



General Assembly

Amendment

January Session, 2025

LCO No. 9838



Offered by:

SEN. LOONEY, 11th Dist.

SEN. MAHER, 26th Dist.

SEN. DUFF, 25th Dist.

REP. RITTER, 1st Dist.

SEN. MCCRORY, 2nd Dist.

REP. ROJAS, 9th Dist.

SEN. GADKAR-WILCOX, 22nd Dist.

To: Subst. Senate Bill No. 1

File No. 637

Cal. No. 341

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

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and substitute the
2 following in lieu thereof:

3 "Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) Commencing on July 1,
4 2025, there is established the Early Childhood Education Endowment.
5 The endowment shall constitute an instrumentality of the state and shall
6 perform essential governmental functions as provided in sections 1 to
7 15, inclusive, of this act. The endowment shall receive and hold all
8 payments and deposits or contributions intended for the endowment,
9 as well as gifts, bequests, endowments or federal, state or local grants
10 and any other funds from any public or private source and all earnings
11 until released in accordance with section 3 of this act.

12 (b) The endowment shall not be construed to be a department,

13 institution or agency of the state. Amounts on deposit in the endowment
14 shall not be commingled with state funds and the state shall have no
15 claim to or against, or interest in, such funds. Any contract entered into
16 by or any obligation of the endowment shall not constitute a debt or
17 obligation of the state and the state shall have no obligation to any
18 designated beneficiary or any other person on account of the
19 endowment and all amounts obligated to be paid from the endowment
20 shall be limited to amounts available for such obligation on deposit in
21 the endowment. The amounts on deposit in the endowment may only
22 be released in accordance with the provisions of section 3 of this act. The
23 endowment shall continue in existence as long as it holds any deposits
24 or has any obligations and until its existence is terminated by law and
25 upon termination any unclaimed assets shall return to the state.
26 Property of the endowment shall not be governed by section 3-61a of the
27 general statutes.

28 (c) The Treasurer shall be responsible for the receipt, maintenance,
29 administration, investing and release of amounts from the endowment.
30 The endowment shall not receive deposits in any form other than cash.

31 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) For the fiscal year ending June
32 30, 2025, based on an estimate prepared by the Secretary of the Office of
33 Policy and Management between June 15, 2025, to June 30, 2025,
34 inclusive, of the amount of current unappropriated surplus for such
35 fiscal year, the amount of such estimated surplus, if any, up to a
36 maximum of three hundred million dollars shall be transferred on or
37 before June 30, 2025, by the Treasurer from the General Fund to the Early
38 Childhood Education Endowment established under section 1 of this
39 act.

40 (b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, and each fiscal year
41 thereafter, based on such estimated amount of current unappropriated
42 surplus described in subsection (a) of this section, if any, the entire
43 amount of such estimated surplus for each such fiscal year shall be
44 transferred by the Treasurer from the General Fund to the Early
45 Childhood Education Endowment, except that if the amount in the

46 Budget Reserve Fund is estimated by the secretary to be less than
47 eighteen per cent of the estimated net General Fund appropriations for
48 the ensuing fiscal year, the amount of such transfer shall be reduced by
49 the amount necessary to increase the amount in the Budget Reserve
50 Fund to eighteen per cent of the estimated net General Fund
51 appropriations for the ensuing fiscal year, or by the maximum amount
52 of the projected surplus, whichever is less, and an amount equal to such
53 reduction shall be transferred to the Budget Reserve Fund.

54 (c) If the Comptroller determines that a deficit will exist for the
55 preceding fiscal year, before the appropriation required by subdivision
56 (1) of subsection (f) of section 4-30a of the general statutes, the amount
57 necessary to fund such deficit shall be deducted from the amount
58 transferred in such preceding fiscal year pursuant to this section and
59 credited to the General Fund effective June thirtieth of such preceding
60 fiscal year. If such deficit exceeds the amount transferred in such
61 preceding fiscal year, no additional funds from the body of the
62 endowment shall be used to fund such deficit.

63 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) For the fiscal years ending
64 June 30, 2026, and June 30, 2027, the Treasurer, in consultation with the
65 Early Childhood Education Endowment Advisory Board, shall annually
66 authorize the release of funds from the Early Childhood Education
67 Endowment in an amount not to exceed twelve per cent of the total
68 amount of the endowment to the Commissioner of Early Childhood.
69 Such released funds shall be expended by the Commissioner of Early
70 Childhood in accordance with the provisions of section 4 of this act.

71 (b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2028, and each fiscal year
72 thereafter, the Treasurer shall, in consultation with the Early Childhood
73 Education Endowment Advisory Board, annually authorize the release
74 of funds from the endowment in an amount not to exceed ten per cent
75 of the total amount of the endowment to the Commissioner of Early
76 Childhood. Such released funds shall be expended by the Commissioner
77 of Early Childhood in accordance with the provisions of section 4 of this
78 act.

