of three  
61 hundred million dollars shall be transferred by the Treasurer to the  
62 Universal Preschool Trust established under section 2 of this act.

63 (b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, and each fiscal year  
64 thereafter, after the accounts for the General Fund have been closed and  
65 the Comptroller has determined the amount of unappropriated surplus,  
66 if any, in said fund, the entire amount of such surplus shall be  
67 transferred by the Treasurer to the Universal Preschool Trust, except  
68 that if the amount in the Budget Reserve Fund is less than eighteen per  
69 cent of the net General Fund appropriations for the current fiscal year,  
70 the amount of such transfer shall be reduced and an amount equal to  
71 such reduction shall be transferred to the Budget Reserve Fund.

72 (c) Any amount transferred pursuant to this section shall be deducted  
73 in determining the amount of unappropriated surplus to be transferred  
74 to the Budget Reserve Fund pursuant to subsection (b) of section 4-30a  
75 of the general statutes.

76 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) For the fiscal year ending June

77 30, 2026, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Treasurer shall authorize  
78 phases for the administration and expenditure of funds from the trust  
79 as follows:

80 (1) Phase I shall commence for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027,  
81 and operate when the rate of return on the trust's amounts on deposit  
82 meets or exceeds the amount needed to fund all covered children as of  
83 July 1, 2025, according to the eligible expenses for such covered children.

84 (2) Phase II shall commence whenever the two-year annual rate of  
85 return on the trust's amounts on deposit meets or exceeds the amount  
86 needed to fund all covered children served by designated beneficiaries  
87 in phase I plus the amount of eligible expenses described in subdivision  
88 (2) of subsection (b) of this section.

89 (3) Phase III shall commence not earlier than one year following the  
90 first year of implementation of phase II and whenever the two-year  
91 annual rate of return on the trust's amounts on deposit meets or exceeds  
92 the amount needed to fund the number of all covered children served  
93 by designated beneficiaries in phase I and the first year of phase II.

94 (4) Phase IV shall commence not earlier than one year following the  
95 first year of implementation of phase III and whenever the two-year  
96 annual rate of return on the trust's amounts on deposit meets or exceeds  
97 the amount needed to fund the number of all covered children served  
98 by designated beneficiaries in phase I, phase II and phase III.

99 (b) The eligible expenses for each phase shall be as follows:

100 (1) Phase I eligible expenses shall include (A) the unpaid portion of a  
101 covered child's tuition for enrollment in a preschool program as part of  
102 an early care and education program offered by a designated beneficiary  
103 pursuant to section 10-505b of the general statutes, as amended by this  
104 act, and (B) the cost charged to a family associated with a covered child  
105 in a preschool program offered by an eligible board of education.

106 (2) Phase II eligible expenses shall include (A) phase I eligible  
107 expenses, and (B) costs associated with the expansion of slots offered by

108 existing designated beneficiaries, including, but not limited to,  
109 transportation costs, capital expenses and costs associated with  
110 obtaining accreditation for the early care and education program from  
111 the National Association for the Education of Young Children, National  
112 Association for Family Child Care, a Head Start on-site program review  
113 instrument or a successor instrument pursuant to federal regulations.

114 (3) Phase III eligible expenses shall include (A) phase I eligible  
115 expenses, (B) phase II eligible expenses, and (C) the unpaid portion of a  
116 covered child's tuition for enrollment in a preschool program as part of  
117 an early care and education program offered by a designated beneficiary  
118 who is a private provider of child care services.

119 (4) Phase IV eligible expenses shall include (A) phase I eligible  
120 expenses, (B) phase II eligible expenses, (C) phase III eligible expenses,  
121 and (D) the unpaid portion of a covered child's tuition for enrollment in  
122 an infant and toddler program as part of an early care and education  
123 program offered by a designated beneficiary.

124 Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Not later than the fifteenth of  
125 each month, each designated beneficiary seeking a reimbursement  
126 payment from the trust for eligible expenses incurred during the  
127 previous month shall submit a claim to the child care resource and  
128 referral agency designated by the Commissioner of Early Childhood.  
129 The child care resource and referral agency shall provide the Treasurer  
130 with such claims for eligible expenses. Upon review and approval of  
131 such claims, the Treasurer shall disburse funds in an amount equal to  
132 the total sum of such claims to the child care resource and referral  
133 agency. The child care resource and referral agency shall distribute such  
134 funds to each designated beneficiary in an amount equal to the amount  
135 approved by the Treasurer for such designated beneficiary's claim.

136 Sec. 6. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established the  
137 Universal Preschool Trust Board. The board shall be responsible for the  
138 administration of the Universal Preschool Trust.

139 (b) The board shall consist of the following members:

140 (1) One appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives,  
141 who is currently employed in the early childhood workforce;

142 (2) One appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, who is  
143 a representative from the Service Employees' International Union, Local  
144 2001;

145 (3) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of  
146 Representatives, who is the parent or guardian of a child enrolled in a  
147 preschool program provided by an eligible board of education;

148 (4) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, who is a  
149 member of the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance;

150 (5) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of  
151 Representatives, who is a member of an eligible board of education;

152 (6) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, who is a  
153 member of the parent cabinet established by the Office of Early  
154 Childhood pursuant to section 10-500 of the general statutes;

155 (7) One appointed by the Governor, who is a representative of a  
156 corporation with a significant physical presence in the state and that  
157 employs individuals who may benefit from early childhood education  
158 and state child care initiatives;

159 (8) The Commissioner of Early Childhood, or the commissioner's  
160 designee;

161 (9) The Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, or the  
162 secretary's designee; and

163 (10) The Treasurer, or the Treasurer's designee.

164 (c) All initial appointments to the board shall be made not later than  
165 September 1, 2025. Each appointed member shall serve in accordance  
166 with the provisions of section 4-1a of the general statutes, and the  
167 appointing authorities shall appoint members to ensure representation  
168 on the board of all geographic areas in the state, to the extent practicable.

169 Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority. Any vacancy  
170 occurring other than by expiration of term shall be filled for the balance  
171 of the unexpired term.

172 (d) The Treasurer, or the Treasurer's designee, shall serve as the  
173 chairperson of the board. The chairperson shall schedule the first  
174 meeting of the board to be held not later than October 1, 2025. The board  
175 shall meet at least quarterly, and upon request of the board or the  
176 Treasurer.

177 (e) The Treasurer, or the Treasurer's designee, shall, at the first  
178 meeting of the board and semiannually thereafter, submit to the board  
179 an actuarial chart that includes a review of the total amount of funds  
180 within the trust, the health of the investments of the trust, the  
181 anticipated growth of the trust and any recommended models for the  
182 timing and rate of drawing down from the trust.

183 (f) Not later than January 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the board  
184 shall submit a report on the actuarial future of the trust, the current  
185 phase of the trust, the anticipated date to advance phases of the trust, if  
186 any, and an assessment of the success and efficacy of the Universal  
187 Preschool Trust to the joint standing committees of the General  
188 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, children  
189 and appropriations, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a  
190 of the general statutes.

191 (g) The board shall be within the office of the Treasurer for  
192 administrative purposes only.

193 Sec. 7. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Treasurer, on behalf of  
194 the trust and for purposes of the trust, may:

195 (1) Receive and invest moneys in the trust in any instruments,  
196 obligations, securities or property in accordance with section 8 of this  
197 act;

198 (2) Enter into one or more contractual agreements, including  
199 contracts for legal, actuarial, accounting, custodial, advisory,

200 management, administrative, advertising, marketing and consulting  
201 services for the trust, and pay for such services from the assets of the  
202 trust;

203 (3) Procure insurance in connection with the trust's property, assets,  
204 activities or deposits to the trust;

205 (4) Apply for, accept and expend gifts, grants or donations from  
206 public or private sources to enable the trust to carry out its objectives;

207 (5) Adopt regulations in accordance with chapter 54 of the general  
208 statutes for purposes of sections 2 to 9, inclusive, of this act;

209 (6) Sue and be sued;

210 (7) Establish one or more funds within the trust; and

211 (8) Take any other action necessary to carry out the purposes of  
212 sections 2 to 9, inclusive, of this act and incidental to the duties imposed  
213 on the Treasurer pursuant to said sections.

214 (b) The Treasurer, on behalf of the trust and for purposes of the trust,  
215 shall:

216 (1) Enter into a memorandum of understanding with the  
217 Commissioner of Early Childhood to establish information sharing  
218 practices for purposes of sections 2 to 9, inclusive, of this act. Such  
219 memorandum of understanding shall be in accordance with applicable  
220 state and federal laws.

221 (2) Enter into a memorandum of understanding with the child care  
222 resource and referral agency to establish information sharing practices  
223 for purposes of sections 2 to 9, inclusive, of this act. Such memorandum  
224 of understanding shall be in accordance with applicable state and  
225 federal laws.

226 Sec. 8. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Notwithstanding the provisions  
227 of sections 3-13 to 3-13h, inclusive, of the general statutes, the Treasurer  
228 shall invest the amounts on deposit in the trust in a manner reasonable

229 and appropriate to achieve the objectives of the trust, exercising the  
230 discretion and care of a prudent person in similar circumstances with  
231 similar objectives. The Treasurer shall give due consideration to rate of  
232 return, risk, term or maturity, diversification of the total portfolio within  
233 the trust, liquidity, the projected disbursements and expenditures and  
234 the expected payments, deposits, contributions and gifts to be received.  
235 The Treasurer shall not require the trust to invest directly in obligations  
236 of the state or any political subdivision of the state or in any investment  
237 or other fund administered by the Treasurer. The assets of the trust shall  
238 be continuously invested and reinvested in a manner consistent with the  
239 objectives of the trust until disbursed for eligible expenditures or  
240 expended on expenses incurred by the operations of the trust.

241       Sec. 9. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Disbursements from the trust  
242 shall be exempt from all taxation by the state and all political  
243 subdivisions of the state.

244       Sec. 10. Section 3-13c of the general statutes is repealed and the  
245 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

246       As used in sections 3-13 to 3-13e, inclusive, and 3-31b, "trust funds"  
247 includes the Connecticut Municipal Employees' Retirement Fund A, the  
248 Connecticut Municipal Employees' Retirement Fund B, the Soldiers,  
249 Sailors and Marines Fund, the Family and Medical Leave Insurance  
250 Trust Fund, the State's Attorneys' Retirement Fund, the Teachers'  
251 Annuity Fund, the Teachers' Pension Fund, the Teachers' Survivorship  
252 and Dependency Fund, the School Fund, the State Employees  
253 Retirement Fund, the Hospital Insurance Fund, the Policemen and  
254 Firemen Survivor's Benefit Fund, any trust fund described in  
255 subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of section 7-450 that is administered,  
256 held or invested by the State Treasurer, the Connecticut Baby Bond  
257 Trust, any Climate Change and Coastal Resiliency Reserve Fund created  
258 pursuant to section 7-159d, the Universal Preschool Trust and all other  
259 trust funds administered, held or invested by the State Treasurer.

260       Sec. 11. Section 10-505b of the general statutes is repealed and the  
261 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

262 (a) The Office of Early Childhood shall, within available  
263 appropriations, establish a state-wide Tri-Share Child Care Matching  
264 Program. [serving New London County.] Under such program, costs for  
265 child care provided by duly licensed child care facilities in the state shall  
266 be shared [equally] among participating employers, employees and the  
267 [state] Universal Preschool Trust as follows:

268 (1) A participating employer shall be responsible for at least one-third  
269 of an employee's full-day child care costs for a covered child enrolled in  
270 an early care and education program offered by a designated  
271 beneficiary;

272 (2) An employee shall be responsible for child care costs in an amount  
273 not to exceed seven per cent of such employee's annual household  
274 income; and

275 (3) The remaining balance of such employee's child care costs shall be  
276 paid for with funds from the Universal Preschool Trust in accordance  
277 with the provisions of section 5 of this act.

278 (b) (1) The [program shall be established for a minimum of two years  
279 and the] office shall select a regional or state-wide organization as the  
280 administrator of the program. Such administrator shall (A) determine  
281 employers' and employees' eligibility for participation in the program,  
282 (B) ensure that child care facilities to which payments will be made  
283 under the program are licensed by the state, (C) collect and ensure  
284 timely payment from participating employers, participating employees  
285 and the state, (D) disburse funds to the appropriate child care provider,  
286 (E) recruit employers to participate in the program, (F) coordinate  
287 adequate communication between all parties, and (G) collect and submit  
288 to the Office of Early Childhood data concerning participating  
289 employees, including, but not limited to, the annual household income  
290 of such employees, provided any such submitted data shall be  
291 deidentified.

292 (2) To be eligible to participate in the program:

293 (A) An employer shall have a physical facility located in [New  
294 London County] the state that is the principal workplace of its  
295 employees; and

296 (B) An employee shall (i) be employed by a participating employer,  
297 (ii) reside in the state, and (iii) have as such employee's principal  
298 workplace a location in [New London County, and (iv) not be receiving  
299 other public assistance for child care costs] the state.

300 (c) The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall enter into an  
301 agreement with such administrator to perform the duties described  
302 under subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of this section. Such agreement  
303 shall include, but need not be limited to, (1) a provision that the  
304 administrator shall receive, for administrative costs of the program, up  
305 to ten per cent of the funds allocated by the state for the program, (2) a  
306 requirement that the administrator not commingle funds received for  
307 purposes of the program, other than funds for administrative costs  
308 allowed pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, with other funds  
309 held or controlled by the administrator, (3) any restrictions or  
310 prohibitions on the disclosure of data received or collected by the  
311 administrator in the performance of its duties under subdivision (1) of  
312 subsection (b) of this section, and (4) penalties for violation of a  
313 provision of the agreement or of this section.

314 (d) Commencing with the fiscal year immediately following the first  
315 year of the program and annually thereafter, the commissioner shall  
316 submit to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having  
317 cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state  
318 agencies, finance, revenue and bonding, education and children, a  
319 report on the program. Such report shall include, but need not be limited  
320 to, (1) for the fiscal year immediately preceding, (A) the number of  
321 participating employers and participating employees, (B) the  
322 percentage of participating employees whose household incomes are  
323 below the asset limited, income constrained, employed population  
324 threshold, as calculated in the most recent ALICE report by the United  
325 Way of Connecticut, and (C) the amounts disbursed by the

326 administrator for child care costs and the amounts retained by the  
327 administrator for administrative costs, and (2) any programmatic or  
328 legislative changes the commissioner recommends to improve the  
329 program or further its purposes.

330       Sec. 12. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) The Office of Early  
331 Childhood shall develop a centralized online enrollment portal for (1)  
332 designated beneficiaries to apply for payments from the Universal  
333 Preschool Trust, established pursuant to section 2 of this act, and (2)  
334 families to apply for a subsidy or other state or federal financial  
335 assistance for child care under (A) a Head Start or Early Head Start  
336 program, (B) the child care subsidy program, established pursuant to  
337 section 17b-749 of the general statutes, (C) an early care and education  
338 program receiving financial assistance under Early Start CT pursuant to  
339 section 10-550b of the general statutes, (D) a preschool program under  
340 the Connecticut Smart Start competitive grant program, pursuant to  
341 section 10-506 of the general statutes, (E) the temporary family  
342 assistance program pursuant to section 17b-112 of the general statutes,  
343 (F) foster care placements or certified relative foster care placements  
344 through the Department of Children and Families, or (G) any other state  
345 or federal program for child care assistance.

346       (b) The enrollment portal shall (1) enable families to identify early  
347 care and education programs in their area, (2) determine a family's  
348 eligibility for a subsidy and allow such family to apply for a subsidy for  
349 which they are eligible, and (3) provide an estimate of the amount of  
350 tuition a family would pay after deducting any subsidies for which such  
351 family is eligible and any amount covered by the Universal Preschool  
352 Trust.

353       Sec. 13. Subsection (c) of section 10-4 of the general statutes is  
354 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
355 *2025*):

356       (c) Said board shall prepare every five years a five-year  
357 comprehensive plan for elementary, secondary, vocational, career and  
358 adult education. Such comprehensive plan shall include, but need not

359 be limited to, (1) a policy statement of the State Board of Education's  
360 long-term goals and short-term objectives, including, for any  
361 comprehensive plan prepared on or after July 1, 2018, a policy statement  
362 that the demographics of educators in the public schools should reflect  
363 the racial and ethnic diversity of the total population of the state, (2) an  
364 analysis of cost implications and measurement criteria and how said  
365 board's programs and operations relate to such goals and objectives, and  
366 (3) specific action plans, target dates and strategies and methods of  
367 implementation for achieving such goals and objectives. The State Board  
368 of Education shall establish, every five years, an advisory committee to  
369 assist the board in the preparation of the comprehensive plan. Members  
370 of the advisory committee shall be appointed by the State Board of  
371 Education with representation on the committee to include, but not be  
372 limited to, representatives of the Connecticut Advisory Council on  
373 Vocational and Career Education, education organizations, parent  
374 organizations, student organizations, business and industry, organized  
375 labor and appropriate state agencies. Notwithstanding any requirement  
376 for submission of a plan for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1984,  
377 pursuant to section 10-96a of the general statutes, revision of 1958,  
378 revised to January 1, 1983, the State Board of Education shall not be  
379 required to submit the master plan for vocational and career education  
380 but shall submit, pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, the  
381 comprehensive plan for elementary and secondary, vocational, career  
382 and adult education to the Governor and the joint standing committee  
383 of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to  
384 education on or before September 1, 1996, and every five years  
385 thereafter provided, the master plan currently in effect shall remain in  
386 effect until the comprehensive plan is submitted. The Commissioner of  
387 Education shall make semiannual presentations to the State Board of  
388 Education, at regularly scheduled meetings of said board, to provide  
389 updates on the strategic priorities, actions and outcomes outlined in the  
390 comprehensive plan. The State Board of Education shall be responsible  
391 for annually updating the progress in implementing the goals and  
392 objectives of the comprehensive plan based on the presentations of the  
393 commissioner and shall report on such progress to the Governor and to

394 said standing committee annually and make such information available  
395 on the Internet web site of the Department of Education. The State Board  
396 of Education shall provide opportunity for public comment prior to its  
397 adoption of a plan.

398       Sec. 14. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) On or after June first, but prior  
399 to September thirtieth annually, the superintendent of schools for each  
400 school district shall provide, at a regularly scheduled meeting of the  
401 local or regional board of education for the school district, the following:  
402 (1) The number and names of all community-based organizations with  
403 whom the board of education has executed a formal memorandum of  
404 understanding, memorandum of agreement or contract to provide  
405 support services to students in the school district, disaggregated by  
406 school and type of support service provided, (2) the number of students  
407 engaged in both credit-bearing and noncredit-bearing internships or  
408 workforce training programs, disaggregated by type and duration of the  
409 internship or workforce training program, (3) the actual classroom size  
410 and student-teacher ratio during the previous school year,  
411 disaggregated by school and subject area, (4) attrition data for certified  
412 and noncertified staff, disaggregated by school and subject, not  
413 including in-district transfers, and (5) any savings achieved through the  
414 vacancies of positions approved as part of the school district's budget  
415 for the academic year.

416       Sec. 15. (*Effective from passage*) Any state agency that contributes data  
417 for the purposes of the development of the report of disconnected youth  
418 pursuant to section 22 of public act 24-45 shall post such report on the  
419 agency's Internet web site.

420       Sec. 16. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) There is established within  
421 the Department of Education, for administrative purposes only, a  
422 regional education accountability review board for each planning  
423 region, as defined in section 4-124i of the general statutes. Each such  
424 board shall (1) provide intensive technical, financial and other assistance  
425 and related accountability to the priority school districts, as described in  
426 section 10-266p of the general statutes, located in the planning region

427 for such board, (2) develop guidelines and criteria for the budgeting and  
428 expenditure of funds for each such priority school district, and (3)  
429 review and analyze all educational spending of each such priority  
430 school district.

431 (b) Each regional education accountability review board shall consist  
432 of (1) the Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee;  
433 (2) the State Treasurer, or the State Treasurer's designee; (3) three  
434 appointed by the Governor, one of whom has significant professional  
435 experience that focuses on the health and well-being of children and  
436 youth, and one of whom shall be the chief elected official of a  
437 community in the planning region for the board; (4) one appointed by  
438 the president pro tempore of the Senate who has significant experience  
439 as a member of an organization with a collective bargaining agreement  
440 in at least one school district in the planning region for the board, if  
441 applicable, and who shall be selected from a list of names recommended  
442 by the Connecticut Education Association, the American Federation of  
443 Teachers-Connecticut, the Service Employees International Union and  
444 the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; (5)  
445 one appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives who shall  
446 be actively serving as a superintendent of schools for a school district;  
447 (6) one appointed by the minority leader of the Senate who has  
448 significant professional experience that focuses on the health and well-  
449 being of children and youth; and (7) one appointed by the minority  
450 leader of the House of Representatives who shall be a current or former  
451 attorney who practices or practiced education law. The members  
452 described in subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection shall serve as the  
453 chairpersons of each board.

454 (c) Each regional education accountability review board shall submit  
455 an annual expenditure report for each priority school district located in  
456 the planning region for such board to the State Board of Education. Each  
457 such report shall be made available on the Internet web site of the  
458 Department of Education.