79 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) As used in this section:

80 (1) "Expansion costs" includes expenses to increase early care and
81 education program provider payment rates, increase equitable access
82 and affordability of high quality early childhood education, extend the
83 hours of operation per day or portion of the year covered or to sustain
84 services previously funded by the Early Childhood Education
85 Endowment;

86 (2) "Programmatic costs" includes costs for parent and early care and
87 education program enrollment campaigns, local governance partners,
88 needs assessment technical assistance, facilities program technical
89 assistance and workforce recruitment and scholarships for educators in
90 alignment with the early childhood priorities of the Early Childhood
91 Education Endowment Advisory Board and the Office of Early
92 Childhood; and

93 (3) "Administrative costs" includes costs relating to (A) personnel,
94 including, but not limited to, the salary and fringe benefits of the
95 employees of the Treasurer's office responsible for administering the
96 Early Childhood Education Endowment and the employees of the
97 Office of Early Childhood and the Department of Education responsible
98 for administering programming that utilizes funds from the
99 endowment, and the stipends provided to parent and program provider
100 members of the Early Childhood Education Endowment Advisory
101 Board pursuant to subsection (g) of section 8 of this act, and (B) data and
102 technology, including, but not limited to, the development and
103 maintenance of payment or parent enrollment portals, establishing or
104 managing memoranda of understanding between the Office of Early
105 Childhood and other states agencies related to the provision of child
106 care.

107 (b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, the Commissioner of Early
108 Childhood, upon receipt of the funds released by the Treasurer from the
109 Early Childhood Education Endowment pursuant to section 3 of this act,
110 is authorized to expend such funds for the following purposes and in

111 the following manner: (1) Up to eight per cent of such released funds for
112 administrative costs, and (2) of such remaining released funds (A) three
113 hundred thousand dollars for the health insurance subsidy program
114 established pursuant to section 15 of this act, and (B) the remaining
115 balance for expansion costs and programmatic costs.

116 (c) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027, the Commissioner of Early
117 Childhood, upon receipt of the funds released by the Treasurer from the
118 endowment pursuant to section 4 of this act, is authorized to expend
119 such funds for the following purposes and in the following manner: (1)
120 Up to twelve per cent of such released funds for administrative costs,
121 and (2) of such remaining released funds (A) ten million dollars for the
122 health insurance subsidy program established pursuant to section 15 of
123 this act, and (B) the remaining balance for expansion costs and
124 programmatic costs.

125 (d) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2028, and each fiscal year
126 thereafter, the Commissioner of Early Childhood, upon receipt of the
127 funds released by the Treasurer from the endowment pursuant to
128 section 4 of this act, is authorized to expend such funds for the following
129 purposes and in the following manner: (1) Up to seven per cent of such
130 released funds for administrative costs, and (2) of such remaining
131 released funds for (A) the health insurance subsidy program established
132 pursuant to section 15 of this act, and (B) expansion costs and
133 programmatic costs.

134 (e) Any funds from the endowment that have been released by the
135 Treasurer to the Commissioner of Early Childhood pursuant to section
136 4 of this act shall:

137 (1) Supplement and not supplant any other local, state or federal
138 funds otherwise available for early childhood care and education;

139 (2) Not be comingled with any state or federal funding received
140 under the child care development block grant pursuant to the Child
141 Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990; and

142 (3) Not lapse if not expended by the commissioner at the end of the
143 fiscal year and shall be transferred to the Treasurer and deposited in the
144 endowment.

145 Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) For the fiscal year ending June
146 30, 2026, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Commissioner of Early
147 Childhood may expend, in accordance with the provisions of section 4
148 of this act, funds released by the Treasurer from the Early Childhood
149 Education Endowment, pursuant to section 3 of this act, to any early
150 care and education program providing child care services, as described
151 in section 19a-77 of the general statutes, or preschool program operated
152 by a local or regional board of education that is (1) receiving financial
153 assistance under Early Start CT pursuant to section 10-550b of the
154 general statutes, (2) participating in the quality improvement system
155 established by the Office of Early Childhood under subdivision (15) of
156 subsection (b) of section 10-500 of the general statutes, and (3)
157 participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, 42 USC 1766,
158 as amended from time to time, unless such program has received a
159 waiver from participation in said program by the Commissioner of
160 Early Childhood or is a public school preschool program that offers free
161 or reduced priced lunches pursuant to federal law and regulations.

162 Sec. 6. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) On and after July 1, 2027, any
163 expansion of the permissible uses of funds from the Early Childhood
164 Education Endowment under section 4 of this act shall require that at
165 least thirty-five per cent of any expansion of spaces in early care and
166 education programs shall be for infant and toddler spaces.

167 Sec. 7. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) For the fiscal year ending June
168 30, 2028, and each fiscal year thereafter, the family contribution for child
169 care services provided by an early care and education program that is
170 receiving funding from the Early Childhood Education Endowment
171 shall be as follows:

172 (1) Any family with an annual gross income of less than one hundred
173 thousand dollars shall not be financially responsible for the cost of such

174 child care services; and

175 (2) Any family with an annual gross income of one hundred thousand
176 dollars or greater shall be financially responsible for an amount up to
177 seven per cent of such family's annual gross income.

178 (b) Any family contribution collected by an early care and education
179 program that is receiving funding from the endowment shall be
180 reported in a form and in such manner as prescribed by the Office of
181 Early Childhood. Such amount so collected shall be deducted from the
182 overall rate paid by the Office of Early Childhood to such program and
183 settled in reconciliation.

184 Sec. 8. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established the Early
185 Childhood Education Endowment Advisory Board. The board shall be
186 responsible for (1) providing oversight of the administration of the Early
187 Childhood Education Endowment, (2) ensuring that funds from the
188 endowment are expended in accordance with the provisions of section
189 4 of this act, (3) reviewing all reports and expenditure plans concerning
190 the endowment submitted by the Treasurer and Commissioner of Early
191 Childhood, (4) reviewing and assessing the outcomes related to the
192 expenditure of funds from the endowment, and (5) preparing and
193 submitting reports and recommendations to the General Assembly
194 concerning the administration of the endowment and permissible
195 expenditure of funds from the endowment, including recommendations
196 for expansion of permissible expenditures of funds from the
197 endowment.

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

199 (1) Two appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives,
200 one of whom shall be a parent who is a member of the parent cabinet
201 established by the Office of Early Childhood pursuant to section 10-500
202 of the general statutes, and one of whom shall be a member of the House
203 of Representatives;

204 (2) Two appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, one of

205 whom shall be the licensee of a family child care home, and one of whom
206 shall be a member of the Senate;

207 (3) Two appointed by the majority leader of the House of
208 Representatives, one of whom shall be an educator in an early care and
209 education program in the state, and one of whom shall be the parent or
210 guardian of a child receiving services under the birth-to-three program
211 established under section 17a-248b of the general statutes;

212 (4) Two appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, one of whom
213 shall be a representative of a philanthropic organization that is engaged
214 in early childhood education issues or child care issues in the state, and
215 one of whom shall be a special education teacher or administrator in a
216 public school preschool program that is providing services under Part B
217 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 USC 1431 et seq.,
218 as amended from time to time;

219 (5) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of
220 Representatives, who is a representative of a child care center;

221 (6) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, who is an
222 educator in a preschool program provided by a local or regional board
223 of education;

224 (7) Two appointed by the Governor, one of whom shall be a
225 representative of a corporation with a significant physical presence in
226 the state and that employs individuals who may benefit from early
227 childhood education and state child care initiatives, and one of whom
228 shall be a representative from a Head Start program;

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

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

233 (10) The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee;

234 and

235 (11) The Treasurer, or the Treasurer's designee.

236 (c) All initial appointments to the board shall be made not later than
237 September 1, 2025. Each appointed member shall serve in accordance
238 with the provisions of section 4-1a of the general statutes, and the
239 appointing authorities shall appoint members to ensure representation
240 on the board of all geographic areas in the state, to the extent practicable.
241 Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority. Any vacancy
242 occurring other than by expiration of term shall be filled for the balance
243 of the unexpired term.

244 (d) The Commissioner of Early Childhood, or the commissioner's
245 designee, the member of the House of Representatives and the member
246 of the Senate shall serve as the chairpersons of the board. The
247 chairpersons shall jointly schedule the first meeting of the board to be
248 held not later than October 1, 2025. The board shall meet at least
249 quarterly, and host an annual public hearing prior to the completion of
250 the annual report described in subsection (f) of this section.

251 (e) The Treasurer, or the Treasurer's designee, shall, at the first
252 meeting of the board and semiannually thereafter, submit to the board
253 an actuarial chart that includes a review of the total amount of funds
254 within the endowment, the health of the investments of the endowment,
255 the anticipated growth of the endowment and any recommended
256 models for the timing and rate of drawing down from the endowment.

257 (f) Not later than January 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the board
258 shall develop a report that includes, but is not limited to, (1) the financial
259 health and actuarial future of the endowment based on information
260 received from the Treasurer, (2) the expenditures of funds from the
261 endowment, (3) status updates of early care and education programs,
262 early childhood educators, families and children served, and (4) any
263 recommendations for legislation. The board shall submit such report to
264 the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having

265 cognizance of matters relating to education, children, appropriations
266 and finance, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the
267 general statutes.

268 (g) The members of the board shall serve without compensation,
269 except the parent and program provider members of the board may,
270 within available resources, be provided a stipend for serving on the
271 board.

272 (h) The board shall be within the office of the Treasurer for
273 administrative purposes only.

274 Sec. 9. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) On and after July 1, 2026, the
275 Commissioner of Early Childhood shall submit recommendations to the
276 Early Childhood Education Endowment Advisory Board on indicators
277 for prioritization in a competitive procurement process when
278 considering programs for expansion costs, as defined in section 4 of this
279 act.

280 Sec. 10. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) Not later than January 1,
281 2032, and every five years thereafter, the Commissioner of Early
282 Childhood shall prepare an impact analysis concerning the operations
283 of the Early Childhood Education Endowment and the effect that the
284 expenditure of funds from the endowment have had on the availability,
285 affordability and quality of early child care in the state. Such impact
286 analysis shall include, but need not be limited to, (1) a report on the
287 solvency of the endowment prepared by the Treasurer, and (2) an
288 analysis of the effect that the expenditure of funds from the endowment
289 has had on (A) early care and education programs receiving financial
290 assistance under Early Start CT pursuant to section 10-550b of the
291 general statutes, (B) early care and education programs that are not
292 receiving state financial assistance, (C) access of families to early care
293 and education programs receiving state financial assistance under Early
294 Start CT, (D) tuition and family contribution rates, (E) early childhood
295 educator salaries and benefits, and (F) the state-wide demand for child
296 care.

297 (b) Not later than July 1, 2031, the commissioner shall submit such
298 impact analysis to the Early Childhood Education Endowment
299 Advisory Board and to the joint standing committees of the General
300 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, children,
301 appropriations and finance, in accordance with the provisions of section
302 11-4a of the general statutes.