459 Sec. 17. Section 10-227 of the general statutes is repealed and the

460 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

461 (a) Each board of education shall cause the superintendent to make  
462 returns not later than September first of each year to the Commissioner  
463 of Education of the receipts, expenditures and statistics, as prescribed  
464 by the commissioner, provided each such board may submit revisions  
465 to the returns in such form and with such documentation as required by  
466 the commissioner not later than January thirty-first of each year  
467 following the September submission. Such reports or returns required  
468 shall be filed in accordance with the instructions furnished by the  
469 commissioner, shall be certified not later than January thirty-first of each  
470 year by the independent public accountant selected pursuant to section  
471 7-392 for the purpose of auditing municipal accounts, and shall be  
472 subject to Department of Education verification. If the returns and  
473 statistics and revisions called for by said commissioner are not filed on  
474 or before the days specified in this section or if the returns are not  
475 certified as required by the commissioner on or before January thirty-  
476 first, each local and regional board of education required by law to make  
477 separate returns, whose returns and statistics or revisions are delayed  
478 until after those days, shall forfeit of the total sum which is paid for such  
479 board of education from the State Treasurer an amount to be determined  
480 by the State Board of Education, which amount shall be not less than  
481 one thousand dollars nor more than ten thousand dollars. The amount  
482 so forfeited shall be withheld from a subsequent grant payment as  
483 determined by the commissioner. Notwithstanding the penalty  
484 provision of this section, the Commissioner of Education may waive  
485 said forfeiture for good cause.

486 (b) Not later than March 15, 2025, and annually thereafter, the  
487 Department of Education shall publish on its Internet web site the data  
488 contained in the reports and returns filed pursuant to subsection (a) of  
489 this section by education program type, expense function, expense  
490 object and funding source, including, but not limited to, federal,  
491 combined state and local and combined private and other sources for  
492 the school and district level. The department shall develop and publish  
493 a guide that contains definitions for each category of expenditure and

494 funding source and the corrective actions or penalties that the  
495 department may order for or impose on a board of education if the data  
496 contained in the reports and returns filed by such board does not align  
497 with such definitions.

498 (c) Not later than March 15, 2025, and annually thereafter, the  
499 Department of Education shall develop and publish the data contained  
500 in the reports and returns filed pursuant to subsection (a) of this section  
501 in a format that allows financial comparisons between school districts  
502 and schools, including student enrollment and demographic statistics  
503 as of October first of the school year in which such reports and returns  
504 were filed. The department shall provide to each board of education an  
505 application program interface through the department's education data  
506 portal, or through other means, to assist such board in posting the data  
507 contained in the reports and returns filed by such board on its Internet  
508 web site.

509 Sec. 18. Section 10-198d of the general statutes is repealed and the  
510 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

511 (a) Not later than January 1, 2016, the Department of Education, in  
512 consultation with the Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement  
513 Gap established pursuant to section 10-16nn, shall develop a chronic  
514 absenteeism prevention and intervention plan for use by local and  
515 regional boards of education to reduce chronic absenteeism in the school  
516 district.

517 (b) (1) The department shall semiannually review, and revise as  
518 needed, the chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan. In  
519 making such revisions, the department shall incorporate the findings of  
520 the most recent report of disconnected youth, developed pursuant to  
521 section 22 of public act 24-45. In addition to the policies and procedures  
522 concerning truants described in section 10-198a, the plan shall include,  
523 but need not be limited to, the following: (A) Information that describes  
524 (i) chronic absenteeism, including, but not limited to, the definition of a  
525 chronically absent child under section 10-198c, and the causes of chronic  
526 absenteeism, such as poverty, violence, poor health and lack of access to

527 transportation, (ii) the effect of chronic absenteeism on a student's  
528 academic performance, and (iii) how family and school partnerships  
529 with community resources, including, but not limited to, family  
530 resource centers and youth service bureaus, can reduce chronic  
531 absenteeism and improve student attendance, [and] (B) the use of an  
532 early indication tool provided by the department or other third party,  
533 provided such tool is designed to quickly identify students who are at  
534 risk for becoming chronically absent or disconnected from school, such  
535 as those students who (i) are at risk of not graduating or satisfying the  
536 high school graduation requirements pursuant to section 10-221a, (ii)  
537 have a history of behavioral concerns or disciplinary issues, including  
538 suspensions or expulsions, and (iii) are homeless children or youth, as  
539 defined in 42 USC 11343a, as amended from time to time, and (C) a  
540 means of collecting and analyzing data relating to student attendance,  
541 truancy and chronic absenteeism for the purpose of (i) disaggregating  
542 such data by school district, school, grade and subgroups, such as race,  
543 ethnicity, gender, eligibility for free or reduced priced lunches, housing  
544 status, students whose primary language is not English and students  
545 with disabilities, and (ii) assisting local and regional boards of education  
546 in (I) tracking chronic absenteeism over multiple years and for the  
547 current school year, (II) developing indicators to identify students who  
548 are at risk of being chronically absent children, (III) monitoring students'  
549 attendance over time, and (IV) making adjustments to interventions as  
550 they are being implemented.

551 (2) The chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan may  
552 include, but need not be limited to, the following: (A) A research-based  
553 and data-driven home visiting or mentorship model that addresses and  
554 attempts to prevent or reduce chronic absenteeism through the use of  
555 mentors, such as students, teachers, administrators, intramural and  
556 interscholastic athletic coaches, school resource officers, family  
557 navigators, student success coaches and community partners, and (B)  
558 incentives and rewards that recognize schools and students that  
559 improve attendance and reduce the school chronic absenteeism rate.

560 Sec. 19. Section 10-222 of the general statutes is repealed and the

561 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

562       Each local board of education shall prepare an itemized estimate of  
563 the cost of maintenance of public schools for the ensuing year and shall  
564 submit such estimate to the board of finance in each town or city having  
565 a board of finance, to the board of selectmen in each town having no  
566 board of finance or otherwise to the authority making appropriations  
567 for the school district, not later than two months preceding the annual  
568 meeting at which appropriations are to be made. The board or authority  
569 that receives such estimate shall, not later than ten days after the date  
570 the board of education submits such estimate, make spending  
571 recommendations and suggestions to such board of education as to how  
572 such board of education may consolidate noneducational services and  
573 realize financial efficiencies. Such board of education may accept or  
574 reject the suggestions of the board of finance, board of selectmen or  
575 appropriating authority and shall provide the board of finance, board of  
576 selectmen or appropriating authority with a written explanation of the  
577 reason for any rejection. The money appropriated by any municipality  
578 for the maintenance of public schools shall be expended by and in the  
579 discretion of the board of education. Except as provided in this  
580 subsection, any such board may transfer any unexpended or  
581 uncontracted-for portion of any appropriation for school purposes to  
582 any other item of such itemized estimate. Boards may, by adopting  
583 policies and procedures, authorize designated personnel to make  
584 limited transfers under emergency circumstances if the urgent need for  
585 the transfer prevents the board from meeting in a timely fashion to  
586 consider such transfer. All transfers made in such instances shall be  
587 announced at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the board and a  
588 written explanation of such transfer shall be provided to the legislative  
589 body of the municipality or, in a municipality where the legislative body  
590 is a town meeting, to the board of selectmen. Expenditures by the board  
591 of education shall not exceed the appropriation made by the  
592 municipality, with such money as may be received from other sources  
593 for school purposes. If any occasion arises whereby additional funds are  
594 needed by such board, the chairman of such board shall notify the board  
595 of finance, board of selectmen or appropriating authority, as the case

596 may be, and shall submit a request for additional funds in the same  
597 manner as is provided for departments, boards or agencies of the  
598 municipality and no additional funds shall be expended unless such  
599 supplemental appropriation shall be granted and no supplemental  
600 expenditures shall be made in excess of those granted through the  
601 appropriating authority. The annual report of the board of education  
602 shall, in accordance with section 10-224, include a summary showing (1)  
603 the total cost of the maintenance of schools, (2) the amount received  
604 from the state and other sources for the maintenance of schools, [and]  
605 (3) the net cost to the municipality of the maintenance of schools, and  
606 (4) the balance of any nonlapsing, unexpended funds account described  
607 in section 10-248a, as amended by this act. For purposes of this  
608 subsection, "meeting" means a meeting, as defined in section 1-200, and  
609 "itemized estimate" means an estimate in which broad budgetary  
610 categories including, but not limited to, salaries, fringe benefits, utilities,  
611 supplies and grounds maintenance are divided into one or more line  
612 items.

613 Sec. 20. Section 10-248a of the general statutes is repealed and the  
614 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

615 (a) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, and each fiscal year  
616 thereafter, notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes or any  
617 special act, municipal charter, home rule ordinance or other ordinance,  
618 a local board of education may deposit into a nonlapsing account any  
619 unexpended funds from the prior fiscal year from the budgeted  
620 appropriation for education, provided (1) such deposited amount does  
621 not exceed two per cent of the total budgeted appropriation for  
622 education for such prior fiscal year, (2) each expenditure from such  
623 account shall be made only for educational purposes, and (3) each such  
624 expenditure shall be authorized by the local board of education for such  
625 town.

626 (b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, and each fiscal year  
627 thereafter, each local board of education shall compile a report  
628 regarding the nonlapsing, unexpended funds account described in this

629 section, including, but not limited to, the total balance of the account,  
630 the amount deposited into such account in a fiscal year and an  
631 accounting of the expenditures made from such account. Each such  
632 board shall submit such report to the Department of Education and the  
633 exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees chosen  
634 pursuant to section 10-153b.

635 (c) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, and each fiscal year  
636 thereafter, each local board of education shall, not later than thirty days  
637 from the adoption of such board's budget, notify the exclusive  
638 bargaining representative for certified employees, chosen pursuant to  
639 section 10-153b, of (1) the establishment of a nonlapsing, unexpended  
640 funds account described in this section, or (2) the board's intended uses  
641 for any funds in such nonlapsing, unexpended funds account during the  
642 next fiscal year.

643 Sec. 21. Subdivision (2) of subsection (d) of section 10-51 of the  
644 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
645 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

646 (2) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, and each fiscal year  
647 thereafter, a regional board of education, by a majority vote of its  
648 members, may create a reserve fund for educational expenditures. Such  
649 fund shall thereafter be termed "reserve fund for educational  
650 expenditures". The aggregate amount of annual and supplemental  
651 appropriations by a district to such fund shall not exceed two per cent  
652 of the annual district budget for such fiscal year. Annual appropriations  
653 to such fund shall be included in the share of net expenses to be paid by  
654 each member town. Supplemental appropriations to such fund may be  
655 made from estimated fiscal year end surplus in operating funds. Interest  
656 and investment earnings received with respect to amounts held in the  
657 fund shall be credited to such fund. The board shall annually submit a  
658 complete and detailed report of the condition of such fund to the  
659 member towns. Upon the recommendation and approval by the  
660 regional board of education, any part or the whole of such fund may be  
661 used for educational expenditures. Upon the approval of any such

662 expenditure an appropriation shall be set up, plainly designated for the  
663 educational expenditure for which it has been authorized. Any  
664 unexpended portion of such appropriation remaining shall revert to  
665 said fund. If any authorized appropriation is set up pursuant to the  
666 provisions of this subsection and through unforeseen circumstances the  
667 board is unable to expend the total amount of such appropriation, the  
668 board, by a majority vote of its members, may terminate such  
669 appropriation which then shall no longer be in effect. Such fund may be  
670 discontinued, after the recommendation and approval by the regional  
671 board of education, and any amounts held in the fund shall be  
672 transferred to the general fund of the district. For the fiscal year ending  
673 June 30, 2026, and each fiscal year thereafter, each board shall (A) make  
674 available and annually update information regarding such fund,  
675 including, but not limited to, the total balance of the fund, the amount  
676 deposited into such fund in a fiscal year and an accounting of the  
677 expenditures made from such fund, and (B) not later than thirty days  
678 from the adoption of such board's budget, notify the exclusive  
679 bargaining representative for certified employees, chosen pursuant to  
680 section 10-153b, of (i) the establishment of the reserve fund for  
681 educational expenditures, or (ii) the board's intended uses for any funds  
682 in such fund during the next fiscal year.

683 Sec. 22. Section 10-222o of the general statutes is repealed and the  
684 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

685 (a) (1) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014, and each fiscal year  
686 thereafter, each local and regional board of education shall annually  
687 make available on the Internet web site of such local or regional board  
688 of education the aggregate spending on salaries, employee benefits,  
689 instructional supplies, educational media supplies, instructional  
690 equipment, regular education tuition, special education tuition,  
691 purchased services and all other expenditure items, excluding debt  
692 service, for each school under the jurisdiction of such local or regional  
693 board of education.

694 (2) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, and each fiscal year

695 thereafter, each local and regional board of education shall, on a  
696 quarterly basis, post on the Internet web site of such local or regional  
697 board of education (A) the actual classroom size and student-teacher  
698 ratios during the current school year, disaggregated by school, (B) the  
699 number of full-time equivalent staffing positions, disaggregated by  
700 categories assigned by the Department of Education, (C) the number of  
701 staffing vacancies in the school district and any accrued savings from  
702 such vacancies during the current fiscal year, and (D) the names and  
703 scope of services provided by all nonprofit organizations or the regional  
704 educational service center with whom the board has executed a formal  
705 memorandum of understanding, memorandum of agreement or  
706 contract to provide any support services to students, including, but not  
707 limited to, students who may be considered at risk of becoming  
708 disconnected from school. Each board shall submit a copy of the  
709 information described in this subsection to the legislative body of the  
710 municipality or, in a municipality where the legislative body is a town  
711 meeting, to the board of selectmen and the district's exclusive  
712 bargaining representative for certified employees chosen pursuant to  
713 section 10-153b.

714 (b) (1) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014, and each fiscal year  
715 thereafter, each regional educational service center shall annually make  
716 available on the Internet web site of such regional educational service  
717 center the aggregate spending on salaries, employee benefits,  
718 instructional supplies, educational media supplies, instructional  
719 equipment, regular education tuition, special education tuition,  
720 purchased services and all other expenditure items, excluding debt  
721 service, for each school under the jurisdiction of such regional  
722 educational service center.

723 (2) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, and each fiscal year  
724 thereafter, each regional educational service center shall, on a quarterly  
725 basis, post on the Internet web site of such regional educational service  
726 center (A) the actual classroom size and student-teacher ratios during  
727 the current school year, disaggregated by school, (B) the number of full-  
728 time equivalent staffing positions, disaggregated by categories assigned

729 by the Department of Education, (C) the number of staffing vacancies of  
730 such regional educational service center and any accrued savings from  
731 such vacancies during the current fiscal year, and (D) the names and  
732 scope of services provided by all nonprofit organizations with whom  
733 the regional educational service center has executed a formal  
734 memorandum of understanding, memorandum of agreement or  
735 contract to provide any support services to students, including, but not  
736 limited to, students who may be considered at risk of becoming  
737 disconnected from school. Each regional educational service center shall  
738 submit a copy of the information described in this subsection to the  
739 legislative body of the members of such regional educational service  
740 center or, in those municipalities where the legislative body is a town  
741 meeting, to the board of selectmen and the exclusive bargaining  
742 representative for certified employees chosen pursuant to section 10-  
743 153b.

744 (c) (1) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014, and each fiscal year  
745 thereafter, the governing authority for each state charter school shall  
746 annually make available on the Internet web site of such governing  
747 authority the aggregate spending on salaries, employee benefits,  
748 instructional supplies, educational media supplies, instructional  
749 equipment, regular education tuition, special education tuition,  
750 purchased services and all other expenditure items, excluding debt  
751 service, for each state charter school under the jurisdiction of such  
752 governing authority.

753 (2) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, and each fiscal year  
754 thereafter, the governing authority for each state charter school shall, on  
755 a quarterly basis, post on the Internet web site of such governing  
756 authority (A) the actual classroom size and student-teacher ratios  
757 during the current school year, disaggregated by school, (B) the number  
758 of full-time equivalent staffing positions, disaggregated by categories  
759 assigned by the Department of Education, (C) the number of staffing  
760 vacancies in the state charter school and any accrued savings from such  
761 vacancies during the current fiscal year, and (D) the names and scope of  
762 services provided by all nonprofit organizations or the regional

763 educational service center with whom the governing authority has  
764 executed a formal memorandum of understanding, memorandum of  
765 agreement or contract to provide any support services to students,  
766 including, but not limited to, students who may be considered at risk of  
767 becoming disconnected from school. Each governing authority shall  
768 submit a copy of the information described in this subsection to the  
769 exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees chosen  
770 pursuant to section 10-153b.

771 (d) Not later than January 1, 2027, and annually thereafter, the  
772 Department of Education shall make all information described in this  
773 section available on the department's Internet web site.

774 Sec. 23. Subsection (a) of section 10-233d of the general statutes is  
775 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
776 *2025*):

777 (a) (1) Any local or regional board of education, at a meeting at which  
778 three or more members of such board are present, or the impartial  
779 hearing board established pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, may  
780 expel, subject to the provisions of this subsection, any pupil in grades  
781 three to twelve, inclusive, whose conduct on school grounds or at a  
782 school-sponsored activity is violative of a publicized policy of such  
783 board and is seriously disruptive of the educational process or  
784 endangers persons or property or whose conduct off school grounds is  
785 violative of such policy and is seriously disruptive of the educational  
786 process, provided a majority of the board members sitting in the  
787 expulsion hearing vote to expel and that at least three affirmative votes  
788 for expulsion are cast. In making a determination as to whether conduct  
789 is seriously disruptive of the educational process, the board of education  
790 or impartial hearing board may consider, but such consideration shall  
791 not be limited to: (A) Whether the incident occurred within close  
792 proximity of a school; (B) whether other students from the school were  
793 involved or whether there was any gang involvement; (C) whether the  
794 conduct involved violence, threats of violence or the unlawful use of a  
795 weapon, as defined in section 29-38, and whether any injuries occurred;

796 and (D) whether the conduct involved the use of alcohol.

797 (2) Expulsion proceedings pursuant to this section, except as  
798 provided in subsection (i) of this section, shall be required for any pupil  
799 in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, whenever there is reason to  
800 believe that any pupil (A) on school grounds or at a school-sponsored  
801 activity, was in possession of a firearm, as defined in 18 USC 921, as  
802 amended from time to time, or deadly weapon, dangerous instrument  
803 or martial arts weapon, as defined in section 53a-3, (B) off school  
804 grounds, did possess such a firearm in violation of section 29-35 or did  
805 possess and use such a firearm, instrument or weapon in the  
806 commission of a crime under chapter 952, or (C) on or off school  
807 grounds, offered for sale or distribution a controlled substance, as  
808 defined in section 21a-240, whose manufacture, distribution, sale,  
809 prescription, dispensing, transporting or possessing with intent to sell  
810 or dispense, offering, or administering is subject to criminal penalties  
811 under sections 21a-277 and 21a-278. Such a pupil shall be expelled for  
812 one calendar year if the local or regional board of education or impartial  
813 hearing board finds that the pupil did so possess or so possess and use,  
814 as appropriate, such a firearm, instrument or weapon or did so offer for  
815 sale or distribution such a controlled substance, provided the board of  
816 education or the hearing board may modify the period of expulsion for  
817 a pupil on a case-by-case basis, and as provided for in subdivision (2) of  
818 subsection (c) of this section.

819 (3) Unless an emergency exists, no pupil shall be expelled without a  
820 formal hearing held pursuant to sections 4-176e to 4-180a, inclusive, and  
821 section 4-181a, provided whenever such pupil is a minor, the notice  
822 required by section 4-177 and section 4-180 shall also be given to the  
823 parents or guardian of the pupil at least five business days before such  
824 hearing, not including the day of such hearing. If an emergency exists,  
825 such hearing shall be held as soon after the expulsion as possible. The  
826 notice shall include information concerning the parent's or guardian's  
827 and the pupil's legal rights and concerning legal services provided free  
828 of charge or at a reduced rate that are available locally and how to access  
829 such services. An attorney or other advocate may represent any pupil

830 subject to expulsion proceedings. The parent or guardian of the pupil  
831 shall have the right to have the expulsion hearing postponed for up to  
832 one week to allow time to obtain representation, except that if an  
833 emergency exists, such hearing shall be held as soon after the expulsion  
834 as possible.

835 (4) (A) Prior to conducting an expulsion hearing as required by this  
836 subsection, an administrator, school counselor or school social worker  
837 at the school in which the pupil is enrolled shall contact the local  
838 homeless education liaison designated by the local or regional board of  
839 education for the school district, pursuant to Subtitle B of Title VII of the  
840 McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 USC 11431 et seq., as  
841 amended from time to time, to make a determination whether such  
842 pupil is a homeless child or youth, as defined in 42 USC 11343a, as  
843 amended from time to time. If it is determined that such pupil is a  
844 homeless child or youth, the local or regional board of education, or the  
845 impartial hearing board established pursuant to subsection (b) of this  
846 section, shall consider the impact of homelessness on the behavior of the  
847 pupil during the hearing. No such pupil may be expelled without a plan  
848 of interventions and supports to mitigate the impact of homelessness on  
849 the behavior of the student.

850 (B) Any pupil who is determined to be a homeless child or youth and  
851 has been expelled for a second time shall be provided a meeting with  
852 the local homeless education liaison by the local or regional board of  
853 education.