303 Sec. 11. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Upon receipt and review of the
304 impact analysis prepared by the Commissioner of Early Childhood
305 pursuant to section 10 of this act, and following consultation with the
306 Treasurer regarding the solvency of the Early Childhood Education
307 Endowment, the Early Childhood Education Endowment Advisory
308 Board shall develop recommendations concerning the expansion of
309 permissible expenditures of funds from the endowment under section 4
310 of this act. Not later than January 1, 2032, the advisory board shall
311 submit such recommendations to the joint standing committees of the
312 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education,
313 children, appropriations and finance, in accordance with the provisions
314 of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

315 Sec. 12. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Treasurer, on behalf of
316 the Early Childhood Education Endowment and for purposes of the
317 endowment, may:

318 (1) Receive and invest moneys in the endowment in any instruments,
319 obligations, securities or property in accordance with section 13 of this
320 act;

321 (2) Enter into one or more contractual agreements, including
322 contracts for legal, actuarial, accounting, custodial, advisory,
323 management, administrative, advertising, marketing and consulting
324 services for the endowment, and pay for such services from the assets
325 of the endowment;

326 (3) Procure insurance in connection with the endowment's property,
327 assets, activities or deposits to the endowment;

328 (4) Apply for, accept and expend gifts, grants or donations from
329 public or private sources to enable the endowment to carry out its
330 objectives;

331 (5) Adopt regulations in accordance with chapter 54 of the general
332 statutes for purposes of sections 1 to 15, inclusive, of this act;

333 (6) Sue and be sued;

334 (7) Establish one or more funds within the endowment; and

335 (8) Take any other action necessary to carry out the purposes of
336 sections 1 to 15, inclusive, of this act and incidental to the duties imposed
337 on the Treasurer pursuant to said sections.

338 (b) The Treasurer, on behalf of the endowment and for purposes of
339 the endowment, shall enter into a memorandum of understanding with
340 the Commissioner of Early Childhood to establish information-sharing
341 practices for purposes of sections 1 to 15, inclusive, of this act. Such
342 memorandum of understanding shall be in accordance with applicable
343 state and federal laws.

344 Sec. 13. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Notwithstanding the provisions
345 of sections 3-13 to 3-13h, inclusive, of the general statutes, the Treasurer
346 shall invest the amounts on deposit in the Early Childhood Education
347 Endowment in a manner reasonable and appropriate to achieve the
348 objectives of the endowment, exercising the discretion and care of a
349 prudent person in similar circumstances with similar objectives. The
350 Treasurer shall give due consideration to rate of return, risk, term or
351 maturity, diversification of the total portfolio within the endowment,
352 liquidity, the projected disbursements and expenditures and the
353 expected payments, deposits, contributions and gifts to be received. The
354 Treasurer shall not require the endowment to invest directly in
355 obligations of the state or any political subdivision of the state or in any
356 investment or other fund administered by the Treasurer. The assets of
357 the endowment shall be continuously invested and reinvested in a
358 manner consistent with the objectives of the endowment until disbursed

359 for eligible expenditures or expended on expenses incurred by the
360 operations of the endowment.

361 Sec. 14. Section 3-13c of the general statutes is repealed and the
362 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

363 As used in sections 3-13 to 3-13e, inclusive, and 3-31b, "trust funds"
364 includes the Connecticut Municipal Employees' Retirement Fund A, the
365 Connecticut Municipal Employees' Retirement Fund B, the Soldiers,
366 Sailors and Marines Fund, the Family and Medical Leave Insurance
367 Trust Fund, the State's Attorneys' Retirement Fund, the Teachers'
368 Annuity Fund, the Teachers' Pension Fund, the Teachers' Survivorship
369 and Dependency Fund, the School Fund, the State Employees
370 Retirement Fund, the Hospital Insurance Fund, the Policemen and
371 Firemen Survivor's Benefit Fund, any trust fund described in
372 subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of section 7-450 that is administered,
373 held or invested by the State Treasurer, the Connecticut Baby Bond
374 Trust, any Climate Change and Coastal Resiliency Reserve Fund created
375 pursuant to section 7-159d, the Early Childhood Education Endowment
376 and all other trust funds administered, held or invested by the State
377 Treasurer.

378 Sec. 15. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) As used in this section:

379 (1) "Health benefit plan" and "qualified health plan" have the same
380 meanings as provided in section 38a-1080 of the general statutes;

381 (2) "Health insurance subsidy" means an amount that is a portion of
382 the remaining balance of the cost of a qualified health plan after the
383 application of all available income tax credits, employer contributions
384 and other subsidies; and

385 (3) "Early care and education program" means a program providing
386 child care services, as described in section 19a-77 of the general statutes,
387 that is licensed by the Office of Early Childhood.

388 (b) Not later than January 1, 2026, the Connecticut Health Insurance

389 Exchange, established pursuant to section 38a-1081 of the general
390 statutes, shall study the level of need for coverage under a health benefit
391 plan that exists for employees of early care and education programs for
392 the purpose of modeling and estimating the cost of operating a health
393 insurance subsidy program for such employees pursuant to subsection
394 (c) of this section. Such study shall include, but need not be limited to,
395 gathering data from the Office of Early Childhood and other resources
396 to assess (1) the size and demographics of the population of such
397 employees, (2) the number of such employees without coverage under
398 a health benefit plan, and (3) any other information required to
399 effectively model and estimate the cost of such program.

400 (c) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027, the Connecticut Health
401 Insurance Exchange and the Office of Early Childhood shall jointly
402 establish, based on the model developed pursuant to subsection (b) of
403 this section, a health insurance subsidy program for employees of early
404 care and education programs through which such employees may apply
405 to the exchange to receive a health insurance subsidy that is applied to
406 the cost of a qualified health plan purchased through the exchange,
407 whether such plan is an individual health plan, an employer
408 reimbursement arrangement authorized pursuant to federal law or a
409 group health plan offered by an employer. The exchange and the office
410 shall jointly develop eligibility criteria for the health insurance subsidy
411 program that includes, but is not limited to, such employee (1) being
412 ineligible for Medicaid, and (2) applying for and accepting all available
413 income tax credits, employer contributions and other subsidies
414 applicable to the cost of a health benefit plan. The exchange shall post
415 such eligibility requirements and the application forms for the health
416 insurance subsidy program in a conspicuous location on its Internet web
417 site.

418 (d) Not later than May 1, 2026, the Connecticut Health Insurance
419 Exchange shall submit to the Early Childhood Education Endowment
420 Advisory Board, established pursuant to section 8 of this act, a
421 recommendation for the amount of the health insurance subsidy

422 available to participants under the health insurance subsidy program
423 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027, based on the amount allocated
424 for such purpose in the Early Childhood Education Endowment,
425 established pursuant to section 1 of this act, and the estimated number
426 of participants in the health insurance subsidy program for such fiscal
427 year. On or before June 30, 2026, the Early Childhood Education
428 Endowment Advisory Board shall approve or modify such
429 recommendation. The amount of such health insurance subsidy shall be
430 applied directly to the cost of a qualified benefit plan and may not be
431 distributed to any participant.

432 (e) The Office of Early Childhood shall contract with community
433 organizations to coordinate outreach activities for employees of early
434 care and education programs to assist such employees to obtain
435 coverage under a health benefit plan, whether such coverage is through
436 Medicaid or participation in the health insurance subsidy program.

437 Sec. 16. Subsection (d) of section 10-76d of the general statutes is
438 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
439 *2025*):

440 (d) To meet its obligations under sections 10-76a to 10-76g, inclusive,
441 any local or regional board of education may make agreements with
442 another such board or subject to the consent of the parent or guardian
443 of any child affected thereby, make agreements, or on and after July 1,
444 2019, enter into a contract with any private provider of special education
445 services, as defined in section 10-91g, private school, or public or private
446 agency or institution, including a group home, to provide the necessary
447 programs or services, but no expenditures made pursuant to a contract
448 with a private provider of special education services, private school,
449 agency or institution for such special education shall be paid under the
450 provisions of section 10-76g, unless (1) such contract includes a
451 description of the educational program and other treatment the child is
452 to receive, a statement of minimal goals and objectives which it is
453 anticipated such child will achieve, an estimated time schedule for
454 returning the child to the community or transferring such child to

455 another appropriate facility, and an explanation of how the tuition, [or
456 costs] rates or other fees charged for services provided under the
457 agreement or contract are to be calculated in accordance with the rate
458 schedule established pursuant to section 3 of this act, (2) subject to the
459 provisions of this subsection, the educational needs of the child for
460 whom such special education is being provided cannot be met by public
461 school arrangements in the opinion of the commissioner who, before
462 granting approval of such contract for purposes of payment, shall
463 consider such factors as the particular needs of the child, the
464 appropriateness and efficacy of the program offered by such private
465 school, agency or institution, and the economic feasibility of comparable
466 alternatives, and (3) commencing with the 1987-1988 school year and for
467 each school year thereafter, each such private provider of special
468 education services, private school, agency or institution has been
469 approved for special education by the Commissioner of Education or by
470 the appropriate agency for facilities located out of state, except as
471 provided in subsection (b) of this section. Notwithstanding the
472 provisions of subdivision (2) of this subsection or any regulations
473 adopted by the State Board of Education setting placement priorities,
474 placements pursuant to this section and payments under section 10-76g,
475 may be made pursuant to such a contract if the public arrangements are
476 more costly than the private provider of special education services,
477 private school, institution or agency, provided the private provider of
478 special education services, private school, institution or agency meets
479 the educational needs of the child and its program is appropriate and
480 efficacious. Any payment under the provisions of section 10-76g or
481 section 8 of this act, shall include all expenditures incurred by a local or
482 regional board of education pursuant to a contract with a private
483 provider of special education services, private school, agency or
484 institution [,] that is in accordance with the rate schedule and to the
485 extent permitted under said [section] sections, during the school year in
486 which such private provider of special education services, private
487 school, agency or institution provided such services, even if such private
488 provider of special education services, private school, agency or
489 institution is approved for special education by the Commissioner of

490 Education during such school year. [Notwithstanding the provisions of
491 this subsection to the contrary, nothing in this subsection shall (A)
492 require the removal of a child from a nonapproved facility if the child
493 was placed there prior to July 7, 1987, pursuant to the determination of
494 a planning and placement team that such a placement was appropriate
495 and such placement was approved by the Commissioner of Education,
496 or (B) prohibit the placement of a child at a nonapproved facility if a
497 planning and placement team determines prior to July 7, 1987, that the
498 child be placed in a nonapproved facility for the 1987-1988 school year.]
499 Each child placed in a nonapproved facility [as described in
500 subparagraphs (A) and (B) of subdivision (3) of this subsection] may
501 continue at [the] such nonapproved facility provided the planning and
502 placement team, [or] a hearing officer appointed pursuant to section 10-
503 76h or a court determines that [the] such placement [is appropriate]
504 provides an appropriate public education and that there is not another
505 charging entity able to offer a placement for such child that provides an
506 appropriate public education. Expenditures incurred by any local or
507 regional board of education [to maintain children in] as a result of such
508 placement in such nonapproved facilities [as described in said
509 subparagraphs (A) and (B) shall] (A) by a planning and placement team
510 shall not be paid pursuant to the provisions of section 10-76g or section
511 8 of this act, and (B) pursuant to an order of a hearing officer appointed
512 pursuant to section 10-76h or a court may be paid pursuant to the
513 provisions of section 10-76g and section 8 of this act. Any local or
514 regional board of education may enter into a contract with the owners
515 or operators of any sheltered workshop or rehabilitation center for
516 provision of an education occupational training program for children
517 requiring special education who are at least sixteen years of age,
518 provided such workshop or institution shall have been approved by the
519 appropriate state agency. Whenever any child is identified by a local or
520 regional board of education as a child requiring special education and
521 such board of education determines that the requirements for special
522 education could be met by a program provided within the district or by
523 agreement with another board of education except for the child's need
524 for services other than educational services such as medical, psychiatric