854 Sec. 24. (Effective July 1, 2025) (a) For the fiscal years ending June 30,  
855 2026, to June 30, 2028, inclusive, the Department of Education shall  
856 administer a student success coach pilot program to be implemented in  
857 the school districts for the towns of Bridgeport, New Haven, Waterbury,  
858 New Britain, Hartford, Windham, New London and Norwich. The  
859 student success coach pilot program shall utilize evidence-based  
860 strategies that have demonstrated effectiveness in supporting students  
861 identified as having attendance, behavioral or credit attainment  
862 challenges and any other risk factors that contribute to students

863 becoming more likely to become disconnected from school and  
864 increasing their risk of misusing drugs, including the use of opioids.

865 (b) The local board of education for a school district participating in  
866 the student success coach pilot program may apply for a grant in an  
867 amount not to exceed two million dollars. The department shall award  
868 such grants to participating boards, in accordance with the provisions  
869 of section 17a-674d of the general statutes, provided such participating  
870 boards (1) utilize an early indicator tool prescribed by the department  
871 to identify those students who have the greatest need for a student  
872 success coach, and (2) are evaluated by the Center for Connecticut  
873 Education Research Collaboration within the department, or another  
874 third party selected by the department.

875 (c) Not later than February 15, 2029, the department shall evaluate the  
876 implementation and effectiveness of the student success coach pilot  
877 program and submit a report on its findings and recommendations to  
878 the State Board of Education, the Opioid Settlement Advisory  
879 Committee, established pursuant to section 17a-674c of the general  
880 statutes, and the joint standing committees of the General Assembly  
881 having cognizance of matters relating to education and children, in  
882 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

883 Sec. 25. Subsection (b) of section 10-283 of the general statutes is  
884 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
885 *2025*):

886 (b) (1) Notwithstanding the application date requirements of this  
887 section, at any time within the limit of available grant authorization and  
888 within the limit of appropriated funds, the Commissioner of  
889 Administrative Services, in consultation with the Commissioner of  
890 Education, may approve applications for grants and make payments for  
891 such grants, for any of the following reasons: (A) To assist school  
892 building projects to remedy damage from fire and catastrophe, (B) to  
893 correct safety, health and other code violations, (C) to replace roofs,  
894 including the replacement or installation of skylights as part of the roof  
895 replacement project, (D) to remedy a certified school indoor air quality

896 emergency, (E) to install insulation for exterior walls and attics, [or] (F)  
897 to purchase and install a limited use and limited access elevator,  
898 windows, photovoltaic panels, wind generation systems, building  
899 management systems or portable classroom buildings, provided  
900 portable classroom building projects shall not create a new facility or  
901 cause an existing facility to be modified so that the portable buildings  
902 comprise a substantial percentage of the total facility area, as  
903 determined by the commissioner, or (G) to upgrade heating, ventilation  
904 and air conditioning systems or make other improvements to indoor air  
905 quality in school buildings subject to subdivision (2) of this subsection.

906 (2) The commissioner shall not award a grant under subparagraph  
907 (G) of subdivision (1) of this subsection to any applicant that, on or after  
908 July 1, 2026, has not certified compliance with the uniform inspection  
909 and evaluation of an existing heating, ventilation and air conditioning  
910 system pursuant to subsection (d) of section 10-220. The following  
911 expenses shall not be eligible for reimbursement under this subsection:  
912 Routine maintenance and cleaning of the heating, ventilation and air  
913 conditioning system, and work performed at or on a public school  
914 administrative or service facility that is not located or housed within a  
915 public school building. Recipients of a grant under subparagraph (G) of  
916 subdivision (1) of this subsection shall be responsible for the routine  
917 maintenance and cleaning of the heating, ventilation and air  
918 conditioning system and provide training to school personnel and  
919 building maintenance staff concerning the proper use and maintenance  
920 of the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system.

921 Sec. 26. Subsection (c) of section 10-66bb of the general statutes is  
922 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
923 *2025*):

924 (c) On and after July 1, 2015, the State Board of Education shall  
925 review, annually, all applications and grant initial certificates of  
926 approval for charters, in accordance with subsections (e) and (f) of this  
927 section, for a local or state charter school located in [a town that has one  
928 or more schools that have been designated as a commissioner's network

929 school, pursuant to section 10-223h, at the time of such application, or]  
930 a town that has been designated as a low achieving school district,  
931 pursuant to section 10-223e, at the time of such application. (1) Except  
932 as provided for in subdivision (2) of this subsection, no state charter  
933 school shall enroll (A) (i) more than two hundred fifty students, or (ii)  
934 in the case of a kindergarten to grade eight, inclusive, school, more than  
935 three hundred students, or (B) twenty-five per cent of the enrollment of  
936 the school district in which the state charter school is to be located,  
937 whichever is less. (2) In the case of a state charter school found by the  
938 State Board of Education to have a demonstrated record of achievement,  
939 said board shall, upon application by such school to said board, waive  
940 the provisions of subdivision (1) of this subsection for such school. (3)  
941 The State Board of Education shall give preference to applicants for  
942 charter schools (A) whose primary purpose is the establishment of  
943 education programs designed to serve one or more of the following  
944 student populations: (i) Students with a history of low academic  
945 performance, (ii) students who receive free or reduced priced lunches  
946 pursuant to federal law and regulations, (iii) students with a history of  
947 behavioral and social difficulties, (iv) students identified as requiring  
948 special education, (v) students who are multilingual learners, or (vi)  
949 students of a single gender; (B) whose primary purpose is to improve  
950 the academic performance of an existing school that has consistently  
951 demonstrated substandard academic performance, as determined by  
952 the Commissioner of Education; (C) that will serve students who reside  
953 in a priority school district pursuant to section 10-266p; (D) that will  
954 serve students who reside in a district in which seventy-five per cent or  
955 more of the enrolled students are members of racial or ethnic minorities;  
956 (E) that demonstrate highly credible and specific strategies to attract,  
957 enroll and retain students from among the populations described in  
958 subparagraph (A)(i) to (A)(vi), inclusive, of this subdivision; or (F) that,  
959 in the case of an applicant for a state charter school, such state charter  
960 school will be located at a work-site or such applicant is an institution  
961 of higher education. In determining whether to grant an initial  
962 certificate of approval for a charter, the State Board of Education shall  
963 consider (i) the effect of the proposed charter school on (I) the reduction

964 of racial, ethnic and economic isolation in the region in which it is to be  
965 located, (II) the regional distribution of charter schools in the state, (III)  
966 the potential of over-concentration of charter schools within a school  
967 district or in contiguous school districts, and (IV) the state's efforts to  
968 close achievement gaps, as defined in section 10-1600, and (ii) the  
969 comments made at a public hearing conducted pursuant to subdivision  
970 (2) of subsection (e) of this section or subparagraph (B)(ii) of subdivision  
971 (1) of subsection (f) of this section.

972 Sec. 27. Subsection (c) of section 10-74i of the general statutes is  
973 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
974 *2025*):

975 (c) Following the designation or establishment of a community  
976 school, but prior to the opening of such community school, the board of  
977 education shall conduct (1) an operations and instructional audit [, in  
978 accordance with the provisions of subsection (c) of section 10-223h,] for  
979 an existing school that has been designated as a community school, (2)  
980 a community needs audit to identify the academic, physical, social,  
981 emotional, health, mental health and civic needs of students and their  
982 families that may impact student learning and academic achievement,  
983 and (3) a community resource assessment of potential resources,  
984 services and opportunities available within or near the community that  
985 students, families and community members may access and integrate  
986 into the community school.

987 Sec. 28. Subdivision (14) of subsection (a) of section 4a-60g of the  
988 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
989 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

990 (14) "Municipal public works contract" means that portion of an  
991 agreement entered into on or after October 1, 2015, between any  
992 individual, firm or corporation and a municipality for the construction,  
993 rehabilitation, conversion, extension, demolition or repair of a public  
994 building, highway or other changes or improvements in real property,  
995 which is financed in whole or in part by the state, including, but not  
996 limited to, matching expenditures, grants, loans, insurance or

997 guarantees. [but excluding any project of an alliance district, as defined  
998 in section 10-262u, financed by state funding in an amount equal to fifty  
999 thousand dollars or less.]

1000 Sec. 29. Subsections (a) to (c), inclusive, of section 8-240a of the  
1001 general statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
1002 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1003 (a) As used in this section:

1004 (1) ["Alliance district" has the same meaning as provided in section  
1005 10-262u] "Eligible community" means the fifty towns with the lowest  
1006 equalized net grand list;

1007 (2) "Environmental justice community" has the same meaning as  
1008 provided in section 22a-20a; and

1009 (3) "Low-income resident" means, after adjustments for family size,  
1010 individuals or families whose income is not greater than (A) sixty per  
1011 cent of the state median income, (B) eighty per cent of the area median  
1012 income for the area in which the resident resides, as determined by the  
1013 United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, or (C)  
1014 any other definition of "low-income resident" included in any program  
1015 in the state that utilizes federal funding, as determined by the  
1016 Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection.

1017 (b) There is established a revolving loan and grant fund to be known  
1018 as the "Housing Environmental Improvement Revolving Loan and  
1019 Grant Fund". The fund may be funded from the proceeds of bonds  
1020 issued pursuant to section 8-240b or from any moneys available to the  
1021 Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection or from other  
1022 sources. Investment earnings credited to the fund shall become part of  
1023 the assets of the fund. Any balance remaining in the fund at the end of  
1024 any fiscal year shall be carried forward in the fund for the next fiscal  
1025 year. Payments of principal or interest on a low interest loan made  
1026 pursuant to this section shall be paid to the State Treasurer for deposit  
1027 in the Housing Environmental Improvement Revolving Loan and Grant

1028 Fund. The fund shall be used to make grants or low interest loans  
1029 pursuant to this section to pay reasonable and necessary fees incurred  
1030 in administering loans under this section. The Commissioner of Energy  
1031 and Environmental Protection may enter into contracts with quasi-  
1032 public agencies or nonprofit corporations to provide for the  
1033 administration of the Housing Environmental Improvement Revolving  
1034 Loan and Grant Fund by such entity or entities, provided no grant or  
1035 low interest loan shall be made from the fund without the authorization  
1036 of the commissioner as provided in this section.

1037 (c) The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection, in  
1038 collaboration with the Commissioner of Housing, shall establish a pilot  
1039 program or programs to provide financing or grants from the fund  
1040 established in subsection (b) of this section for retrofitting projects for  
1041 multifamily residences located in environmental justice communities or  
1042 [alliance districts] eligible communities that (1) improve the energy  
1043 efficiency of such residences, which may include, but need not be  
1044 limited to, the installation of heat pumps, solar power generating  
1045 systems, improved roofing, exterior doors and windows, improved  
1046 insulation, air sealing, improved ventilation, appliance upgrades and  
1047 any electric system or wiring upgrades necessary for such retrofit, (2)  
1048 remediate health and safety concerns that are barriers to any such  
1049 retrofit, including, but not limited to, mold, vermiculite, asbestos, lead  
1050 and radon, or (3) provide services to assist residents and building  
1051 owners to access and implement the programs established pursuant to  
1052 this section or other available state or federal programs that enable the  
1053 implementation of energy efficiency retrofitting.

1054 Sec. 30. Section 8-265pp of the general statutes is repealed and the  
1055 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1056 The Connecticut Housing Finance Authority shall develop and  
1057 administer a program of mortgage assistance to certified teachers (1)  
1058 employed by priority school districts pursuant to section 10-266p, (2)  
1059 employed by transitional school districts pursuant to section 10-263c, (3)  
1060 employed by the Technical Education and Career System at a technical

1061 education and career school located in such priority or transitional  
1062 school districts, (4) who teach in a subject matter shortage area pursuant  
1063 to section 10-8b, (5) who graduated from a public high school in [an  
1064 educational reform district, as defined in section 10-262u] a priority  
1065 school district, or (6) who graduated from an historically black college  
1066 or university or a Hispanic-serving institution, as those terms are  
1067 defined in the Higher Education Act of 1965, P.L. 89-329, as amended  
1068 from time to time, and reauthorized by the Higher Education  
1069 Opportunity Act of 2008, P.L. 110-315, as amended from time to time.  
1070 Such assistance shall be available to eligible teachers for the purchase of  
1071 a house as their principal residence, provided, in the case of a teacher  
1072 employed by a priority or a transitional school district, or by the  
1073 Technical Education and Career System at a technical education and  
1074 career school located in a priority or transitional school district, the  
1075 house is located in such district. In making mortgage assistance  
1076 available under the program, the authority shall utilize down payment  
1077 assistance or any other appropriate housing subsidies. The terms of any  
1078 mortgage assistance shall allow the mortgagee to realize a reasonable  
1079 portion of the equity gain upon sale of the mortgaged property.

1080 Sec. 31. Section 10-4q of the general statutes is repealed and the  
1081 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1082 The Commissioner of Education, with the assistance of the State  
1083 Education Resource Center, established pursuant to section 10-357a,  
1084 may provide grants to those local and regional boards of education [for  
1085 school districts designated as alliance districts, pursuant to section 10-  
1086 262u] that have been identified by the commissioner as in need of  
1087 literacy assistance based on student performance on the mastery  
1088 examination in reading. Such grants shall be for the creation and  
1089 acquisition of new curricula, training in the use of such curricula and  
1090 related supporting textbooks and other materials. Such local and  
1091 regional boards of education may use such grants only for curricula,  
1092 training and related textbooks and materials that have been authorized  
1093 by the commissioner. Such local and regional boards of education shall  
1094 apply for grants pursuant to this section at such time and in such

1095 manner as the commissioner prescribes, and the commissioner shall  
1096 determine the amount of the grant awards.

1097 Sec. 32. Section 10-14u of the general statutes is repealed and the  
1098 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1099 (a) As used in this section:

1100 (1) "Achievement gaps" means the existence of a significant disparity  
1101 in the academic performance of students among and between (A) racial  
1102 groups, (B) ethnic groups, (C) socioeconomic groups, (D) genders, and  
1103 (E) multilingual learners and students whose primary language is  
1104 English.

1105 (2) "Opportunity gaps" means the ways in which race, ethnicity,  
1106 socioeconomic status, English proficiency, community wealth, familial  
1107 situations or other factors intersect with the unequal or inequitable  
1108 distribution of resources and opportunities to contribute to or  
1109 perpetuate lower educational expectations, achievement or attainment.

1110 (3) "Scientifically-based reading research and instruction" means (A)  
1111 a comprehensive program or a collection of instructional practices that  
1112 is based on reliable, valid evidence showing that when such programs  
1113 or practices are used, students can be expected to achieve satisfactory  
1114 reading progress, and (B) the integration of instructional strategies for  
1115 continuously assessing, evaluating and communicating the student's  
1116 reading progress and needs in order to design and implement ongoing  
1117 interventions so that students of all ages and proficiency levels can read  
1118 and comprehend text and apply higher level thinking skills. Such  
1119 comprehensive program or collection of practices includes, but is not  
1120 limited to, instruction in the following areas of reading: Oral language,  
1121 phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, rapid automatic  
1122 name or letter name fluency and reading comprehension.

1123 (4) "Literacy district" means a school district for a local or regional  
1124 board of education that has been identified by the Commissioner of  
1125 Education as in need of literacy assistance based on student

1126 performance on the mastery examination in reading for such district.

1127 (b) For the school year commencing July 1, 2022, and each school year  
1128 thereafter, the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success,  
1129 established pursuant to section 10-14gg, shall oversee an intensive  
1130 reading instruction program to improve student literacy in grades  
1131 kindergarten to grade three, inclusive, and close the achievement gaps  
1132 that result from opportunity gaps. Such intensive reading instruction  
1133 program shall include routine reading assessments for students in  
1134 kindergarten to grade three, inclusive, scientifically-based reading  
1135 research and instruction, an intensive reading intervention strategy, as  
1136 described in subsection (c) of this section, supplemental reading  
1137 instruction and reading remediation plans, as described in subsection  
1138 (d) of this section, and an intensive summer school reading program, as  
1139 described in subsection (e) of this section. For the school year  
1140 commencing July 1, 2022, and each school year thereafter, the Center for  
1141 Literacy Research and Reading Success shall provide, upon request of a  
1142 local or regional board of education for a [town designated as an alliance  
1143 district, as defined in section 10-262u,] literacy district the intensive  
1144 reading instruction program to such board, or may include the intensive  
1145 reading instruction program in the tiered supports in early literacy  
1146 provided under the reading readiness program pursuant to section 10-  
1147 14y, as amended by this act.

1148 (c) For the school year commencing July 1, 2022, and each school year  
1149 thereafter, the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success, shall  
1150 develop an intensive reading intervention strategy which shall be  
1151 available to local and regional boards of education for a town  
1152 designated as [an alliance district] a literacy district that have any  
1153 elementary schools that enroll students who are not reading at or above  
1154 grade level to ensure that such students are reading proficiently by  
1155 grade three in such schools. Such intensive reading intervention  
1156 strategy shall (1) include, but not be limited to, (A) rigorous assessments  
1157 in reading skills, (B) scientifically-based reading research and  
1158 instruction, (C) external literacy coaches who have experience and  
1159 expertise in the science of teaching reading, who will work with the

1160 reading data collected, support the principal of the school as needed,  
1161 observe, and coach classes and supervise the reading interventions, (D)  
1162 reading interventionists who will develop a reading remediation plan  
1163 for any student who is reading below proficiency, be responsible for all  
1164 supplemental reading instruction, and conduct reading assessments as  
1165 needed, and (E) training for teachers and administrators in  
1166 scientifically-based reading research and instruction, including, training  
1167 for school administrators on how to assess a classroom to ensure that all  
1168 children are proficient in reading by grade three, and (2) outline, at a  
1169 minimum, how (A) reading data will be collected, analyzed and used  
1170 for purposes of instructional development, (B) professional and  
1171 leadership development will be related to reading data analysis and  
1172 used to support individual teacher and classroom needs, (C) schools  
1173 will communicate with parents and guardians of students on reading  
1174 instruction strategies and student reading performance goals, and on  
1175 opportunities for parents and guardians to partner with teachers and  
1176 school administrators to improve reading at home and at school, (D)  
1177 teachers and school leaders will be trained in the science of teaching  
1178 reading, (E) periodic student progress reports will be issued, and (F)  
1179 such intensive reading intervention strategy will be monitored at the  
1180 classroom level. The commissioner shall review and evaluate the  
1181 intensive reading intervention strategy for model components that may  
1182 be used and replicated in other [alliance districts] literacy districts to  
1183 ensure that all children are proficient in reading by grade three.

1184 (d) (1) For the school year commencing July 1, 2022, and each school  
1185 year thereafter, each local and regional board of education for a [town  
1186 designated as an alliance district] literacy district shall, in consultation  
1187 with the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success, provide  
1188 supplemental reading instruction to students in kindergarten to grade  
1189 three, inclusive, who are reading below proficiency, as identified by the  
1190 reading assessment described in section 10-14t. Such supplemental  
1191 reading instruction shall be provided by a reading interventionist  
1192 during regular school hours.

1193 (2) A reading remediation plan shall be developed by a reading

1194 interventionist for each student enrolled in an elementary school in [an  
1195 alliance district] a literacy district in kindergarten to grade three,  
1196 inclusive, who has been identified as reading below proficiency to  
1197 address and correct the reading deficiency of such student. Such  
1198 remediation plan shall include instructional strategies that utilize  
1199 research-based reading instruction materials and teachers trained in  
1200 reading instruction, parental involvement in the implementation of the  
1201 remediation plan and regular progress reports on such student.

1202 (3) The principal of each elementary school in [an alliance district] a  
1203 literacy district shall notify the parent or guardian of any student in  
1204 kindergarten to grade three, inclusive, who has been identified as being  
1205 below proficiency in reading. Such notice shall be in writing and (A)  
1206 include an explanation of why such student is below proficiency in  
1207 reading, and (B) inform such parent or guardian that a remediation plan,  
1208 as described in subdivision (2) of this subsection, will be developed for  
1209 such student to provide supplemental reading instruction, including  
1210 strategies for the parent or guardian to use at home with such student.

1211 (e) (1) Each local and regional board of education for a [town  
1212 designated as an alliance district] literacy district shall, in consultation  
1213 with the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success, provide any  
1214 student in kindergarten to grade three, inclusive, who is reading below  
1215 proficiency at the end of the school year with an intensive summer  
1216 school reading instruction program. Such intensive summer school  
1217 reading instruction program shall include, (A) a comprehensive reading  
1218 intervention program, (B) scientifically-based reading research and  
1219 instruction strategies and interventions, (C) diagnostic assessments  
1220 administered to a student prior to or during an intensive summer school  
1221 reading instruction program to determine such student's particularized  
1222 need for instruction, (D) teachers who are trained in the teaching of  
1223 reading and reading assessment and intervention, and (E) weekly  
1224 progress monitoring to assess the reading progress of such student and  
1225 tailor instruction for such student.

1226 (2) Each local and regional board of education for a [town designated

1227 as an alliance district] literacy district providing supplemental reading  
1228 instruction as part of the intensive reading instruction program under  
1229 this section shall submit reports to the Center for Literacy Research and  
1230 Reading Success, at such time and in such manner as prescribed by the  
1231 Department of Education, on (A) student reading progress for each  
1232 student reading below proficiency based on the data collected from the  
1233 screening and progress monitoring of such student using the reading  
1234 assessments described in section 10-14t, and (B) the specific reading  
1235 interventions and supports implemented.

1236 (f) Not later than October 1, 2022, and annually thereafter, the  
1237 Commissioner of Education shall report to the joint standing committee  
1238 of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to  
1239 education, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, on student  
1240 reading levels in the intensive reading instruction program. Such report  
1241 shall include recommendations on model components of the school  
1242 intensive reading intervention strategy that may be used and replicated  
1243 in other [alliance districts] literacy districts.

1244 Sec. 33. Section 10-14y of the general statutes is repealed and the  
1245 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1246 (a) The Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success, established  
1247 pursuant to section 10-14gg, shall, within available appropriations,  
1248 establish a reading readiness program that provides tiered supports in  
1249 early literacy to each [school district designated as an alliance district,  
1250 pursuant to section 10-262u] literacy district, as defined in section 10-  
1251 14u, as amended by this act. The center shall conduct an assessment of  
1252 the reading readiness of students enrolled in kindergarten to grade  
1253 three, inclusive, for each [alliance district] literacy district. Such reading  
1254 readiness assessment shall consider any combination of the following:  
1255 (1) Whether such [alliance district] literacy district has developed and is  
1256 implementing a multiyear plan and allocated resources specifically for  
1257 early literacy in kindergarten to grade three, inclusive, (2) whether  
1258 teachers and administrators have received training regarding the  
1259 science of teaching reading, and the extent to which teachers and

1260 administrators have completed the program of professional  
1261 development in scientifically based reading research and instruction,  
1262 pursuant to section 10-148b, (3) the level of access to external literacy  
1263 coaches who have experience and expertise in the science of teaching  
1264 reading, and (4) whether there is reading intervention staff embedded  
1265 in the [alliance district] literacy district.

1266 (b) The center shall identify the early literacy needs of each [alliance  
1267 district] literacy district based on the results of the reading readiness  
1268 assessment conducted pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, and  
1269 provide tiered supports in early literacy as follows:

1270 (1) Tier one universal supports shall be provided to each [alliance  
1271 district, as defined in section 10-262u,] literacy district and include  
1272 online professional development modules aligned with the reading  
1273 instruction survey, as described in section 10-145r, and other literacy  
1274 modules and programs available in the state;

1275 (2) Tier two targeted supports shall include (A) a two-year program  
1276 of literacy leadership training for certain teachers and administrators,  
1277 (B) targeted professional development, in accordance with the  
1278 provisions of section 10-148b, using the results of the reading instruction  
1279 survey, as described in section 10-145r, and (C) external coaching  
1280 support; [, which may utilize funding received pursuant to section 10-  
1281 223h or 10-262u;] and

1282 (3) Tier three intensive supports shall include multiyear support from  
1283 the center and a commitment from the [alliance district] literacy district,  
1284 that includes, but need not be limited to, [(A) the use of funding received  
1285 pursuant to section 10-262u to support an early literacy program for  
1286 students enrolled in kindergarten to grade three, inclusive, (B) technical  
1287 support in the drafting and submission of alliance district reading plans,  
1288 as described in section 10-262u, (C)] (A) identifying and engaging  
1289 dedicated literacy coaches and reading interventionists, [(D)] (B)  
1290 targeted and intensive professional development, and [(E)] (C) funds for  
1291 assessment and instructional materials.

1292 [(c) Any tiered supports in early literacy provided under this section  
1293 shall be aligned with any turnaround plan, developed pursuant to  
1294 section 10-223h, or alliance district plan, developed pursuant to section  
1295 10-262u, as applicable.]

1296 Sec. 34. Subsections (a) and (b) of section 10-16z of the general statutes  
1297 are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
1298 *1, 2025*):

1299 (a) There is established the Early Childhood Cabinet. The cabinet  
1300 shall consist of: (1) The Commissioner of Early Childhood, or the  
1301 commissioner's designee, (2) the Commissioner of Education, or the  
1302 commissioner's designee, (3) the Commissioner of Social Services, or the  
1303 commissioner's designee, (4) the chancellor of the Connecticut State  
1304 Colleges and Universities, or the chancellor's designee, (5) the  
1305 Commissioner of Public Health, or the commissioner's designee, (6) the  
1306 Commissioner of Developmental Services, or the commissioner's  
1307 designee, (7) the Commissioner of Children and Families, or the  
1308 commissioner's designee, (8) the executive director of the Commission  
1309 on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity or the executive  
1310 director's designee, (9) the project director of the Connecticut Head Start  
1311 State Collaboration Office, (10) a parent or guardian of a child who  
1312 attends or attended a school readiness program appointed by the  
1313 minority leader of the House of Representatives, (11) a representative of  
1314 a local provider of early childhood education appointed by the minority  
1315 leader of the Senate, (12) a representative of the Connecticut Family  
1316 Resource Center Alliance appointed by the majority leader of the House  
1317 of Representatives, (13) a representative of a state-funded child care  
1318 center appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, (14) two  
1319 appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, one of whom  
1320 is a member of a board of education for a [town designated as an alliance  
1321 district, as defined in section 10-262u] priority school district pursuant  
1322 to section 10-266p, and one of whom is a parent who has a child  
1323 attending a school in [an educational reform district, as defined in  
1324 section 10-262u] a priority school district, (15) two appointed by the  
1325 president pro tempore of the Senate, one of whom is a representative of

1326 an association of early education and child care providers and one of  
1327 whom is a representative of a public elementary school with a  
1328 prekindergarten program, (16) ten appointed by the Governor, one of  
1329 whom is a representative of the Connecticut Head Start Association, one  
1330 of whom is a representative of the business community in this state, one  
1331 of whom is a representative of the philanthropic community in this  
1332 state, one of whom is a representative of the Connecticut State  
1333 Employees Association, one of whom is an administrator of the child  
1334 care development block grant pursuant to the Child Care and  
1335 Development Block Grant Act of 1990, one of whom is responsible for  
1336 administering grants received under section 1419 of Part B of the  
1337 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 USC 1419, as amended  
1338 from time to time, one of whom is responsible for administering the  
1339 provisions of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20  
1340 USC 6301 et seq., one of whom is responsible for coordinating education  
1341 services to children and youth who are homeless, one of whom is a  
1342 licensed family child care home provider and a member of a staffed  
1343 family child care network identified by the Commissioner of Early  
1344 Childhood, and one of whom is a parent recommended by a parent  
1345 advisory group that has been appointed by the Commissioner of Early  
1346 Childhood, (17) the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management,  
1347 or the secretary's designee, (18) the Lieutenant Governor, or the  
1348 Lieutenant Governor's designee, (19) the Commissioner of Housing, or  
1349 the commissioner's designee, [and] (20) the Commissioner of Mental  
1350 Health and Addiction Services, or the commissioner's designee, and (21)  
1351 the executive director of the Connecticut Library Consortium, or a  
1352 cooperating library service unit as defined in section 11-9e, or the  
1353 executive director's designee.

1354 (b) The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall serve as a  
1355 cochairperson of the cabinet. The other cochairperson of the cabinet  
1356 shall be appointed from among its members by the Governor. The  
1357 cabinet shall meet at least quarterly. Members shall not be compensated  
1358 for their services, except the following members, who are parents or  
1359 guardians, may, within available appropriations, be compensated for  
1360 any time and travel related to meetings of the cabinet: (1) The parent or

1361 guardian of a child who attends or attended a school readiness program  
1362 and was appointed by the minority leader of the House of  
1363 Representatives under subdivision (10) of subsection (a) of this section,  
1364 (2) the parent who has a child attending a school in [an educational  
1365 reform district, as defined in section 10-262u] a priority school district,  
1366 and was appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives  
1367 under subdivision (14) of subsection (a) of this section, and (3) the parent  
1368 who was recommended by a parent advisory group and appointed by  
1369 the Governor under subdivision (16) of subsection (a) of this section.

1370 Sec. 35. Subsection (c) of section 10-95i of the general statutes is  
1371 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
1372 *2025*):

1373 (c) The board shall consider the addition of new trade programs.  
1374 Decisions by the board to add such programs shall at a minimum be  
1375 based on the (1) projected employment demand for graduates of the  
1376 program, (2) cost of establishing the program, (3) availability of  
1377 qualified instructors, (4) existence of similar programs at other  
1378 educational institutions, (5) interest of students in the trade, (6) need to  
1379 diversify the trade with workers from underrepresented populations,  
1380 and (7) workforce training needs of (A) students, graduates and  
1381 residents of [alliance districts, as defined in section 10-262u, and]  
1382 priority school districts, as described in section 10-266p, and (B) students  
1383 and graduates of priority schools, as defined in section 10-265e. The  
1384 board shall authorize new trade programs for a maximum of five years.  
1385 The board shall provide a process for the public, including, but not  
1386 limited to, employers, parents, students or teachers, to request  
1387 consideration of the establishment of a new trade program.

1388 Sec. 36. Subsections (a) and (b) of section 10-156ii of the general  
1389 statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof  
1390 (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1391 (a) There is established an aspiring educators diversity scholarship  
1392 program administered by the Department of Education. The program  
1393 shall provide an annual scholarship to diverse students who (1)

1394 graduated from a public high school in [an alliance district, as defined  
1395 in section 10-262u] the state, and (2) are enrolled in a teacher preparation  
1396 program at any four-year institution of higher education. A diverse  
1397 student may receive an annual scholarship in an amount up to ten  
1398 thousand dollars for each year such diverse student is enrolled and in  
1399 good standing in a teacher preparation program. As used in this section,  
1400 "diverse" has the same meaning as provided in section 10-156bb.

1401 (b) Not later than January 1, 2023, the department shall, in  
1402 consultation with the chairpersons of the joint standing committee of the  
1403 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education,  
1404 develop a policy concerning the administration of the scholarship. Such  
1405 policy shall include, but need not be limited to, provisions regarding (1)  
1406 any additional eligibility criteria, (2) payment and distribution of the  
1407 scholarships to diverse students through the teacher preparation  
1408 programs in which they are enrolled, and (3) the notification of students  
1409 in high school [in alliance districts] of the scholarship program,  
1410 including the opportunity to apply for a scholarship under the program  
1411 while enrolled in high school and prior to graduation if such student  
1412 will be enrolled in a teacher preparation program during the following  
1413 fall semester at a four-year institution of higher education.

1414 Sec. 37. Subsection (d) of section 10-215l of the general statutes is  
1415 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
1416 *2025*):

1417 (d) In awarding grants under this section, the department shall (1)  
1418 give priority to applicants (A) located in [alliance districts, as defined in  
1419 section 10-262u, or who are providers of school readiness programs, as  
1420 defined in section 10-16p] priority school districts pursuant to section  
1421 10-266p, or who received a grant under this section prior to July 1, 2025,  
1422 and (B) who demonstrate broad commitment from school  
1423 administrators, school nutrition professionals, educators and  
1424 community stakeholders, and (2) not award a grant that is in an amount  
1425 greater than ten per cent of the total amount available for the fiscal year.

1426 Sec. 38. Subsection (g) of section 10-215m of the general statutes is

1427 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
1428 2025):

1429 (g) In addition to the reimbursement payments otherwise provided  
1430 pursuant to this section, the department may, within available  
1431 appropriations, provide supplemental grants to eligible boards of  
1432 education. Such supplemental grant funds may be expended for the  
1433 purpose of purchasing kitchen equipment, engaging with school  
1434 nutrition or farm-to-school consultants or training relating to the  
1435 processing, preparation and serving of locally sourced food and  
1436 regionally sourced food. In awarding supplemental grants under this  
1437 subsection, the department shall give priority to an eligible board of  
1438 education for a [town designated as an alliance district pursuant to  
1439 section 10-262u] priority school district pursuant to section 10-266p, or  
1440 that received a grant under this section prior to July 1, 2025.

1441 Sec. 39. Subsection (j) of section 10-236b of the general statutes is  
1442 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
1443 2025):

1444 (j) [(1)] On and after July 1, 2016, each local or regional board of  
1445 education, and each institution or facility operating under contract with  
1446 a local or regional board of education pursuant to subsection (d) of  
1447 section 10-76d that provides special education for children, including  
1448 any approved private special education program, shall [(A)] (1) record  
1449 each instance of the use of physical restraint or seclusion on a student,  
1450 [(B)] (2) specify whether the use of seclusion was in accordance with an  
1451 individualized education program, [(C)] (3) specify the nature of the  
1452 emergency that necessitated the use of such physical restraint or  
1453 seclusion, and [(D)] (4) include such information in an annual  
1454 compilation on its use of such restraint and seclusion on students. Each  
1455 local or regional board of education and such institutions or facilities  
1456 operating under contract with a local or regional board of education  
1457 pursuant to subsection (d) of section 10-76d that provides special  
1458 education for children, including any approved private special  
1459 education program shall provide such annual compilation to the

1460 Department of Education [for the purposes of the pilot program  
1461 established pursuant to subdivision (2) of this subsection] to examine  
1462 incidents of physical restraint and seclusion in schools and to the State  
1463 Board of Education for the purposes of subsection (k) of this section.  
1464 Local or regional boards of education and such institutions and facilities  
1465 that provide special education for children shall not be required to  
1466 report instances of in-school suspensions, as defined in subsection (c) of  
1467 section 10-233a.

1468 [(2) The Department of Education shall establish a pilot program for  
1469 the school year commencing July 1, 2015. Such pilot program shall be  
1470 implemented in various districts, including, but not limited to, an  
1471 alliance district, a regional school district and a regional education  
1472 service center. Under the pilot program, the Department of Education  
1473 shall examine incidents of physical restraint and seclusion in schools  
1474 and shall compile and analyze data regarding such incidents to enable  
1475 the department to better understand and respond to incidents of  
1476 physical restraint and seclusion on students in the state.]

1477 Sec. 40. Subdivision (2) of section 10-262f of the general statutes is  
1478 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
1479 *2025*):

1480 (2) "Base aid ratio" means for the fiscal year ending June 30, [2018]  
1481 2026, and each fiscal year thereafter, the sum of (A) one minus the town's  
1482 wealth adjustment factor, and (B) the town's base aid ratio adjustment  
1483 factor, if any, except that a town's base aid ratio shall not be less than (i)  
1484 ten per cent for [a town designated as an alliance district, as defined in  
1485 section 10-262u, or] a priority school district, as described in section 10-  
1486 266p, and (ii) one per cent for a town that is not [designated as an  
1487 alliance district or] a priority school district.

1488 Sec. 41. Section 10-262h of the general statutes is repealed and the  
1489 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1490 (a) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2018, each town maintaining  
1491 public schools according to law shall be entitled to an equalization aid

1492 grant as follows: (1) Any town [designated as an alliance district, as  
1493 defined in section 10-262u,] that is a priority school district pursuant to  
1494 section 10-266p shall be entitled to an equalization aid grant in an  
1495 amount equal to its base grant amount; and (2) any town that is not  
1496 [designated as an alliance district] a priority school district shall be  
1497 entitled to an equalization aid grant in an amount equal to ninety-five  
1498 per cent of its base grant amount.

1499 (b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019, each town maintaining  
1500 public schools according to law shall be entitled to an equalization aid  
1501 grant as follows: (1) Any town whose fully funded grant is greater than  
1502 its base grant amount shall be entitled to an equalization aid grant in an  
1503 amount equal to its base grant amount plus four and one-tenth per cent  
1504 of its grant adjustment; and (2) any town whose fully funded grant is  
1505 less than its base grant amount shall be entitled to an equalization aid  
1506 grant in an amount equal to its base grant amount minus twenty-five  
1507 per cent of its grant adjustment, except any such town designated as an  
1508 alliance district shall be entitled to an equalization aid grant in an  
1509 amount equal to its base grant amount.

1510 (c) For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2020, and June 30, 2021, each  
1511 town maintaining public schools according to law shall be entitled to an  
1512 equalization aid grant as follows: (1) Any town whose fully funded  
1513 grant is greater than its base grant amount shall be entitled to an  
1514 equalization aid grant in an amount equal to its equalization aid grant  
1515 amount for the previous fiscal year plus ten and sixty-six-one-  
1516 hundredths per cent of its grant adjustment; and (2) any town whose  
1517 fully funded grant is less than its base grant amount shall be entitled to  
1518 an equalization aid grant in an amount equal to its equalization aid  
1519 grant amount for the previous fiscal year minus eight and thirty-three-  
1520 one-hundredths per cent of its grant adjustment, except any such town  
1521 designated as an alliance district shall be entitled to an equalization aid  
1522 grant in an amount equal to its base grant amount.

1523 (d) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, each town maintaining  
1524 public schools according to law shall be entitled to an equalization aid

1525 grant as follows: (1) Any town whose fully funded grant is greater than  
1526 its base grant amount shall be entitled to an equalization aid grant in an  
1527 amount equal to its equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal  
1528 year plus ten and sixty-six-one-hundredths per cent of its grant  
1529 adjustment; and (2) any town whose fully funded grant is less than its  
1530 base grant amount shall be entitled to an equalization aid grant in an  
1531 amount equal to the amount the town was entitled to for the fiscal year  
1532 ending June 30, 2021.

1533 (e) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, each town maintaining  
1534 public schools according to law shall be entitled to an equalization aid  
1535 grant as follows: (1) Any town whose fully funded grant is greater than  
1536 its equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year shall be  
1537 entitled to an equalization aid grant in an amount equal to its  
1538 equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year plus sixteen  
1539 and sixty-seven-one-hundredths per cent of its grant adjustment; and  
1540 (2) any town whose fully funded grant is less than its equalization aid  
1541 grant amount for the previous fiscal year shall be entitled to an  
1542 equalization aid grant in an amount equal to the amount the town was  
1543 entitled to for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022.

1544 (f) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, each town maintaining  
1545 public schools according to law shall be entitled to an equalization aid  
1546 grant as follows: (1) Any town whose fully funded grant is greater than  
1547 its equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year shall be  
1548 entitled to an equalization aid grant in an amount equal to its  
1549 equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year plus twenty  
1550 per cent of its grant adjustment; (2) any town whose fully funded grant  
1551 is less than its equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year  
1552 shall be entitled to an equalization aid grant in an amount equal to the  
1553 amount the town was entitled to for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023;  
1554 and (3) any town designated as an alliance district shall be entitled to an  
1555 equalization aid grant in an amount that is the greater of (A) the amount  
1556 described in either subdivision (1) of this subsection or subdivision (2)  
1557 of this subsection, as applicable, (B) its base grant amount, or (C) its  
1558 equalization aid grant entitlement for the previous fiscal year.

1559 (g) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, each town maintaining  
1560 public schools according to law shall be entitled to an equalization aid  
1561 grant as follows: (1) Any town whose fully funded grant is greater than  
1562 its equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year shall be  
1563 entitled to an equalization aid grant in an amount equal to its  
1564 equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year plus fifty-six  
1565 and five tenths per cent of its grant adjustment; (2) any town whose fully  
1566 funded grant is less than its equalization aid grant amount for the  
1567 previous fiscal year shall be entitled to an equalization aid grant in an  
1568 amount equal to the amount the town was entitled to for the fiscal year  
1569 ending June 30, 2024; and (3) any town designated as an alliance district,  
1570 shall be entitled to an equalization aid grant in an amount that is the  
1571 greater of (A) the amount described in either subdivision (1) of this  
1572 subsection or subdivision (2) of this subsection, as applicable, (B) its base  
1573 grant amount, or (C) its equalization aid grant entitlement for the  
1574 previous fiscal year.

1575 (h) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, each town maintaining  
1576 public schools according to law shall be entitled to an equalization aid  
1577 grant as follows: (1) Any town whose fully funded grant is greater than  
1578 its equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year shall be  
1579 entitled to an equalization aid grant in an amount equal to its fully  
1580 funded grant; (2) any town whose fully funded grant is less than its  
1581 equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year shall be  
1582 entitled to an equalization aid grant in an amount equal to its  
1583 equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year minus  
1584 fourteen and twenty-nine-one-hundredths per cent of its grant  
1585 adjustment; and (3) any town [designated as an alliance district] that is  
1586 a priority school district shall be entitled to an equalization aid grant in  
1587 an amount that is the greater of (A) the amount described in either  
1588 subdivision (1) of this subsection or subdivision (2) of this subsection, as  
1589 applicable, (B) its base grant amount, or (C) its equalization aid grant  
1590 entitlement for the previous fiscal year.

1591 (i) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027, each town maintaining  
1592 public schools according to law shall be entitled to an equalization aid

1593 grant as follows: (1) Any town whose fully funded grant is greater than  
1594 its equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year shall be  
1595 entitled to an equalization aid grant in an amount equal to its fully  
1596 funded grant; (2) any town whose fully funded grant is less than its  
1597 equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year shall be  
1598 entitled to an equalization aid grant in an amount equal to its  
1599 equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year minus sixteen  
1600 and sixty-seven-one-hundredths per cent of its grant adjustment; and  
1601 (3) any town [designated as an alliance district] that is a priority school  
1602 district shall be entitled to an equalization aid grant in an amount that  
1603 is the greater of (A) the amount described in either subdivision (1) of  
1604 this subsection or subdivision (2) of this subsection, as applicable, (B) its  
1605 base grant amount, or (C) its equalization aid grant entitlement for the  
1606 previous fiscal year.