525 or institutional care or services, such board of education may meet its
526 obligation to furnish special education for such child by paying the
527 reasonable cost of special education instruction in a private provider of
528 special education services, private school, hospital or other institution
529 provided such board of education or the commissioner concurs that
530 placement in such institution is necessary and proper and no state
531 institution is available to meet such child's needs. Any such private
532 provider of special education services, private school, hospital or other
533 institution receiving such reasonable cost of special education
534 instruction by such board of education shall submit all required
535 documentation to such board of education for purposes of submitting
536 claims to the Medicaid School Based Child Health Program
537 administered by the Department of Social Services.

538 Sec. 17. Section 10-262j of the general statutes is amended by adding
539 subsection (j) as follows (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

540 (NEW) (j) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, and each fiscal year
541 thereafter, any district that has received a grant under section 19 of this
542 act, during the prior fiscal year, shall not be required to include the
543 amount of such grant in the calculation of such district's budgeted
544 appropriation for education for the subsequent fiscal year.

545 Sec. 18. (*Effective July 1, 2025*) The Department of Education shall
546 conduct a request for information from those contractors who have (1)
547 expertise in the mapping of transportation routes, and (2) the ability to
548 (A) create, and annually update, recommended coordinated bus routes
549 for all special education students traveling to and from special
550 education outplacements in the state that (i) maximize efficiency and
551 reduce expenses in the provision of special education and related
552 services, and (ii) are in accordance with state and federal law, or (B)
553 provide software or access to a digital program that would allow a state
554 agency to create and annually update recommended coordinated bus
555 routes for all special education students traveling to and from special
556 education outplacements in the state that (i) maximize efficiency and
557 reduce expenses in the provision of special education and related

558 services, and (ii) are in accordance with state and federal law. Not later
559 than July 1, 2027, the department shall submit a report on the results of
560 such request for information to the joint standing committees of the
561 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education
562 and transportation, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of
563 the general statutes.

564 Sec. 19. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) For the fiscal year ending
565 June 30, 2027, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Department of
566 Education shall, within available appropriations, administer a
567 competitive grant program for local and regional boards of education to
568 support in-district or regional special education programming and
569 services for students with disabilities. Grants awarded to local and
570 regional boards of education under the program may be used (1) to
571 enhance and improve existing special education programming and
572 services in the school district or start-up costs related to the creation of
573 in-district or regional special education programming and services for
574 students who are currently enrolled in a program operated by a
575 provider of special education services, as defined in section 10-91g of
576 the general statutes, and (2) for planning and operational expenses
577 related to such in-district or regional special education programming
578 and services.

579 (b) The Commissioner of Education shall develop the application to
580 be used by local and regional boards of education in applying for a grant
581 under this section. The application shall include, but need not be limited
582 to, a description of (1) the program location, (2) the student population
583 who will be served by the programming and services, (3) the staffing
584 needs for the programming and services, (4) any assistive technology
585 and materials necessary to implement the programming and services,
586 (5) any capital improvement needs, (6) the budget allocation for the
587 programming and services, and (7) any professional development
588 necessary for implementation of the programming and services. A local
589 or regional board of education shall submit such application in a form
590 and manner prescribed by the Commissioner of Education.

591 (c) The commissioner shall develop criteria for reviewing and
592 approving grant applications. Such criteria shall be based upon (1)
593 increasing students' access to high-quality general education
594 instruction, and (2) enhancing in-district or regional programming, such
595 as unified classes and increased time with nondisabled peers, for
596 students with intensive needs, including giving priority to a board of
597 education for a town designated as an alliance district pursuant to
598 section 10-262u of the general statutes.

599 (d) Any local or regional board of education that receives a grant
600 under this section shall not expend such grant on special education
601 programming and services provided pursuant to a contract with a third
602 party or a private provider of special education services.

603 (e) Not later than September 30, 2027, and annually thereafter, any
604 local or regional board of education that has received a grant under the
605 program in the prior fiscal year shall submit a report to the
606 commissioner that assesses the impact of the grant on student outcomes,
607 including the increase in time with nondisabled peers across the school
608 district and the number of outplaced students, and district
609 expenditures. The report shall contain any information and data
610 requested by the commissioner.

611 (f) Not later than February 1, 2028, and annually thereafter, the
612 department shall submit a report on the progress of the program that
613 assesses the impact of the grant on student outcomes, including the
614 increase in time with nondisabled peers across the school district and
615 the number of outplaced students, to the joint standing committee of the
616 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education,
617 in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

618 Sec. 20. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) Not later than December 1,
619 2026, the Department of Education, in consultation with the Child
620 Advocate, shall develop, and update not less than annually thereafter, a
621 listing of each special education program offered by (1) any regional
622 educational service center, (2) any private provider of special education,

623 as defined in section 10-91g of the general statutes, approved by the
624 Commissioner of Education, and (3) any local or regional board of
625 education that accepts out-of-district student placements. Such listing
626 shall specify for each program the (A) types of services provided, (B)
627 physical location where such program offers special education, (C) ages
628 served, and (D) approved classroom size of the program.