1607 (j) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2028, each town maintaining  
1608 public schools according to law shall be entitled to an equalization aid  
1609 grant as follows: (1) Any town whose fully funded grant is greater than  
1610 its equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year shall be  
1611 entitled to an equalization aid grant in an amount equal to its fully  
1612 funded grant; (2) any town whose fully funded grant is less than its  
1613 equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year shall be  
1614 entitled to an equalization aid grant in an amount equal to its  
1615 equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year minus twenty  
1616 per cent of its grant adjustment; and (3) any town [designated as an  
1617 alliance district] that is a priority school district shall be entitled to an  
1618 equalization aid grant in an amount that is the greater of (A) the amount  
1619 described in either subdivision (1) of this subsection or subdivision (2)  
1620 of this subsection, as applicable, (B) its base grant amount, or (C) its  
1621 equalization aid grant entitlement for the previous fiscal year.

1622 (k) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2029, each town maintaining  
1623 public schools according to law shall be entitled to an equalization aid  
1624 grant as follows: (1) Any town whose fully funded grant is greater than  
1625 its equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year shall be  
1626 entitled to an equalization aid grant in an amount equal to its fully

1627 funded grant; (2) any town whose fully funded grant is less than its  
1628 equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year shall be  
1629 entitled to an equalization aid grant in an amount equal to its  
1630 equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year minus  
1631 twenty-five per cent of its grant adjustment; and (3) any town  
1632 [designated as an alliance district] that is a priority school district shall  
1633 be entitled to an equalization aid grant in an amount that is the greater  
1634 of (A) the amount described in either subdivision (1) of this subsection  
1635 or subdivision (2) of this subsection, as applicable, (B) its base grant  
1636 amount, or (C) its equalization aid grant entitlement for the previous  
1637 fiscal year.

1638 (l) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2030, each town maintaining  
1639 public schools according to law shall be entitled to an equalization aid  
1640 grant as follows: (1) Any town whose fully funded grant is greater than  
1641 its equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year shall be  
1642 entitled to an equalization aid grant in an amount equal to its fully  
1643 funded grant; (2) any town whose fully funded grant is less than its  
1644 equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year shall be  
1645 entitled to an equalization aid grant in an amount equal to its  
1646 equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year minus thirty-  
1647 three and thirty-three-one-hundredths per cent of its grant adjustment;  
1648 and (3) any town [designated as an alliance district] that is a priority  
1649 school district shall be entitled to an equalization aid grant in an amount  
1650 that is the greater of (A) the amount described in either subdivision (1)  
1651 of this subsection or subdivision (2) of this subsection, as applicable, (B)  
1652 its base grant amount, or (C) its equalization aid grant entitlement for  
1653 the previous fiscal year.

1654 (m) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2031, each town maintaining  
1655 public schools according to law shall be entitled to an equalization aid  
1656 grant as follows: (1) Any town whose fully funded grant is greater than  
1657 its equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year shall be  
1658 entitled to an equalization aid grant in an amount equal to its fully  
1659 funded grant; (2) any town whose fully funded grant is less than its  
1660 equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year shall be

1661 entitled to an equalization aid grant in an amount equal to its  
1662 equalization aid grant amount for the previous fiscal year minus fifty  
1663 per cent of its grant adjustment; and (3) any town [designated as an  
1664 alliance district] that is a priority school district shall be entitled to an  
1665 equalization aid grant in an amount that is the greater of (A) the amount  
1666 described in either subdivision (1) of this subsection or subdivision (2)  
1667 of this subsection, as applicable, (B) its base grant amount, or (C) its  
1668 equalization aid grant entitlement for the previous fiscal year.

1669 (n) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2032, and each fiscal year  
1670 thereafter, each town maintaining public schools according to law shall  
1671 be entitled to an equalization aid grant in an amount equal to its fully  
1672 funded grant, except any town [designated as an alliance district] that is  
1673 a priority school district shall be entitled to an equalization aid grant in  
1674 an amount that is the greater of (1) its fully funded grant, (2) its base  
1675 grant amount, or (3) its equalization aid grant entitlement for the  
1676 previous fiscal year.

1677 Sec. 42. Subsection (c) of section 10-262i of the general statutes is  
1678 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
1679 *2025*):

1680 (c) All aid distributed to a town pursuant to the provisions of this  
1681 section [and section 10-262u] shall be expended for educational  
1682 purposes only and shall be expended upon the authorization of the local  
1683 or regional board of education, [and in accordance with the provisions  
1684 of section 10-262u.] For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1999, and each  
1685 fiscal year thereafter, if a town receives an increase in funds pursuant to  
1686 this section over the amount it received for the prior fiscal year, such  
1687 increase shall not be used to supplant local funding for educational  
1688 purposes. The budgeted appropriation for education in any town  
1689 receiving an increase in funds pursuant to this section shall be not less  
1690 than the amount appropriated for education for the prior year plus such  
1691 increase in funds.

1692 Sec. 43. Subsection (c) of section 10-262j of the general statutes is  
1693 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*

1694 2025):

1695 (c) Except as otherwise provided under the provisions of subsections  
1696 (g) and (h) of this section, a town designated as [an alliance district, as  
1697 defined in section 10-262u,] a priority school district pursuant to section  
1698 10-266p shall not reduce its budgeted appropriation for education  
1699 pursuant to this section.

1700 Sec. 44. Section 10-265h of the general statutes is repealed and the  
1701 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1702 (a) The Commissioner of Administrative Services, in consultation  
1703 with the Commissioner of Education, shall establish, within available  
1704 bond authorizations, a grant program to assist [alliance districts, as  
1705 defined in section 10-262u,] priority school districts pursuant to section  
1706 10-266p in paying for general improvements to school buildings. For  
1707 purposes of this section "general improvements to school buildings"  
1708 means work that (1) is generally not eligible for reimbursement  
1709 pursuant to chapter 173, and (2) is to (A) replace windows, doors, boilers  
1710 and other heating and ventilation system components, internal  
1711 communications and technology systems, lockers, floors, cafeteria  
1712 equipment and ceilings, including the installation of new drop ceilings,  
1713 (B) upgrade restrooms including the replacement of fixtures and related  
1714 water supplies and drainage, (C) upgrade and replace lighting,  
1715 including energy efficient upgrades to lighting systems and controls to  
1716 increase efficiency, and reduce consumption levels and cost, (D)  
1717 upgrade entryways, driveways, parking areas, play areas and athletic  
1718 fields, (E) upgrade equipment, including, but not limited to, the  
1719 following equipment purchased on or after November 1, 2017: Cabinets,  
1720 computers, laptops and related equipment and accessories, (F) repair  
1721 roofs, including the installation of energy efficient fixtures and systems  
1722 and environmental enhancements, or (G) install or upgrade security  
1723 equipment that is consistent with the school safety infrastructure criteria  
1724 described in section 10-292r, including, but not limited to, video  
1725 surveillance devices and fencing, provided "general improvements to  
1726 school buildings" may include work not specified in this subdivision if

1727 the [alliance district] priority school district provides justification for  
1728 such work acceptable to the Commissioner of Administrative Services,  
1729 but shall not include routine maintenance such as painting, cleaning,  
1730 equipment repair or other minor repairs or work done at the  
1731 administrative facilities of a board of education.

1732 (b) Eligibility for grants pursuant to this section shall be determined  
1733 for a five-year period. [based on a school district's designation as an  
1734 alliance district in the initial year of designation as an alliance district.]  
1735 Grant awards shall be made annually contingent upon the filing of an  
1736 application and a satisfactory annual evaluation. Priority shall be given  
1737 to [an alliance district] a priority school district that includes a life-cycle  
1738 stewardship plan with such [alliance district's] priority school district's  
1739 application. The life-cycle stewardship plan shall describe the  
1740 investments and other efforts that have been and will be made by the  
1741 [alliance district] priority school district to extend the life cycle of its  
1742 facilities and equipment. [Alliance districts] Priority school districts  
1743 shall apply for grants pursuant to this section at such time and in such  
1744 manner as the commissioner prescribes. Grant awards made to [an  
1745 alliance district] a priority school district that is one of the [alliance  
1746 districts] priority school districts with the five largest populations,  
1747 based on the 2010 federal census, shall be in an amount equal to or  
1748 greater than two million dollars.

1749 (c) No funds received by [an alliance district] a priority school district  
1750 pursuant to this section shall be used to supplant local matching  
1751 requirements for federal or state funding otherwise received by such  
1752 [alliance district] priority school district for improvements to school  
1753 buildings.

1754 (d) Each [alliance district] priority school district that receives funds  
1755 pursuant to this section shall file expenditure reports with the  
1756 Department of Administrative Services as requested by the  
1757 Commissioner of Administrative Services. Each [alliance district]  
1758 priority school district shall refund (1) any unexpended amounts at the  
1759 close of the project for which the grants are awarded, and (2) any

1760 amounts not expended in accordance with the approved grant  
1761 application.

1762 (e) General improvements for which grants are awarded in any year  
1763 shall be completed by the end of the succeeding fiscal year.

1764 Sec. 45. Section 10-265o of the general statutes is repealed and the  
1765 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1766 For the fiscal year ending June 30, [2014] 2026, and each fiscal year  
1767 thereafter, the Department of Education shall establish the municipal  
1768 aid for new educators grant program. On or before March first of each  
1769 year, the program shall, within available appropriations, provide grants  
1770 of up to two hundred thousand dollars to the local or regional board of  
1771 education for [an alliance district, as defined in section 10-262u,] a  
1772 priority school district pursuant to section 10-266p for the purpose of  
1773 extending offers of employment to students who are enrolled in a  
1774 teacher preparation program offered by a public or private institution  
1775 of higher education, are graduating seniors and are academically in the  
1776 top ten per cent of their graduating class.

1777 Sec. 46. Section 10-265p of the general statutes is repealed and the  
1778 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1779 The Commissioner of Education shall, within available  
1780 appropriations, establish a wraparound services grant program that  
1781 awards grants to [educational reform districts, as defined in section 10-  
1782 262u,] priority school districts pursuant to section 10-266p for social-  
1783 emotional behavioral supports, family involvement and support,  
1784 student engagement, physical health and wellness, and social work and  
1785 case management. The local or regional board of education for an  
1786 educational reform district may apply to the commissioner for a grant  
1787 under this section at such time and in such manner as the commissioner  
1788 prescribes.

1789 Sec. 47. Section 10-265q of the general statutes is repealed and the  
1790 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1791 The Commissioner of Education shall, within available  
1792 appropriations, establish [an educational reform district] a priority  
1793 school district science grant program that awards grants to [educational  
1794 reform districts, as defined in section 10-262u,] priority school districts  
1795 pursuant to section 10-266p for the purpose of improving student  
1796 academic performance in science, reading and numeracy in  
1797 kindergarten to grade eight, inclusive. The local or regional board of  
1798 education for [an educational reform district] a priority school district  
1799 may apply to the commissioner for a grant under this section at such  
1800 time and in such manner as the commissioner prescribes. In awarding  
1801 such grants, the commissioner shall give priority to (1) applicant  
1802 programs that partner with schools that have a record of low academic  
1803 performance in science, and (2) applicant after-school elementary  
1804 science programs that have a record of improving student academic  
1805 performance in science.

1806 Sec. 48. Subdivision (3) of subsection (a) of section 10-505 of the  
1807 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
1808 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1809 (3) "Eligible children" means children (A) from birth to four years of  
1810 age, inclusive, and children five years of age who are not eligible to  
1811 enroll in school pursuant to section 10-15c, or who are eligible to enroll  
1812 in school and will attend a school readiness program pursuant to section  
1813 10-16t, and (B) who reside (i) in an area served by a priority school or a  
1814 former priority school, as described in subdivision (2) of subsection (d)  
1815 of section 10-16p, (ii) in a town ranked one to fifty when all towns are  
1816 ranked in ascending order according to town wealth, as defined in  
1817 subdivision (26) of section 10-262f, whose school district is not a priority  
1818 school district pursuant to section 10-266p, (iii) in a town formerly a  
1819 town described in clause (ii) of this subparagraph, as provided for in  
1820 subdivision (2) of subsection (d) of section 10-16p, or (iv) in a town  
1821 [designated as an alliance district, as defined in section 10-262u,] whose  
1822 school district is [not] a priority school district pursuant to section 10-  
1823 266p;

1824 Sec. 49. Subsection (b) of section 10a-11k of the general statutes is  
1825 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
1826 *2025*):

1827 (b) The Office of Higher Education shall award grants under the  
1828 PATH program on a competitive basis to any nonprofit community-  
1829 based organization that (1) provided the types of assistance specified in  
1830 subsection (a) of this section during the academic year prior to the year  
1831 in which the grant will be awarded, and (2) will provide, cooperatively  
1832 with the school administrators of a public high school in the state, such  
1833 assistance during the academic year for which the grant will be  
1834 awarded. The office shall establish procedures for the submission of  
1835 grant applications for said program and shall review such grant  
1836 applications on the basis of an evaluation format developed by the  
1837 office, that shall include, but need not be limited to, preference for such  
1838 nonprofit community-based organizations that provide such assistance  
1839 in a [school district designated as an alliance school district, pursuant to  
1840 section 10-262u,] priority school district pursuant to section 10-266p for  
1841 the academic year in which the grant will be awarded. Grants shall be  
1842 awarded in amounts not exceeding twenty thousand dollars and not  
1843 less than fifteen thousand dollars and shall be available for the duration  
1844 of the academic year for which such grant is awarded. If the office finds  
1845 that any such grant is being used for any purpose that is not in  
1846 conformity with the purposes of the PATH program, the office may  
1847 require repayment of the grant to the state.

1848 Sec. 50. Section 10a-247 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
1849 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1850 (a) The Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority  
1851 shall establish, subject to available funding pursuant to section 10a-247a,  
1852 an [Alliance District] Educator and Counselor Loan Subsidy Program  
1853 for the purpose of subsidizing interest rates on authority loans, as  
1854 defined in section 10a-223, to teachers, paraeducators and school  
1855 counselors who are employed [in a district designated as an alliance  
1856 district pursuant to section 10-262u] by a local or regional board of

1857 education and who meet the eligibility criteria as established by the  
1858 authority and the Commissioner of Education.

1859 (b) The authority shall enter into a memorandum of agreement with  
1860 the Commissioner of Education to establish the eligibility criteria and  
1861 administrative guidelines for the [Alliance District] Educator and  
1862 Counselor Loan Subsidy Program. Such eligibility criteria and  
1863 guidelines shall include, but need not be limited to, (1) applicant  
1864 eligibility, (2) interest rate subsidies and principal limits on authority  
1865 loans subject to the [Alliance District] Educator and Counselor Loan  
1866 Subsidy Program, (3) the process for verifying the employment of  
1867 applicants, and (4) the requirement that an interest rate subsidy through  
1868 the [Alliance District] Educator and Counselor Loan Subsidy Program  
1869 shall terminate for any subsidy recipient who ceases to meet the  
1870 employment requirements of such program during the term of such  
1871 recipient's loan from the authority.

1872 Sec. 51. Section 10a-247a of the general statutes is repealed and the  
1873 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1874 The Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority  
1875 shall maintain a separate, nonlapsing account to hold funds for the  
1876 [Alliance District] Educator and Counselor Loan Subsidy Program  
1877 established pursuant to section 10a-247, as amended by this act. The  
1878 account shall contain any moneys required by law to be deposited in the  
1879 account, including, but not limited to, any state appropriation or the  
1880 proceeds from the sale of bonds issued for the purpose of section 10a-  
1881 247, as amended by this act. Moneys in the account shall be used (1) for  
1882 the purposes of the [Alliance District] Educator and Counselor Loan  
1883 Subsidy Program and for reasonable and necessary expenses for the  
1884 administration of such program, (2) for the issuance of authority loans  
1885 to refinance one or more eligible loans, and (3) to maintain a reserve held  
1886 by the authority to cover any losses incurred by the authority from the  
1887 issuance of such authority loans. For the purposes of this section,  
1888 "authority loans" and "eligible loans" have the same [meaning]  
1889 meanings as provided in section 10a-223.

1890 Sec. 52. Subdivision (3) of subsection (d) of section 12-18b of the  
1891 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
1892 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1893 (3) Each municipality [designated as an alliance district pursuant to  
1894 section 10-262u] whose school district is a priority school district  
1895 pursuant to section 10-266p or in which more than fifty per cent of the  
1896 property is state-owned real property shall be classified as a tier one  
1897 municipality.

1898 Sec. 53. Section 12-635 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
1899 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1900 The Commissioner of Revenue Services shall grant a credit against  
1901 any tax due under the provisions of chapter 207, 208, 209, 210, 211 or  
1902 212: (1) In an amount not to exceed one hundred per cent of the total  
1903 cash amount invested during the taxable year by the business firm in  
1904 programs operated or created pursuant to proposals approved pursuant  
1905 to section 12-632 for energy conservation projects directed toward  
1906 properties occupied by persons, at least seventy-five per cent of whom  
1907 are at an income level not exceeding one hundred fifty per cent of the  
1908 poverty level for the year next preceding the year during which such tax  
1909 credit is to be granted; (2) in an amount equal to one hundred per cent  
1910 of the total cash amount invested during the taxable year by the business  
1911 firm in programs operated or created pursuant to proposals approved  
1912 pursuant to section 12-632 for energy conservation projects at properties  
1913 owned or occupied by charitable corporations, foundations, trusts or  
1914 other entities as determined under regulations adopted pursuant to this  
1915 chapter; (3) in an amount equal to one hundred per cent of the total cash  
1916 amount invested during the taxable year by the business firm in a  
1917 comprehensive college access loan forgiveness program located in [an  
1918 "educational reform district" as defined in section 10-262u] a priority  
1919 school district pursuant to section 10-266p, that has established  
1920 minimum eligibility criteria including, but not limited to, years of  
1921 enrollment in the educational reform district, grade point average,  
1922 attendance record and loan forgiveness prerequisite; or (4) in an amount

1923 not to exceed sixty per cent of the total cash amount invested during the  
1924 taxable year by the business firm (A) in employment and training  
1925 programs directed at youths, at least seventy-five per cent of whom are  
1926 at an income level not exceeding one hundred fifty per cent of the  
1927 poverty level for the year next preceding the year during which such tax  
1928 credit is to be granted; (B) in employment and training programs  
1929 directed at persons with physical disabilities; (C) in employment and  
1930 training programs for unemployed workers who are fifty years of age  
1931 or older; (D) in education and employment training programs for  
1932 recipients in the temporary family assistance program; or (E) in child  
1933 care services. Any other program which serves persons at least seventy-  
1934 five per cent of whom are at an income level not exceeding one hundred  
1935 fifty per cent of the poverty level for the year next preceding the year  
1936 during which such tax credit is to be granted and which meets the  
1937 standards for eligibility under this chapter shall be eligible for a tax  
1938 credit under this section in an amount equal to sixty per cent of the total  
1939 cash invested by the business firm in such program.

1940 Sec. 54. Subdivision (4) of subsection (a) of section 32-285a of the  
1941 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
1942 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1943 (4) "Municipality" means a municipality designated as a public  
1944 investment community pursuant to section 7-545 or [as an alliance  
1945 district pursuant to section 10-262u] whose school district is a priority  
1946 school district pursuant to section 10-266p.

1947 Sec. 55. Section 45a-8c of the general statutes is repealed and the  
1948 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1949 (a) The Probate Court Administrator may, within available  
1950 appropriations, establish a truancy clinic within (1) any Regional  
1951 Children's Probate Court, [that serves a town designated as an alliance  
1952 district pursuant to section 10-262u,] or (2) any Probate Court that serves  
1953 a town [designated as an alliance district] that is not served by a  
1954 Regional Children's Probate Court. The administrative judge of the  
1955 Regional Children's Probate Court or the probate judge, as the case may

1956 be, or the designee of such administrative judge or such probate judge,  
1957 shall administer the truancy clinic for such administrative judge's or  
1958 such probate judge's respective court.

1959 (b) If the Probate Court Administrator establishes truancy clinics  
1960 pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, the principal of any  
1961 elementary or middle school, [located in a town designated as an  
1962 alliance district,] or the principal's designee, may refer to a truancy clinic  
1963 a parent or guardian with a child enrolled in such school who is a truant,  
1964 as defined in section 10-198a, or at risk of becoming a truant. Upon  
1965 receiving such referral, the truancy clinic shall prepare a citation and  
1966 summons for the parent or guardian of the child to appear at the clinic.  
1967 An attendance officer authorized pursuant to section 10-199, or a police  
1968 officer authorized pursuant to section 10-200, shall deliver the citation  
1969 and summons and a copy of the referral to the parent or guardian.

1970 (c) The administrative judge of the Regional Children's Probate Court  
1971 [that serves a town designated as an alliance district] or the probate  
1972 judge [that serves a town designated as an alliance district, as the case  
1973 may be,] may refer any matter referred to a truancy clinic to a probate  
1974 magistrate or attorney probate referee assigned by the Probate Court  
1975 Administrator pursuant to section 45a-123a to hear the matter.

1976 (d) The truancy clinics shall operate for the purpose of identifying  
1977 and resolving the cause of a child's truancy using nonpunitive  
1978 procedures. After the initial appearance made pursuant to the summons  
1979 described in subsection (b) of this section, the participation of a parent  
1980 or guardian in the truancy clinic shall be voluntary. The truancy clinics  
1981 shall establish protocols for clinic participation and shall establish  
1982 programs and relationships with schools, individuals, public and  
1983 private agencies, and other organizations to provide services and  
1984 support for parents, guardians and children participating in the clinics.

1985 (e) The Probate Court Administrator shall establish policies and  
1986 procedures to implement the truancy clinics and measure the  
1987 effectiveness of the truancy clinics.

1988 (f) Not later than September 1, 2015, and annually thereafter, each  
 1989 administrative judge of a Regional Children's Probate Court [that serves  
 1990 a town designated as an alliance district in which a truancy clinic has  
 1991 been established] and each probate judge [that serves a town designated  
 1992 as an alliance district in which a truancy clinic has been established]  
 1993 shall file a report with the Probate Court Administrator assessing the  
 1994 effectiveness of each truancy clinic in such administrative judge's or  
 1995 such probate judge's respective court.

1996 (g) Not later than January 1, 2016, the Probate Court Administrator  
 1997 shall submit, in accordance with section 11-4a, a report assessing the  
 1998 effectiveness of the truancy clinics to the joint standing committees of  
 1999 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the  
 2000 judiciary and education.

2001 Sec. 56. Sections 10-21r, 10-153s, 10-153t, 10-156gg, 10-183v, 10-223f,  
 2002 10-223h, 10-223i, 10-262u, 10-262v, 10-262w and 10-265r of the general  
 2003 statutes are repealed. (*Effective July 1, 2025*)

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

|           |                     |             |
|-----------|---------------------|-------------|
| Section 1 | <i>from passage</i> | New section |
| Sec. 2    | <i>from passage</i> | New section |
| Sec. 3    | <i>from passage</i> | New section |
| Sec. 4    | <i>from passage</i> | New section |
| Sec. 5    | <i>from passage</i> | New section |
| Sec. 6    | <i>from passage</i> | New section |
| Sec. 7    | <i>from passage</i> | New section |
| Sec. 8    | <i>from passage</i> | New section |
| Sec. 9    | <i>from passage</i> | New section |
| Sec. 10   | <i>July 1, 2025</i> | 3-13c       |
| Sec. 11   | <i>July 1, 2025</i> | 10-505b     |
| Sec. 12   | <i>July 1, 2025</i> | New section |
| Sec. 13   | <i>July 1, 2025</i> | 10-4(c)     |
| Sec. 14   | <i>July 1, 2025</i> | New section |
| Sec. 15   | <i>from passage</i> | New section |
| Sec. 16   | <i>July 1, 2025</i> | New section |
| Sec. 17   | <i>July 1, 2025</i> | 10-227      |

|         |              |                     |
|---------|--------------|---------------------|
| Sec. 18 | July 1, 2025 | 10-198d             |
| Sec. 19 | July 1, 2025 | 10-222              |
| Sec. 20 | July 1, 2025 | 10-248a             |
| Sec. 21 | July 1, 2025 | 10-51(d)(2)         |
| Sec. 22 | July 1, 2025 | 10-222o             |
| Sec. 23 | July 1, 2025 | 10-233d(a)          |
| Sec. 24 | July 1, 2025 | New section         |
| Sec. 25 | July 1, 2025 | 10-283(b)           |
| Sec. 26 | July 1, 2025 | 10-66bb(c)          |
| Sec. 27 | July 1, 2025 | 10-74i(c)           |
| Sec. 28 | July 1, 2025 | 4a-60g(a)(14)       |
| Sec. 29 | July 1, 2025 | 8-240a(a) to (c)    |
| Sec. 30 | July 1, 2025 | 8-265pp             |
| Sec. 31 | July 1, 2025 | 10-4q               |
| Sec. 32 | July 1, 2025 | 10-14u              |
| Sec. 33 | July 1, 2025 | 10-14y              |
| Sec. 34 | July 1, 2025 | 10-16z(a) and (b)   |
| Sec. 35 | July 1, 2025 | 10-95i(c)           |
| Sec. 36 | July 1, 2025 | 10-156ii(a) and (b) |
| Sec. 37 | July 1, 2025 | 10-215l(d)          |
| Sec. 38 | July 1, 2025 | 10-215m(g)          |
| Sec. 39 | July 1, 2025 | 10-236b(j)          |
| Sec. 40 | July 1, 2025 | 10-262f(2)          |
| Sec. 41 | July 1, 2025 | 10-262h             |
| Sec. 42 | July 1, 2025 | 10-262i(c)          |
| Sec. 43 | July 1, 2025 | 10-262j(c)          |
| Sec. 44 | July 1, 2025 | 10-265h             |
| Sec. 45 | July 1, 2025 | 10-265o             |
| Sec. 46 | July 1, 2025 | 10-265p             |
| Sec. 47 | July 1, 2025 | 10-265q             |
| Sec. 48 | July 1, 2025 | 10-505(a)(3)        |
| Sec. 49 | July 1, 2025 | 10a-11k(b)          |
| Sec. 50 | July 1, 2025 | 10a-247             |
| Sec. 51 | July 1, 2025 | New section         |
| Sec. 52 | July 1, 2025 | 12-18b(d)(3)        |
| Sec. 53 | July 1, 2025 | 12-635              |
| Sec. 54 | July 1, 2025 | 32-285a(a)(4)       |
| Sec. 55 | July 1, 2025 | 45a-8c              |
| Sec. 56 | July 1, 2025 | Repealer section    |

**Statement of Legislative Commissioners:**

In Sections 1, 2 and 4 to 9, inclusive, the effective date was changed from "July 1, 2025" to "from passage" for accuracy; in Section 6(e), ", or the Treasurer's designee," was added and "biannually" was changed to "semiannually" for consistency and proper form; in Section 7(b)(2), "described in section 5 of this act" was deleted for proper form; in Section 14, "September thirtieth" was changed to "September thirtieth annually" and "shall annually provide" was changed to "shall provide" for clarity; in Section 17(b), "may take" was changed to "may order for" for clarity; in Section 17(c), "its" was changed to "the department's" for clarity; in Section 18(b), "biannually" was changed to "semiannually" for consistency and proper form; in Section 24, "student success pilot program" was changed to "student success coach pilot program" for consistency; and in Section 39, subparagraph designators were changed to subdivision designators for proper form and "for the purposes of the pilot program established pursuant to subdivision (2) of this subsection" was bracketed for obsolescence.

**ED**            *Joint Favorable Subst. -LCO*

*The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.*

## OFA Fiscal Note

### State Impact:

| Agency Affected                                                   | Fund-Effect                 | FY 26 \$          | FY 27 \$    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Resources of the General Fund                                     | GF - Potential Revenue Loss | Up to 300 million | See Below   |
| Teachers' Retirement Bd.                                          | GF - Potential Cost         | None              | 49 million  |
| Resources of the UPE Trust                                        | UPE Trust - See Below       | See Below         | See Below   |
| Office of Early Childhood                                         | GF - Cost                   | See Below         | See Below   |
| Education, Dept.                                                  | GF - Savings                | 14,204,582        | 18,539,116  |
| Policy & Mgmt., Off.                                              | MRSF - Savings              | 7.8 million       | 7.8 million |
| Education, Dept.                                                  | GF - Cost                   | 5,774,433         | 6,174,433   |
| Treasurer                                                         | GF - Cost                   | 130,000           | 130,000     |
| State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits <sup>1</sup>                  | GF - Cost                   | 212,100           | 212,100     |
| Treasurer, Debt Serv.                                             | GF - Cost                   | See Below         | See Below   |
| Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority (CHESLA) | CHESLA - See Below          | See Below         | See Below   |
| Probate Court                                                     | PCAF - Potential Cost       | See Below         | See Below   |

Note: GF=General Fund; PCAF=Probate Court Administration Fund; MRSF=Municipal Revenue Sharing Fund

### Municipal Impact:

| Municipalities                      | Effect       | FY 26 \$    | FY 27 \$    |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Various Municipalities              | Revenue Loss | 7.8 million | 7.8 million |
| Various Municipalities              | See Below    | See Below   | See Below   |
| Local and Regional School Districts | See Below    | See Below   | See Below   |

<sup>1</sup>The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 40.71% of payroll in FY 26.

***Explanation***

The bill establishes a universal preschool trust, eliminates Alliance Districts, Educational Reform Districts, and the Commissioner's Network of Schools, and makes various other changes resulting in the fiscal impacts described below.

**Sections 1 – 10** set up the Universal Preschool Endowment (UPE) Trust and associated Board, describe eligible programmatic expenses and reimbursements for the trust, and provide investment thresholds to enable additional allowable uses of the trust.

*Revenues of the UPE Trust*

The bill requires up to \$300 million of unappropriated General Fund (GF) surpluses after the close of accounts for FY 25, and the entire surplus if the Budget Reserve Fund (BRF) is at its maximum threshold (18% of net GF appropriations for the current fiscal year) after the close of accounts for FY 26 and beyond, to be transferred into the Universal Preschool Endowment Trust. To the extent there are General Fund surpluses at the close of FY 25, FY 26, and in the out years, there will be a transfer of resources of the General Fund to the UPE Trust in each fiscal year following the surplus year. General Fund surpluses would otherwise be deposited in the Budget Reserve Fund (BRF), subject to statutory requirements regarding the use of BRF excess when applicable.

The bill also requires the resources of the UPE Trust be invested by the Treasurer separate and apart from other state investments, but in the same manner as several other state investment funds. Investment revenues are indeterminate, as they are dependent on available resources, market returns, and future investment decisions.

*Expenses of the UPE Trust*

To the extent revenues are deposited in the fund and amounts on deposit in the fund meets or exceeds the amount needed to fund the program, there will be ongoing annual administrative and investment

costs associated with the UPE Trust as a result of the bill starting no earlier than FY 27. Administrative expenses include a one-time cost to the State Treasurer associated with the establishment of the UPE Trust of up to \$100,000.

The bill allows the UPE Trust to enter into contracts for various administrative, legal, and investment services. It also requires the Treasurer and Commissioner of Early Childhood to enter into a memorandum of understanding regarding information sharing, and with the child care resource and referral agency designated by the Commission of Early Childhood. The bill specifies the ongoing costs of administering the UPE Trust are to be covered by the resources of the fund. As such, there is not anticipated to be a cost to appropriated funds or municipalities due to these sections.

Additionally, **Section 9** exempts the UPE Trust's property and earnings from all state and local taxes. To the extent these would otherwise be taxable, this precludes a revenue gain to the state and municipalities.

**Section 11** results in a cost to the Office of Early Childhood to establish a state-wide Tri-Share Child Care Matching Program. The total cost will be dependent on how many employers and employees sign up for the program. The state portion of funds are to be paid out of the Universal Preschool Trust. For context, under the program, costs for child care are shared equally between participating employers, employees, and the state.

**Section 12** results in a cost to the Office of Early Childhood of at least \$1 million in FY 26 and FY 27 to contract with a consultant to create and implement a centralized online enrollment portal.

For context, the portal must: 1) include information on early care and education program slot availability; 2) determine eligibility for available programs; 3) provide opportunities for families to apply for government financial assistance; 4) allow designated beneficiaries to apply for payments from the Universal Preschool Trust; and 5) estimate the

amount of tuition a family would pay after deducting subsidies and the amount covered by the Universal Preschool Trust.

**Sections 13 – 15** make procedural changes that have no fiscal impact.

**Section 16** establishes regional education accountability review boards for each planning region, to provide “intensive technical, financial and other assistance” and “review and analyze all education spending” of each Priority School District.

These requirements result in an additional annual cost to the Office of the State Treasurer and the State Department of Education (SDE), who are required to serve as chairs of each board, of approximately \$182,900 to each agency annually beginning in FY 26. Each agency would require one additional full-time employee to address the requirements of the bill for all planning regions and the budgets of every Priority School District. Annual costs include \$130,000 in salary and corresponding fringe benefits of \$52,900.

**Section 17** has no fiscal impact. It makes procedural changes to the annual expenditure report process between school boards and SDE.

**Section 18** has no fiscal impact. It requires SDE to include a tool that identifies students at risk of becoming disconnected in their chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan. SDE already utilizes such a tool.

**Sections 19 – 21** have no fiscal impact. They make technical and procedural changes to school boards' annual budget reporting requirements.

**Section 22** requires school boards and similar entities to collect and report certain data quarterly and requires SDE to make it available on their website, which results in annual staffing costs to SDE and potentially districts starting in FY 26, and a one-time development cost to SDE in FY 27. SDE will require one full-time Education Consultant (annual salary of \$130,000 and \$52,900 in fringe benefits) and an IT contractor (\$50,000 annually) to collect new data from districts and

report quarterly on SDE's website. Additionally, there is a \$400,000 one-time development cost in FY 27 for SDE to create a new system for data collection and integration.

There are potential staffing costs for school districts to collect and report the required data quarterly, dependent on existing staffing levels and their current data collection processes.

**Section 23** has no fiscal impact. It requires schools to contact the local homeless education liaison to determine if a student is homeless before a school expulsion hearing and to take certain steps if the student is homeless, which can be accomplished with existing resources.

**Section 24** establishes a student success coach pilot program within SDE for FY 26 through FY 28 and results in a cost of: (1) up to \$16 million for grants to certain districts, and a corresponding revenue gain of up to \$2 million for each of the districts, spread across the program's three-year timeframe; and (2) \$131,100 for the salary of an Education Consultant staff position and associated fringe benefit costs of \$53,400 per year to administer the program. The participating districts will be Bridgeport, New Haven, Waterbury, New Britain, Hartford, Windham, New London, and Norwich; these districts may apply for a grant.

**Section 25** expands the school construction reimbursement program to include standalone school air quality projects, which is anticipated to increase long-term spending under the school construction program. This will necessitate increased GO bond use and therefore increased long-term General Fund debt repayment. The increased GO bond spending will finance revenue gains to municipalities and school districts for those future air quality projects that would not have been funded under the standalone competitive grant program.

**Sections 26 - 28** have no fiscal impact. They make conforming changes associated with the bill's elimination of Alliance Districts and the Commissioner's Network of Schools.

**Section 29** applies the Housing Environmental Improvement

Revolving Loan and Grant Program and the pilot program for energy efficiency projects, to eligible communities rather than Alliance Districts. Alliance District towns that are not environmental justice communities would no longer be eligible.<sup>2</sup> To the extent there is a redistribution of grant funds, a municipality could experience a corresponding revenue gain or loss.

**Section 30** makes a conforming change regarding the elimination of Educational Reform Districts to an existing mortgage assistance program that the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) administers and is not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact.

**Sections 31 - 33** have no fiscal impact to the state. These make conforming changes and replace Alliance Districts with literacy districts for various programs. Alliance Districts will not be eligible for these programs unless they are identified as literacy districts.

**Section 34** has no fiscal impact. It expands the Early Childhood Cabinet to include the executive director of the Connecticut Library Consortium, and makes conforming changes to the cabinet membership associated with the bill's elimination of Alliance Districts and Educational Reform Districts.

**Section 35** has no fiscal impact. It makes a conforming change associated with the bill's elimination of Alliance Districts, regarding the responsibilities of the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System.

**Section 36** has no fiscal impact. It expands eligibility for the Aspiring Educators Diversity Scholarship to students who graduated from any school district in Connecticut, rather than just Alliance Districts, and is not anticipated to change the total amount of scholarship awards.

**Sections 37 - 38** replace Alliance Districts with Priority School Districts and with applicants that have previously received grants, for

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<sup>2</sup> The "eligible communities" criteria is the 50 towns with the lowest equalized net grand list. No Alliance Districts are currently in that group.

priority consideration, within the CT Grown for CT Kids Grant Program and for supplemental grants within the Local Food for Schools Incentive grant program. To the extent there is a redistribution of grant funds, a school district or municipality could experience a corresponding revenue gain or loss. There is no anticipated cost to the state, as the grants are capped.

**Section 39** has no fiscal impact. It repeals a pilot program for examining incidents of physical restraint and seclusion. The pilot program has been completed.

**Sections 40 - 41** replace Alliance Districts with Priority School Districts for the ECS formula's minimum base aid ratio (i.e., state aid percentage) and total entitlement hold harmless provisions beginning in FY 26, resulting in an estimated savings to the General Fund within the State Department of Education of \$4,335,184 in FY 26 and \$8,669,718 in FY 27.<sup>3</sup> There is a corresponding revenue loss to overfunded towns that are classified as Alliance Districts and are not Priority School Districts. There are 14 such towns in FY 26. The General Fund savings and revenue loss to impacted towns continues into the future, growing in magnitude through FY 32, when the overfunded towns reach ECS full funding.

**Section 42** has no fiscal impact. It makes a conforming change associated with the bill's elimination of Alliance Districts.

**Section 43** has no fiscal impact to the state. It applies a prohibition on reducing a town's minimum budget requirement (MBR) to PSDs instead of Alliance Districts. Districts that are Alliance Districts and not Priority School Districts will be able to reduce their budgeted appropriations for education in circumstances allowed by statute.

**Section 44** alters eligibility for a school minor capital grants program, which is funded through General Obligation (GO) bonds. Current law limits eligibility to Alliance Districts, which the section replaces with

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<sup>3</sup> The bill and the current law formula (which is the comparison point) both resume the ECS phase-out decreases to towns considered overfunded beginning in FY 26.

Priority School Districts. Future General Fund debt service costs may be incurred at a different rate to the degree that it causes authorized GO bond funds to be expended at a different rate than they otherwise would have been absent the eligibility change.

As of April 1, 2025, there is an unallocated bond balance of \$18 million for the Alliance District grant program. The section does not change GO bond authorizations.

This section would preclude a potential revenue increase for Alliance Districts that are not also Priority School Districts, if awards would have been given for otherwise eligible expenses.

**Section 45** has no fiscal impact. It replaces Alliance Districts with Priority School Districts for eligibility for the Municipal Aid for New Educators Grant Program, which is not currently funded.

**Sections 46 - 47** have no fiscal impact to the state. They expand eligibility from Educational Reform Districts to Priority School Districts for a wraparound services grant program and a science grant program, which are not currently funded. There are six Priority School Districts that are not also Reform Districts.

**Section 48** makes technical and conforming changes to the Office of Early Childhood statutes related to eliminating Alliance Districts, which does not result in a fiscal impact to the state.

**Section 49** has no fiscal impact. It makes conforming changes associated with the bill's elimination of Alliance Districts, regarding a grant program administered by the Office of Higher Education (OHE). These changes are not anticipated to change the total amount of OHE grant awards.

**Sections 50 - 51** expand eligibility for an existing loan subsidy program to any teachers employed by a local or regional board of education, instead of being limited to only teachers in Alliance Districts. The Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority (CHESLA), a self-supporting, quasi-public agency, administers this

program. These sections may result in an increase in subsidies paid by CHESLA via existing resources (originally funded through General Obligation bonds) but they do not increase program funding or provide any new funding sources.

**Section 52** results in a cumulative revenue loss of approximately \$7.8 million to various municipalities in both FY 26 and FY 27 and corresponding savings to the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) for the Tiered PILOT grant.

The bill replaces Alliance Districts with Priority School Districts in the Tiered PILOT formula. Currently municipalities with an Alliance District are considered tier 1 for the Tiered PILOT formula and are guaranteed to receive at least 53% of the grant owed. Municipalities that no longer have an Alliance District or Priority School District and do not otherwise qualify as a tier 1 town will see a revenue loss in their Tiered PILOT grant.

**Section 53** applies the Neighborhood Assistance Act tax credit program to Priority School Districts instead of Educational Reform Districts. This does not result in any fiscal impact to the state as it does not alter the aggregate annual \$5 million cap on the program.

**Section 54** alters eligibility for the Community Investment Fund 2030, which is funded through General Obligation (GO) bonds. Current law limits eligibility to public investment communities and Alliance Districts, which the bill replaces with public investment communities and Priority School Districts. Future General Fund debt service costs may be incurred at a different rate to the degree that it causes authorized GO bond funds to be expended at a different rate than they otherwise would have been absent the eligibility change.

As of April 1, 2025, there is an unallocated bond balance of \$100.6 million for the Community Investment Fund 2030. The section does not change GO bond authorizations.

This section would preclude a potential revenue increase for Alliance

Districts that are not also Priority School Districts or public investment communities, if awards would have been given for otherwise eligible expenses.

**Section 55** allows the Probate Court Administration (PCA) to establish truancy clinics in any area of state, which results in a potential cost to the Probate Court Administration Fund (PCAF) to the extent that truancy clinics are established.

Currently, there is only one such clinic that serves one elementary school. In FY 23, \$3,000 was expended to support this clinic. Most of the work for the clinic is conducted on a volunteer basis. The bill (and current law) does not require the work of the clinic to be conducted by volunteers. Should a clinic be established without volunteers, it will experience significant costs. It is unlikely that the PCA will establish additional clinics.

**Section 56** repeals numerous statutes, resulting in various fiscal impacts.

Section 56 repeals the Commissioner's Network of Schools. Eliminating the Commissioner's Network of Schools will: (1) require SDE to significantly revise the federally approved Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan, which allows SDE to receive certain federal funding; and (2) result in an annual General Fund savings of \$9,869,398, the amount equal to the Commissioner's Network budget line item within SDE, starting in FY 26.