629 (b) Not later than January 15, 2027, the Department of Education shall
630 post such list on the public database maintained by the department on
631 its Internet web site and send such list to each local and regional board
632 of education in the state.

633 Sec. 21. Section 10-232a of the general statutes is repealed and the
634 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

635 (a) As used in this section and sections 10-232b and 10-232c,
636 "nongovernmental school operator" means an operator of an
637 interdistrict magnet school that is a third-party not-for-profit
638 corporation approved by the Commissioner of Education, the
639 governing council of a state or local charter school, an endowed or
640 incorporated academy approved by the State Board of Education
641 pursuant to section 10-34, a special education facility approved by the
642 State Board of Education pursuant to section 10-76d, as amended by this
643 act, the supervisory agent of a nonpublic school, [or] a cooperative
644 arrangement pursuant to section 10-158a and a private provider of
645 special education services, as defined in section 10-91g.

646 (b) Each nongovernmental school operator shall, subject to the
647 provisions of section 31-51i, (1) require each applicant for a position with
648 such nongovernmental school operator to state, in writing, whether
649 such applicant has ever been convicted of a crime or whether criminal
650 charges are pending against such applicant at the time of such
651 application and, if charges are pending, to state the charges and the
652 court in which such charges are pending, (2) require each applicant to
653 submit to a records check of the Department of Children and Families
654 child abuse and neglect registry established pursuant to section 17a-

101k, before such applicant may be hired by such nongovernmental school operator, and (3) on and after July 1, 2019, require, subject to the provisions of subsection (e) of this section, each applicant for a position with such nongovernmental school operator to submit to state and national criminal history records checks within thirty days from the date of employment and may require, subject to the provisions of subsection (e) of this section, any person hired prior to said date to submit to state and national criminal history records checks. The criminal history records checks required by this subsection shall be conducted in accordance with section 29-17a, the federal National Child Protection Act of 1993 and the federal Volunteers for Children Act of 1998. If the nongovernmental school operator receives notice of a conviction of a crime which has not previously been disclosed by such person to the nongovernmental school operator, the nongovernmental school operator may (A) terminate the contract of a certified employee, in accordance with the provisions of section 10-151, if applicable, and (B) dismiss a noncertified employee, provided such employee is notified of the reason for such dismissal. If the nongovernmental school operator receives notice of a conviction of a crime by a person holding a certificate, authorization or permit issued by the State Board of Education, the nongovernmental school operator shall send such notice to the State Board of Education. The provisions of this subsection shall not be construed to cause a nongovernmental school operator to disseminate the results of any national criminal history records check.

(c) If a nongovernmental school operator requests, a regional educational service center shall arrange for the fingerprinting of any person required to submit to state and national criminal history records checks pursuant to this section or for conducting any other method of positive identification required by the State Police Bureau of Identification or the Federal Bureau of Investigation and shall forward such fingerprints or other positive identifying information to the State Police Bureau of Identification which shall conduct criminal history records checks in accordance with section 29-17a, the federal National Child Protection Act of 1993 and the federal Volunteers for Children Act

689 of 1998. Such regional educational service center shall maintain such
690 fingerprints or other positive identifying information, which may be in
691 an electronic format, for a period of four years, at the end of which such
692 fingerprints and positive identifying information shall be destroyed.
693 The State Police Bureau of Identification shall provide the results of such
694 checks to such nongovernmental school operator. No regional
695 educational service center shall charge a fee for services under this
696 subsection that exceeds any fee that the center may charge any applicant
697 for a position with such center.

698 (d) State and national criminal history records checks for substitute
699 teachers completed within one year prior to the date of employment
700 with a nongovernmental school operator and submitted to the
701 employing nongovernmental school operator shall meet the
702 requirements of subsection (b) of this section. A nongovernmental
703 school operator shall not require substitute teachers to submit to state
704 and national criminal history records checks pursuant to subsection (b)
705 of this section if they are continuously employed by such
706 nongovernmental school operator, provided a substitute teacher is
707 subjected to such checks at least once every five years. For purposes of
708 this section, substitute teachers shall be deemed to be continuously
709 employed by a nongovernmental school operator if they are employed
710 at least one day of each school year by such nongovernmental school
711 operator.

712 (e) The provisions of this section shall not apply to (1) a student
713 employed by the nongovernmental school operator that operates a
714 school which the student attends, or (2) a person employed by a
715 nongovernmental school operator as a teacher for a noncredit adult class
716 or adult education activity, as defined in section 10-67, who is not
717 required to hold a teaching certificate pursuant to section 10-145b for his
718 or her position.

719 (f) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (g) of section 31-51i,
720 and to the extent permissible under state and federal laws regarding the
721 dissemination of criminal history records, the State Board of Education

722 shall, upon request of a nongovernmental school operator, make
723 available to such nongovernmental school operator requesting
724 information concerning an applicant for a position with such
725 nongovernmental school operator, (1) any information concerning the
726 applicant's eligibility for employment in a position with such
727 nongovernmental school operator requiring a certificate, authorization
728 or permit issued pursuant to chapter 166, (2) whether the department
729 has knowledge that the applicant has been disciplined for a finding of
730 abuse or neglect or sexual misconduct, as defined in section 10-222c, and
731 any information concerning such a finding, and (3) whether the
732 department has received notification that the applicant has been
733 convicted of a crime or of criminal charges pending against the
734 applicant and any information concerning such charges. The provisions
735 of this subsection shall not be construed to cause the state board to
736 investigate any such request or disseminate the results of any national
737 criminal history records check.