Section 56 repeals the statute placing limitations on the reemployment of teachers receiving retirement benefits, resulting in a potential cost to the Teachers' Retirement Board of \$49 million annually beginning in FY 27 associated with the anticipated increase to the Teachers' Retirement System's unfunded actuarial accrued liability (UAAL). This increase assumes active members retire earlier or upon accruing the maximum pension benefit to seek reemployment, which effectively reduces employee contributions and increases the number of pension beneficiaries being paid out of the system. Actual costs will be

realized through the actuarial determined employer contribution established in the annual valuation.

Section 56 repeals Alliance Districts and associated restrictions of eligible spending for the Alliance District portion of ECS funding. This may alter how current Alliance Districts choose to spend ECS funding.

Section 56 repeals the school air quality competitive grant program. Repealing the program will result in lower future debt service costs from not using GO bonds previously authorized for the program. As of April 1, 2025, the unallocated balance for the program is \$138.5 million. The section does not change GO bond authorizations.<sup>4</sup>

Various other statutes are repealed in section 56, which do not result in a fiscal impact as the repealed programs are not currently administered or the statutes are procedural in nature.

### ***The Out Years***

The ongoing fiscal impacts identified above will continue into the future subject to future municipal decisions, applications for the school construction program, and the terms of any bonds issued.

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<sup>4</sup> The Governor's proposed bond bill (SB 1247) eliminates the remaining \$138.5 million balance of authorized and unallocated bonds for the school air quality competitive grant program.

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## OLR Bill Analysis

### sSB 1

#### **AN ACT INCREASING RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS, SCHOOLS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION.**

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*Establishes the Universal Preschool Trust, funds it with transfers of unappropriated surplus, and requires the state treasurer to administer and invest the trust's funds; creates the Universal Preschool Trust Board; allows funds in the trust to be used for expenses for early care and education programs, the eligible categories of which expand in phases based on the trust's rate of return*

##### § 12 — ONLINE ENROLLMENT PORTAL

*Requires OEC to develop a centralized portal to allow families to find early care and education programs, determine eligibility, and apply for available government financial assistance*

##### § 13 — UPDATES TO SBE'S FIVE-YEAR PLAN PROCESS

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*Requires local BOEs to create a report on nonlapsing, unspent funds and include similar information in an existing report; similarly updates requirements related to regional BOE educational expenditures reserve funds*

### § 22 — POSTING CLASSROOM AND STAFFING DATA

*Requires school boards, RESCs, and charter schools to post on their websites information on class size, student-teacher ratios and other staffing, and the nonprofits that provide student support services to their students; requires SDE to also post this information on its website*

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*Requires districts to contact their local homeless education liaisons prior to an expulsion hearing to determine if the student is homeless*

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*Requires SDE to administer a three-year student success coach pilot program in select school districts*

### §§ 25 & 56 — HVAC GRANTS TO SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Repeals the school construction HVAC grant and instead merges it with an existing DAS school construction grant that provides grants for a broader range of school building projects; merges most of the existing law’s grant provisions, such as the application and eligibility criteria, into the existing grant but leaves out some aspects, such requiring applicants to go through the annual priority list process with legislative approval*

### §§ 26, 27 & 56 — NETWORK OF SCHOOLS PROGRAM REPEALED

*Repeals the SDE commissioner’s Network of Schools program aimed at improving academic achievement in low-performing schools*

### §§ 28-56 — REPEALS ALLIANCE DISTRICT PROGRAM AND RELATED CHANGES

*Repeals the alliance district program, which places certain requirements on the lowest performing 36 school districts in order for them to receive a portion of their ECS grant*

### § 34 — EARLY CHILDHOOD CABINET MEMBERSHIP

*Adds a library consortium member to the Early Childhood Cabinet*

### § 56 — REPEALERS

*Repeals provisions on the SDE commissioner’s network of schools, alliance districts, minority candidate retention and residency program, and allowing limited reemployment of retired teachers; makes related technical and conforming changes*

## **SUMMARY**

This bill makes numerous changes to the education statutes as

described in the section-by-section analysis below.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Various, see below.

## **§§ 1-11 — UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL TRUST**

*Establishes the Universal Preschool Trust, funds it with transfers of unappropriated surplus, and requires the state treasurer to administer and invest the trust's funds; creates the Universal Preschool Trust Board; allows funds in the trust to be used for expenses for early care and education programs, the eligible categories of which expand in phases based on the trust's rate of return*

The bill establishes the Universal Preschool Trust, funds it with transfers of unappropriated surplus, and requires the state treasurer to administer and invest the money in it. It also creates the Universal Preschool Trust Board and charges it with administering the fund.

Under the bill, the trust may be used to reimburse boards of education and child care providers for early care and education program eligible expenses. It expands the categories of expenses that may be reimbursed from the trust in phases, generally based on the fund's rate of return.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except the changes to the tri-share program (§ 11) and a conforming change (§ 10) are effective July 1, 2025.

### ***Transfers to the Fund (§ 3)***

Each fiscal year, after the General Fund accounts have been closed and the comptroller has determined the amount of any unappropriated surplus, the bill requires the treasurer to transfer to the Universal Preschool Trust the unappropriated surplus as follows:

1. For FY 25, up to \$300 million and
2. For FY 26 and beyond, the entire amount of the surplus, except that if the Budget Reserve Fund is below its maximum threshold (i.e. 18% of net General Fund appropriations for the current fiscal year), the transfer amount must be reduced and an amount equal to the reduction must be transferred to the budget reserve fund.

The bill requires the amounts the bill transfers to the trust to be

deducted when determining the amount of unappropriated surplus to be transferred to the Budget Reserve Fund as required by law. The state constitution requires any unappropriated surplus to be used (1) to fund a budget reserve fund; (2) to reduce bonded indebtedness; or (3) for any other purpose authorized by at least three-fifths of the members of each chamber (Conn. Const., art. III, § 18 (c)).

### ***Fund Expenditures and Reimbursements (§§ 4, 5 & 11)***

Starting with FY 26, the bill requires the treasurer to authorize spending from the trust in phases.

Under the bill, early care and education programs offered by eligible boards of education and licensed child care providers (i.e. “designated beneficiaries”) may apply for reimbursement from the trust for eligible expenses. An “eligible board of education” is a local or regional board of education that (1) is eligible for a Connecticut Smart Start competitive grant; (2) offers full-day preschool; and (3) does not charge tuition for the program, unless the tuition is required as part of a state or federal grant or subsidy program.

The bill phases in categories of eligible expenses, as shown in the table below. Generally, the trust must achieve a certain rate of return before moving to the next phase. The main expense the trust covers is the “unpaid portion” of tuition for eligible early care and education programs, the scope of which broadens as the various phases are implemented. The “unpaid portion” equals the tuition charged for a child’s enrollment in the program minus (1) state and federal child care subsidies the program received for the child and (2) an amount that does not exceed 7% of the annual household income for the child’s family.

**Table: Eligible Expenses for Reimbursement From the Universal Preschool Trust, Phases I to IV**

| <b><i>Phase</i></b> | <b><i>Begins When</i></b>                                                                                                                 | <b><i>Eligible Expenses</i></b>                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Phase I             | FY 27, and operates when the trust’s rate of return meets or exceeds the amount necessary to fund all covered children as of July 1, 2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The unpaid portion of a child’s tuition for a preschool program offered by a designated beneficiary through the tri-share program (see below)</li> </ul> |

| <b>Phase</b> | <b>Begins When</b>                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Eligible Expenses</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|              |                                                                                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The costs charged to a family for a preschool program operated by an eligible board of education (presumably, this would cover tuition required under state or federal law)</li> </ul>             |
| Phase II     | When the two-year annual rate of return meets or exceeds the amount necessary to fund Phase I plus Phase II expenses                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phase I expenses</li> <li>• Costs associated with expanding slots offered by existing designated beneficiaries (e.g., transportation costs, capital costs, and accreditation costs)</li> </ul>     |
| Phase III    | At least one year after Phase II begins <u>and</u> when the two-year annual rate of return meets or exceeds the amount necessary to fund Phase I and the first year of phase II | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phase I &amp; II expenses</li> <li>• The unpaid portion of a child's tuition for a preschool program operated by a designated beneficiary who is a private child care services provider</li> </ul> |
| Phase IV     | At least one year after Phase III begins <u>and</u> when the two-year annual rate of return meets or exceeds the amount necessary to fund Phases I, II, and III                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phase I, II, &amp; III expenses</li> <li>• The unpaid portion of a child's tuition for an infant and toddler program operated by a designated beneficiary</li> </ul>                               |

**Tri-Share Program.** Under current law, the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) must administer a tri-share pilot program in New London county, under which child care costs are shared equally between employees, employers, and the state. The bill makes this program statewide and permanent. It also requires that costs for child care be split as follows:

1. a participating employer must pay at least one-third of an employee's full-day child care costs for a program offered by a designated beneficiary,
2. an employee must be responsible for child care costs in an amount that does not exceed 7% of the employee's annual household income, and
3. the remaining balance (i.e. the "unpaid portion") must be paid from the Universal Preschool Trust.

The bill also eliminates a provision in current law that made employees ineligible for the pilot program if they were receiving other public assistance for child care.

**Reimbursement.** Under the bill, designated beneficiaries seeking reimbursement from the trust must submit a claim by the 15th of each month to the child care resource and referral agency designated by the OEC commissioner. The child care resource and referral agency must give the treasurer the claims. After review and approval, the treasurer must disburse an amount equal to the total sum of claims to the child care resource and referral agency, who must distribute the funds to designated beneficiaries in the amount the treasurer approved for the claim.

#### **Universal Preschool Trust Board (§ 6)**

The bill establishes the Universal Preschool Trust Board, places it within the treasurer's office for administrative purposes only, and makes it responsible for administering the trust. It consists of (1) the OEC commissioner, the treasurer, and the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) secretary, or their designees and (2) seven appointed members meeting certain qualifications, as shown in the table below.

**Table: Appointed Board Members**

| <b>Appointing Authority</b>  | <b>Qualification</b>                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| House Speaker                | Early childhood workforce employee                                                                                                                                            |
| Senate President Pro Tempore | Representative from the Service Employees' International Union, Local 2001                                                                                                    |
| House Majority Leader        | Parent or guardian of a child enrolled in an eligible board of education-provided preschool program                                                                           |
| Senate Majority Leader       | Member of the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance                                                                                                                            |
| House Minority Leader        | Eligible board of education member                                                                                                                                            |
| Senate Minority Leader       | Member of OEC's parent cabinet                                                                                                                                                |
| Governor                     | Representative of a corporation with a significant physical presence in the state whose employees may benefit from early childhood education and state child care initiatives |

**Appointments and Meetings.** The bill requires the various appointing authorities to make appointments to ensure representation for all geographic regions in the state, to the extent practicable, and to make initial appointments by September 1, 2025. Members serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority, but no longer than the appointing authority's term of office or until the member's successor is appointed and qualified, whichever is longer. Vacancies must be filled by the appointing authority, and any vacancy that occurs other than by a term expiring must be filled for the balance of the unexpired term.

Under the bill, the treasurer (or his designee) serves as the board's chairperson and must schedule and hold the first meeting by October 1, 2025. The board must meet at least quarterly and upon the treasurer's request. At the first meeting, and semiannually after that, the treasurer (or his designee) must give the board an actuarial chart that includes a review of the total amount of funds in the trust, the health of the trust's investments, the trust's anticipated growth, and any recommended models for the timing and rate of drawing down from the trust.

**Annual Report.** Starting by January 1, 2026, the board must annually report to the Education, Children, and Appropriations committees on the trust's actuarial future, its current phase and the anticipated date of advancing to the next phase (if any), and an assessment of the trust's success and efficacy.

### ***Trust Requirements (§§ 2 & 7-10)***

Under the bill, the trust is an instrumentality of the state performing essential governmental functions. It receives and holds all deposits, contributions, gifts, bequests, endowments, government grants, and other sources of funds, and the earnings on those funds, until disbursed as the bill requires.

The bill requires that deposits be made in cash and specifies that funds in the trust are not the property of the state and cannot be combined with state funds. The bill also specifies that the trust is not a state department, institution, or agency, and the state has no claim on

funds in the trust. The trust must continue to exist as long as it has deposits or obligations and until terminated by law. Unclaimed assets escheat to the state upon the trust's termination, and the bill exempts the trust's property from the law for determining when property held by a fiduciary is considered abandoned.

Under the bill, any contract entered into by the trust, or any obligation of the trust, is not a state debt or obligation, and the state has no obligation on account of the trust. Amounts that must be paid from the trust are limited to the amount deposited in the trust available for the payments. The trust's deposits may be disbursed only in accordance with the bill.

***Treasurer's Authority and Powers.*** Under the bill, the state treasurer must receive, maintain, administer, invest, and disburse the trust's money. On behalf of the trust and to carry out its purposes, he may:

1. receive and invest the trust's money as described below;
2. enter into contractual agreements for services for the trust (e.g., legal, actuarial, administrative, and consulting) and pay for them with the trusts' assets;
3. get insurance in connection with the trust's property, assets, activities, or deposits;
4. apply for, accept, and spend public or private gifts, grants, or donations;
5. adopt regulations;
6. sue and be sued;
7. establish funds within the trust; and
8. take other necessary action to carry out the bill's purposes and incidental to the treasurer's duties under the bill.

**Memorandums of Understanding.** The bill requires the treasurer, on the trust's behalf and for its purposes, to enter into memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with the OEC commissioner and the child care resource and referral agency to establish information sharing practices for the purpose of implementing the bill's provision on trust expenditures. These MOUs must comply with all applicable state and federal laws.

**Investment.** The bill requires the state treasurer to (1) invest the trust's funds in a reasonable way to achieve its objectives; (2) exercise a prudent person's care and discretion; and (3) consider things like rate of return, risk, maturity, portfolio diversification, liquidity, projected disbursements and expenditures, and expected deposits and other gifts.

Under the bill, these requirements apply regardless of existing state laws on the treasurer's investment authority, including the (1) requirement that the treasurer's trust fund investments be reviewed by the Investment Advisory Council and (2) statutory constraints that limit the percentage of state funds invested in common stock and investments in companies doing business in specified countries.

The treasurer need not require that the trust invest in government bonds or other funds he administers. The bill requires that the trust's assets be continuously invested and reinvested, consistent with the trust's objectives, until they are disbursed for eligible expenditures or spent on the trust's operational expenses.

It also explicitly subjects the treasurer's trust investments to the same oversight and requirements that the law establishes for other treasurer-administered funds, such as the Teachers' Pension Fund, the State Employees Retirement Fund, and the Connecticut Municipal Employees' Retirement Fund.

**Tax Exemption.** The bill provides that the trust's property and earnings are exempt from all state and local taxes.

## § 12 — ONLINE ENROLLMENT PORTAL

*Requires OEC to develop a centralized portal to allow families to find early care and education programs, determine eligibility, and apply for available government financial assistance*

The bill requires OEC to develop a centralized online enrollment portal that allows families to find early care and education programs, determine eligibility, and apply for available government financial assistance. Specifically, the portal must allow designated beneficiaries to apply for payments from the Universal Preschool Trust and families to apply for subsidies or financial assistance under:

1. a Head Start or Early Head Start program,
2. Care 4 Kids,
3. early care and education programs receiving financial assistance under Early Start CT,
4. preschool programs under the Connecticut Smart Start grant programs,
5. temporary family assistance program,
6. foster care placements or certified relative foster care placements through the Department of Children and Families (DCF), or
7. any other state or federal child care assistance program.

The portal must also (1) help families identify early care and education programs in their area, (2) determine a family's eligibility for a subsidy and allow families to apply for a subsidy they are eligible for, and (3) estimate the amount of tuition a family would pay after deducting subsidies and the amount covered by the Universal Preschool Trust.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

### **§ 13 — UPDATES TO SBE'S FIVE-YEAR PLAN PROCESS**

*Requires the education commissioner to make semiannual presentations on the progress of SBE's five-year plan, SBE to use these presentations to inform the plan's implementation, and these progress reports to be published online*

By law, the State Board of Education (SBE) must prepare a five-year plan (every five years) with long-term goals and short-term objectives related to elementary, secondary, vocational, career, and adult education and specific steps to achieve them. Additionally, SBE is required to annually report the progress made implementing the plan to the governor and Education Committee.

The bill requires the education commissioner to make semiannual presentations at regularly scheduled SBE meetings to give updates on the priorities, actions, and outcomes outlined in the five-year plan. Additionally, under the bill, SBE must use the information provided in the presentations in the plan's implementation and their annual progress report and make these progress reports available on the State Department of Education's (SDE's) website.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

#### **§ 14 — SUPERINTENDENTS' ANNUAL INFORMATION REPORT TO THEIR BOARD OF EDUCATION (BOE)**

*Requires all superintendents to submit information regarding the district's contracts, students, staff, and savings annually to their BOE*

Annually, between June 1 and September 29, the bill requires each school district's superintendent to provide the following information at a regularly scheduled board of education (BOE) meeting:

1. the number and names of all community-based organizations in which the district is in a formal MOU, memorandum of agreement, or contract that pertains to providing student support services (by school and type of support service);
2. the number of students in credit and non-credit internships and workforce development programs (by type and duration);
3. classroom sizes and student-teacher ratios during the previous school year (by school and subject);
4. certified and noncertified staff turnover, other than same-district transfers (by school and subject); and

5. any savings earned through vacancies in approved budgeted positions for the academic year.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

## **§ 15 — POSTING DISCONNECTED YOUTH REPORT ONLINE**

*Requires any state agency that contributes data to the disconnected youth report to post the report on their website*

The bill requires any state agency that contributes data for the Connecticut Preschool through Twenty and Workforce Information Network's (P20 WIN) disconnected youth report to post the report on their website.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

### ***Background — Disconnected Youth Report***

By law, the P20 WIN executive board is required to annually report on disconnected youth using the data model established through the data-sharing agreement 0043 regarding Research on Disengaged and Disconnected Youth in Connecticut (i.e. a 2023 agreement between various state agencies (including SDE, DCF, the Department of Labor, and Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services), a nonprofit, and a private consulting firm to share certain data from P20 WIN).

A “disconnected youth” is an individual age 14-26 who is (1) an at-risk student (in danger of not graduating due to certain factors) or (2) not enrolled in high school and (a) does not have a high school diploma or its equivalent; (b) has a diploma or equivalent but is unemployed and not enrolled in an adult education program, higher education institution, or a workforce training or certification program, including an apprenticeship program, or otherwise pursuing postsecondary education; or (c) is incarcerated.

## **§ 16 — ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW BOARDS**

*Establishes regional education accountability review boards for the purpose of supporting priority school districts*

The bill establishes a regional education accountability review board

for each planning region within the state (see BACKGROUND). Each board must (1) provide technical, financial, and other assistance, and related accountability, to their priority school districts (see BACKGROUND); (2) develop budgeting and expenditure guidelines for their priority school districts; and (3) analyze these districts' educational spending. The boards are within SDE for administrative purposes only.

Each regional education accountability review board must be chaired by the education commissioner and state treasurer or their designees. Each board must also include the following members:

1. a professional in children's health and wellbeing, the chief elected official of a community within the board's planning region, and a third individual (appointed by the Governor);
2. a second professional in children's health and wellbeing (appointed by the Senate minority leader);
3. one individual who is an experienced member of an organization that is in a collective bargaining agreement with a school district within the planning region, chosen from a list recommended by specified unions (appointed by the Senate president pro tempore);
4. one active superintendent (appointed by the House speaker); and
5. one current or former education law attorney (appointed by the House minority leader).

Under the bill, each regional education accountability review board must submit to SBE an annual expenditure report for each priority district located in their planning region. SDE must make the reports available on the department's website.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

### ***Background — Planning Regions***

Planning regions are geographic areas of Connecticut that consist of unified municipalities for the purpose of collaborating on common interests. By law, OPM designates the boundaries of planning regions. Currently, Connecticut is composed of nine planning regions.

**Background — Priority School Districts**

Priority school districts are districts (1) whose students receive low standardized test scores, (2) that have high levels of poverty, or (3) in the eight towns with the largest population in the state (CGS § 10-266p(a)). There are 16 priority districts in the 2024-25 school year.

**§ 17 — UPDATES TO ANNUAL EXPENDITURE REPORT PROCESS BETWEEN SCHOOL BOARDS AND SDE**

*Requires SDE to publish the penalties for BOEs failing to submit an expenditure report that aligns with SDE's criteria and for SDE to provide BOEs with an online application to assist them in uploading their report's data*

By law, BOEs must have their school superintendents annually report returns of the school district's receipts, expenditures, and statistics to SDE, who must then post on its website this data by education program type, expense function, expense object, and funding source. Additionally, the department must publish an online guide defining each expenditure and funding source category. The bill requires this publication to also include the corrective actions or penalties SDE can impose on a BOE if the data in their reports fails to align with these definitions.

Furthermore, in existing law, SDE must publish the data from the reports in a format allowing for financial comparisons between districts and schools. The bill requires that SDE provide each BOE an application program interface (through SDE's education data portal or an alternative method) to assist the board in posting their report's data on SDE's website.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

**§ 18 — UPDATES TO SDE'S CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN**

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*Expands on SDE's chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan by incorporating additional required and permissible components and requiring SDE to review the plan biannually*

By law, SDE was required to develop, in consultation with the Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement Gap, a chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan to be used by BOEs.

The bill requires SDE to review, and revise as needed, the plan biannually. When making revisions, SDE must incorporate the findings from the disconnected youth report (see *Background – Disconnected Youth Report* in § 15 of this analysis). The bill also specifically requires the plan to include the truancy policies and procedures that school boards must adopt by law (e.g., requiring a meeting with parents or guardians after a student's fourth unexcused absence in a month or 10th in a school year).

In existing law, the plan must include, among other things, a way to collect and analyze data on chronic absenteeism that allows for the data to be separated into various subgroups, including race, gender, free or reduced lunch eligibility, disability status, and primary language other than English. The bill adds housing status as an additional category. Additionally, it requires that the plan include using an early indication tool to identify students who are at risk for becoming chronically absent or disconnected from school, such as students who may not be able to graduate, have a history of behavioral or disciplinary issues, or are homeless. This tool can be provided by SDE or a third party.

By law, SDE may include a research-based and data-driven mentorship model to address chronic absenteeism in their plan. These mentors can be students, teachers, administrators, athletic coaches, school resource officers, and community partners. The bill allows for SDE to also use a home visiting model. Under the bill, both home visiting and mentorship models are subject to the same list of mentors, and the bill adds family navigators and student success coaches to this list.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

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**§§ 19-21 — UNSPENT FUND ACCOUNT AND EDUCATIONAL EXPENDITURES RESERVE FUND UPDATES**

*Requires local BOEs to create a report on nonlapsing, unspent funds and include similar information in an existing report; similarly updates requirements related to regional BOE educational expenditures reserve funds*

***Addition to an Existing Cost Report***

By law, local BOEs are allowed to deposit unspent education funds into a nonlapsing account. The deposit may be up to 2% of the previous fiscal year's budgeted appropriation for education, and account expenditures must be only for educational purposes.

Under existing law, each BOE must publish an annual report with a summary showing the (1) total cost of maintaining the schools, (2) amount received from the state and other sources for this purpose, and (3) net cost to the municipality of the school budget. The bill adds that the report must also include the balance of any nonlapsing, unspent funds account.

***New Report on Nonlapsing, Unspent Funds***

Beginning for FY 26, the bill requires each local BOE to create an annual report on their nonlapsing, unspent fund account. This report must include the following information:

1. the total balance of the account,
2. the amount deposited into the account in a fiscal year, and
3. an accounting of the expenditures made from the account.

The report must be submitted to SDE and the exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees.

***Updating Exclusive Bargaining Representatives on Nonlapsing, Unspent Funds***

Under the bill, starting for FY 26, each local BOE must annually notify the exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees of the:

1. establishment of a nonlapsing, unspent funds account; or

2. board's intended uses for any funds in the account during the next fiscal year.

This notification must be made no later than 30 days from the adoption of the board's budget.

### **Requirements Regarding Educational Expenditures Reserve Fund**

By law, a regional BOE, by a majority vote of its members, can create an educational expenditures reserve fund (limited to 2% of the district's budget, to be used for educational purposes). These boards must annually report to member towns on the condition of the fund.

Under the bill, beginning FY 26, each board must annually:

1. make available and annually update information regarding the fund, including the fund's total balance, the amount deposited into the fund in a fiscal year, and an accounting of the expenditures made from it; and
2. notify the exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees of the educational expenditure reserve's establishment or the board's intended uses for the funds during the next fiscal year (this notification must be made no later than 30 days from the adoption of the board's budget).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

## **§ 22 — POSTING CLASSROOM AND STAFFING DATE**

*Requires school boards, RESCs, and charter schools to post on their websites information on class size, student-teacher ratios and other staffing, and the nonprofits that provide student support services to their students; requires SDE to also post this information on its website*

By law, school boards, regional education service centers (RESC), and state charter school governing authorities (i.e. governing boards) must annually post on their websites aggregate spending on items for each school such as salaries, benefits, instructional supplies and equipment, and special education tuition, among other things. The bill requires the same entities, beginning with FY 26, to quarterly post information on

their websites about:

1. actual class size and student-teacher ratios, disaggregated by school;
2. the number of full-time equivalent staff positions, disaggregated by SDE categories;
3. the number of staffing vacancies, and any accrued savings from the vacancies during the current fiscal year; and
4. the nonprofit organizations with which they have an agreement or contract to provide support services, including to youth at risk of becoming disconnected from school (leaving school) and the scope of services they provide.

For school boards and charter school governing authorities, they must also include any agreements they have with RESCs and the scope of services the RESC provides, including for at-risk youth.

School boards and RESCs must submit this information to the applicable town legislative body or board of selectmen, if the legislative body is a town meeting, and the teachers' union. Charter school governing authorities are only required to submit it to the teachers' union.

By January 1, 2027, and annually thereafter, SDE must make the required information available on its website.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

## **§ 23 — CONTACTING LOCAL HOMELESS EDUCATION LIAISONS BEFORE EXPULSION HEARINGS**

*Requires districts to contact their local homeless education liaisons prior to an expulsion hearing to determine if the student is homeless*

Under the bill, before a school expulsion hearing, a school administrator, counselor, or social worker must contact the local homeless education liaison designated by the local or regional BOE to determine if the student is homeless (see *Background*). If the student is

found to be homeless, the entity conducting the hearing (the BOE or the impartial hearing board) must consider the impact of homelessness on the student's behavior, and the student cannot be expelled without a plan to alleviate this impact.

The bill also requires the BOE to provide a meeting with the local homeless education liaison for any child who is determined to be homeless and is expelled two times.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

### ***Background — School Expulsion Hearings***

By law, a school board must hold a hearing before expelling a student, except in an emergency (i.e. the student's continued presence would be so disruptive or dangerous as to allow the student's removal before the hearing). In the latter instance, the expulsion hearing must take place as soon as possible after the student's removal.

### ***Background — Homeless Youth and Homeless Education Liaisons***

Federal law defines "homeless children and youths" as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and includes those sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (42 U.S.C. § 11434a).

The federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act requires every school district in the country to designate a homeless liaison, who is a local educational agency staff person. This liaison is responsible for identifying and supporting homeless students across the district (42 U.S.C. § 11431 et seq.).

## **§ 24 — STUDENT SUCCESS COACH PILOT PROGRAM**

*Requires SDE to administer a three-year student success coach pilot program in select school districts*

The bill requires SDE to administer a student success coach pilot program in the Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwich, Waterbury, and Windham school districts for FYs 26

through 28. The program must utilize evidence-based strategies shown to effectively support students with attendance, behavioral, or credit attainment challenges and other risk factors making them more likely to become disconnected from school and misuse drugs (including opioids).

Under the bill, a participating local BOE can apply for a grant of up to \$2,000,000 from SDE, and SDE must award grants in line with the law on the Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee. To be eligible for a grant, the BOE must:

1. utilize an early indicator tool from SDE to identify students with the greatest need for a student success coach, and
2. be evaluated by SDE's Center for Connecticut Education Research Collaboration, or a third party selected by SDE.

Under the bill, by February 15, 2029, SDE must:

1. evaluate the program's implementation and effectiveness, and
2. report findings and recommendations to SBE, the Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee, the Education Committee, and the Committee on Children.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

## **§§ 25 & 56 — HVAC GRANTS TO SCHOOL DISTRICT**

*Repeals the school construction HVAC grant and instead merges it with an existing DAS school construction grant that provides grants for a broader range of school building projects; merges most of the existing law's grant provisions, such as the application and eligibility criteria, into the existing grant but leaves out some aspects, such requiring applicants to go through the annual priority list process with legislative approval*

The bill repeals the existing school construction heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems (HVAC) grant and instead merges it with an existing school construction grant law that provides grants for a broader range of school building projects (such as roof replacements and addressing building code violations). The bill subjects the new HVAC grants to the same application and eligibility criteria as for

existing non-priority school building projects (see *Inspection and Maintenance Requirements*).

Under the bill, current law's provisions are generally added to the existing Department of Administrative Services (DAS) school construction grant that authorizes the commissioner to award grants without going through the annual priority list process, which the legislature approves annually in a bill (these projects are often referred to as the "non-priority list projects"). The priority list includes major projects such as building new schools or complete renovations of existing schools.

Under current law, the DAS commissioner may approve grants to reimburse school districts for project costs to install, replace, or upgrade HVAC systems or related improvements. Under the bill, the commissioner may approve grants to upgrade HVAC systems or make other improvements to indoor air quality in school buildings. The bill language does not include installing or replacing systems.

While the statutes for each of these grants do not include a dollar limit, the non-priority list projects tend to be smaller than the priority list projects, ranging from \$100,000 to \$5 million. Priority list projects commonly range from \$1 million to, in some cases, \$200 million.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

### ***Inspection and Maintenance Requirements***

The bill maintains the following current law requirements:

1. prohibiting awarding grants for HVAC or indoor air quality improvements to recipients unless they have certified compliance with the uniform inspection and evaluation of their school buildings' HVAC systems as required by law (CGS § 10-220(d)),
2. deeming the following expenses as ineligible for reimbursement:
  - (a) routine maintenance and cleaning of the HVAC system and

- (b) work performed at or on a public school administrative or service facility that is not located or housed within a public school building, and
- 3. requiring grant recipients to (a) be responsible for the routine maintenance and cleaning of the HVAC system and (b) provide training to school personnel and maintenance staff concerning the system's proper use and maintenance.

### ***Repealed HVAC Grant Provisions***

The bill repeals the following provisions:

1. grant eligibility for charter schools;
2. specific grant eligibility criteria including (a) the age and condition of the current HVAC system or equipment being replaced or upgraded in the school, (b) current air quality issues at the school, (c) the age and condition of the overall school building, (d) the school district's master plan, (e) the availability of maintenance records, (f) the school's routine HVAC maintenance contract or plan, and (g) the applicant's ability to finance the remaining costs;
3. requiring DAS to reconsider grant applications it has denied through the end of FY 26 and provide technical assistance to the denied school board to help the board gain approval of the grant;
4. requiring DAS, if there is not enough grant funding, to prioritize schools with the greatest need based on the eligibility criteria; and
5. requiring an HVAC project to be completed by the end of the next calendar year after the grant was awarded unless extended by DAS for good cause.

### **§§ 26, 27 & 56 — NETWORK OF SCHOOLS PROGRAM REPEALED**

*Repeals the SDE commissioner's Network of Schools program aimed at improving academic achievement in low-performing schools*

The bill repeals the education commissioner's Network of Schools program through which she selects up to 25 low-achieving schools each school year that receive intensified SBE supervision and direction (CGS § 10-223h).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

Currently, the program sets steps the commissioner, school district turnaround committees, and local and regional boards of education must take to improve academic achievement. Each school's turnaround committee must create and implement a turnaround plan, based on a turnaround model it chooses. The law requires the commissioner to give participating schools funding and technical and operational support. Schools remain in the network for three years with an option for an additional two.

The bill does not specify what happens to the schools currently participating in the program that have not completed their designated time.

The bill also repeals a related law that addresses contracts between school boards and non-profit educational management organizations selected as part of a participating school's turnaround plan to manage the school (CGS § 10-223i).

Among other things, these contracts must require the management organizations to annually report to the education commissioner on (1) the educational progress of the school's students; (2) its financial relationship with the school, including a certified audit statement of all revenues from public and private sources and expenditures; and (3) the time their employees and consultants devoted to the school.

The bill also makes related technical and conforming changes to various statutes.

## **§§ 28-56 — REPEALS ALLIANCE DISTRICT PROGRAM AND RELATED CHANGES**

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*Repeals the alliance district program, which places certain requirements on the lowest performing 36 school districts in order for them to receive a portion of their ECS grant*

The bill repeals the alliance district program, and in doing so (1) updates terminology in several statutes, replacing “alliance districts” with “priority school districts,” (PSD) “literary districts,” or “eligible communities,” as described below; (2) narrows eligibility for certain programs from alliance districts to PSDs; (3) expands eligibility for certain education programs to all school districts instead of only alliance districts; and (4) expands eligibility for several programs to primary school districts instead of education reform districts as under current law.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

### ***Alliance District Program Repeal***

The bill repeals the alliance district program, which requires each of the state’s 36 lowest performing school districts (as measured by the accountability index; see *Background – Accountability Index Scores*) to submit an improvement plan to SDE for approval before the department releases the district’s alliance funding (i.e. a portion of the annual education cost sharing (ECS) grant that these districts receive). The plan must detail how a district will use its alliance funding to improve student achievement. In addition to the plan, the law permits the alliance district funding to be spent according to SDE’s minority candidate certification, retention, or residency year program (see below) and with any SBE guidelines (CGS § 10-262u).

Current law specifies improvement plan components, such as (1) a tiered intervention system for the district’s schools based on their needs; (2) ways to strengthen reading programs to ensure reading mastery in grades K-3; (3) additional learning time, including extended school day or year programs run by school personnel or external partners; and (4) a talent strategy that includes teacher and school leader recruitment and assignment and career ladder policies that draw on district-approved guidelines for a teacher evaluation.

The program also includes SDE interventions and oversight to help

districts carry out their plans.

The bill also makes related minor, technical and conforming changes to various statutes (§§ 28, 35, 39, 42, 48, 54 & 56).

### ***Terminology Changes***

The bill changes terminology in various education statutes by replacing the term “alliance district” with the following:

1. PSDs, which are districts that meet certain town population, student performance, and poverty measures and receive state grants for certain programs (e.g., reading, afterschool, and dropout prevention programs);
2. “literacy districts,” which are districts the education commissioner identified as needing literacy assistance based on their students’ performance on the state reading mastery exam; and
3. “eligible communities,” which are one of the 50 towns in the state with the lowest equalized net grand list.

Additionally, the bill substitutes the term “education reform district” (i.e. the lowest scoring 10 districts within the state’s 36 alliance districts) with PSD.

Currently, there are 36 alliance districts and 16 PSDs. By substituting alliance districts with PSDs the bill makes 20 districts no longer eligible for certain programs or subject to alliance district statutory provisions, as described below.

***ECS Grant (§§ 40, 41 & 43).*** The bill applies to PSDs, instead of alliance districts, the following ECS grant provisions:

1. a “hold harmless” provision that guarantees PSDs receive a grant amount that is at least as much as they received in the previous fiscal year;

2. the “base aid ratio” used to calculate ECS grants that sets a minimum floor of 10% for a PSD’s wealth factor, instead of 1% for non-PSDs (districts with higher ratios receive higher per student grant amounts); and
3. a minimum budget requirement (MBR) provision that generally prohibits PSDs from lowering their MBR for education from one year to the next.

By law, the state ECS grant is calculated annually based on the number and demographics of students enrolled in a district (those eligible for free and reduced meals and English language learners are weighted more in the grant calculation) and the town’s property wealth (towns with higher property wealth receive less per student than those with less property wealth).

***Additional Grant Programs for PSDs (§§ 37, 38, 44, 45, 49 & 52).***

The bill replaces alliance districts with PSDs in the following six grant programs:

1. CT Grown for CT Kids Grant Program, which helps education boards develop farm-to-school program to increase availability of local foods in child nutrition programs (CGS § 10-215l);
2. Local Food for Schools Incentive Program, which reimburses education boards for purchasing locally- and regionally-sourced food to use in its school meal program (CGS § 10-215m);
3. School Building Improvements Grant Program, which helps districts pay for general improvements to school buildings (generally for projects that are smaller than those that are part of the school construction annual priority lists process) (CGS § 10-265h);
4. Municipal Aid for New Educators Grant Program, which gives grants to education boards to hire certain students enrolled in teacher preparation programs (CGS § 10-265o);

5. Preparation for Academic Transition to Higher Education (PATH) Grant Program, which gives grants to nonprofit organizations that assist high school students with the college application and financial aid process (CGS § 10a-11k); and
6. state grants in lieu of taxes to certain properties, for purposes of determining which towns will be considered a Tier I municipality (i.e. those with an equalized net grand list per capita of under \$100,000) (CGS § 12-18b(d)).

**Literacy Districts (§§ 31-33).** The bill applies the following programs to literacy districts instead of alliance districts, as under current law: (1) state grants for new curricula and related training, textbooks, and materials; (2) the intensive reading instruction program for students in grades kindergarten to grade three; and (3) the reading readiness program.

**Eligible Communities (§ 29).** The bill applies the following programs to eligible communities instead of alliance districts, as under current law: (1) the Housing Environmental Revolving Loan and Grant Program and (2) the pilot program for energy efficiency projects for multifamily residences located in environmental justice communities or eligible communities.

**Expanding Certain Programs to All School Districts (§§ 36, 51, 52 & 55)**

The bill expands eligibility for several programs currently available only to alliance districts by instead making them available to any school district. These programs include the following:

1. the aspiring educator diversity scholarship program, which gives annual scholarships to diverse students who graduated from a public high school in an alliance district and are enrolled in a teacher preparation program at a four-year higher education institution (CGS § 10-156ii);
2. the alliance districts educator and counselor loan subsidy

program, which subsidizes interest rates on loans to teachers, paraeducators and school counselors employed in alliance districts (CGS §§ 10a-247 &-247a); and

3. probate court truancy clinics in alliance districts (CGS § 45a-8c).

***Expanding Certain Programs for Educational Reform Districts (§§ 30, 46, 47 & 53)***

The bill also applies several programs to PSDs, instead of educational reform districts, as under current law. In doing so, it expands access to these programs by making 16 districts, instead of 10, eligible.

Specifically, these programs include the following:

1. mortgage assistance for certain teachers (CGS § 8-265pp),
2. the wraparound services grant program (CGS § 10-265p),
3. the educational reform district science grant program (CGS § 10-265q), and
4. the Neighborhood Assistance Act tax credit (GS § 12-635).

***Background — Accountability Index Scores***

The “accountability index” for a school district or an individual school is the score resulting from multiple weighted measures that (1) include the mastery test scores (i.e. performance index) and, if appropriate, high school graduation rates, and (2) may include academic growth over time, attendance and chronic absenteeism, postsecondary education and career readiness, enrollment in and graduation from institutions of higher education and postsecondary education programs, civics and arts education, and physical fitness (CGS § 10-223e(a)).

**§ 34 — EARLY CHILDHOOD CABINET MEMBERSHIP**

*Adds a library consortium member to the Early Childhood Cabinet*

The bill increases the Early Childhood Cabinet’s membership, from 31 to 32, by adding the executive director of the Connecticut Library

Consortium or a cooperating library service unit, or his or her designee. The bill does not indicate how it will be decided whether the new board member is the director of the library consortium or of a library service unit.

The bill also makes conforming changes by substituting the term “alliance district” with “primary school district” for two existing cabinet members (one school board member and one parent of a student in an educational reform district) to reflect the bills’ repeal of the alliance district program (see §§ 28-56 above).

By law, the Early Childhood Cabinet (1) advises OEC, (2) develops an annual action plan that assigns state agencies certain tasks specified in the federal Head Start Act, and (3) submits an annual statewide strategic report that addresses agencies’ progress in meeting the action plan’s requirements.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

### ***Background — Related Bills***

sSB 6, § 8 (File 199), favorably reported by the Committee on Children, adds the Connecticut Library Consortium’s executive director to the Early Childhood Cabinet’s membership.

HB 5003, §§ 1 & 2 (File 198), favorably reported by the Committee on Children, transfers unappropriated surplus funds into a fund dedicated to early childhood care and education programs, and the treasurer manages the fund and invests its assets.

SB 1458, favorably reported by the Education Committee, repeals the Network of Schools program and revamps the Alliance District program by reducing, from 36 to 15, the number of districts and renames them opportunity districts.

HB 6922 (File 311), favorably reported by the Education Committee, repeals the existing school construction HVAC grant and merges it with an existing school construction grant law that gives grants for a broader

range of school building projects.

## § 56 — REPEALERS

*Repeals provisions on the SDE commissioner's network of schools, alliance districts, minority candidate retention and residency program, and allowing limited reemployment of retired teachers; makes related technical and conforming changes*

In addition to repealing provisions on the (1) DAS HVAC system grant program for school boards (see § 25 above); (2) SDE commissioner's Network of Schools program (see §§ 26, 27 & 56 above); and (3) alliance district program (see §§ 28-56 above), the bill additionally repeals the following provisions and makes related technical and conforming changes:

1. requiring SDE to administer the Minority Candidate Certification Retention or Residency Year Program ("Retention or Residency Program") (CGS § 10-156gg), and
2. allowing limited reemployment of retired teachers (CGS § 10-183v).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

### ***Teacher Candidate Retention or Residency Program***

Current law requires SDE to administer the Retention or Residency program in coordination with a RESC or a private, nonprofit certification program. It also requires each school district designated as an alliance district to partner with a residency program operator to enroll minority candidates and place them in the district for their 10-month teacher candidate residency. SDE must (1) withhold from each alliance district 10% of any increase in alliance aid and (2) use the funds for grant payments to cover program-related costs (CGS § 10-156gg).

### ***Reemployment of Retired Teachers***

Under current law, retired teachers are allowed to be reemployed for certain periods of time under specified conditions and still receive their pension benefit (they do not contribute to their pension during this time). Generally, they are reemployed (1) under the "45% rule" (earning up to 45% of the position's maximum salary and returning any payment

received over that amount) or (2) in a shortage area or at a PSD for up to two years with no salary limit. (An existing third option for those who retired after at least 34 years of teaching and are now reemployed with an alliance district expired in 2024 (CGS § 10-183v).)

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Education Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea     30     Nay   15     (03/24/2025)