738 Sec. 22. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) Each regional educational
739 service center and private provider of special education services, as
740 defined in section 10-91g of the general statutes, shall send written
741 notification to the parent or legal guardian of a student receiving special
742 education services, the local or regional board of education that has
743 placed such student with such regional educational service center or
744 private provider for the provision of special education services and the
745 Department of Education regarding all staffing changes that impact the
746 provision of such special education services, including, but not limited
747 to, vacancies, long-term absences and assignments of long-term
748 substitutes, not later than five business days from the occurrence of such
749 staffing change. Such written notice shall include, but need not be
750 limited to, specification of (1) any change in services provided by
751 specialists, (2) any change to student to teacher ratios, and (3) the plan
752 to mitigate the impact of such staffing change on such student. As used
753 in this section, "long-term" means ten or more consecutive school days.

754 Sec. 23. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) The Department of Education

755 shall establish a model contract for special education transportation
756 services to and from special education outplacements provided by
757 providers of special education transportation services. Not later than
758 July 1, 2026, the department shall make such model contract available to
759 local and regional boards of education for use by such boards to enter
760 into a contract with providers of special education transportation
761 services for such special education transportation services.

762 Sec. 24. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) Not later than July 1, 2026, the
763 Department of Education, in consultation with the Connecticut Parent
764 Advocacy Center, shall develop, and annually update, a special
765 education family guide that assists the parents and guardians of
766 students receiving special education and related services in
767 understanding the process and laws governing the provision of special
768 education. Such guide shall include, but need not be limited to, an
769 explanation of (1) the allowable number of days to (A) diagnose that a
770 student requires special education or related services, and (B) hold an
771 initial planning and placement team meeting, (2) the consequences for
772 failure of the school district to (A) meet the deadlines described in
773 subdivision (1) of this section, and (B) include the appropriate
774 administrators at the initial and subsequent planning and placement
775 team processes, and (3) recourses available to parents and guardians if
776 an in-home tutor does not attend to tutoring sessions. The department
777 shall make such guide available on its Internet web site.

778 Sec. 25. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) For the fiscal year ending
779 June 30, 2027, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Department of
780 Education shall administer the special education training, education
781 and testing competitive grant program. Under the grant program, the
782 department shall award grants to individual educators and
783 paraeducators for the purpose of covering the costs associated with any
784 professional training, education and testing requirements relating to
785 such individual's ability to provide special education and related
786 services. The department shall develop criteria for reviewing and
787 awarding grants under the program, and such criteria shall take into

788 consideration the financial need of the applicant and give priority to
789 those applicants with the greatest financial need. As used in this section,
790 "educators and paraeducators" includes individuals who are enrolled in
791 a teacher preparation program, as defined in section 10-10a of the
792 general statutes, candidates for professional certification as an educator
793 under chapter 166 of the general statutes, teachers employed by a local
794 or regional board of education, prospective paraeducators and
795 paraeducators employed by a local or regional board of education.

796 (b) An educator or paraeducator may apply, in a form and manner
797 prescribed by the department, for a grant under this section. Any
798 educator or paraeducator receiving a grant award under the program
799 shall use such grant to assist in covering the cost of (1) tuition or other
800 fees associated with enrollment in a teacher preparation program
801 offered at the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, (2) obtaining
802 or renewal of professional certification under chapter 166 of the general
803 statutes with an endorsement in special education, (3) testing for
804 paraeducators, (4) continuing education credits, and (5) any other
805 education or testing requirements relating to such educator's or
806 paraeducator's ability to provide special education and related services.
807 No educator or paraeducator may receive a grant award under the
808 program unless such educator or paraeducator commits to three years
809 of employment to provide special education and related services in a
810 school under the jurisdiction of a town designated as an alliance district
811 pursuant to section 10-262u of the general statutes.

812 (c) The department shall develop repayment criteria for educators
813 and paraeducators who do not complete three years of employment in
814 a school under the jurisdiction of a town designated as an alliance
815 district pursuant to section 10-262u of the general statutes. Any amounts
816 repaid to the department shall be deposited in the General Fund.

817 Sec. 26. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) For the fiscal year ending
818 June 30, 2026, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Department Education
819 shall establish a grant program to support local and regional boards of
820 education in providing support services for students who require

821 special education and have experienced trauma or have behavioral
822 health needs. Such grant shall be available to each local or regional
823 board of education that provides support services, including, but not
824 limited to, trauma-informed care coordination and family outreach, for
825 such students and such students' families in partnership with
826 community service providers, including, but not limited to, family
827 service centers. Grants shall be funded in an amount prescribed by the
828 Commissioner of Education.

829 (b) On or before September 1, 2025, the Department of Education
830 shall post in a conspicuous location on its Internet web site (1) a
831 description of the grant program, including, but not limited to, the
832 amount of funding available for each grant under such program, and (2)
833 the application form for such program.

834 Sec. 27. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) There is established an Office
835 of the Educational Ombudsperson, which shall be within the Office of
836 Governmental Accountability for administrative purposes only. The
837 Office of the Educational Ombudsperson shall serve students and
838 families of students in the pursuit of preschool, elementary and
839 secondary education, special education, vocational education and adult
840 education. The Office of the Educational Ombudsperson shall be under
841 the direction of an Educational Ombudsperson who shall be appointed
842 by the Governor and be selected from among individuals with expertise
843 and experience in educational advocacy, special education and
844 educational law.

845 (b) The Office of the Educational Ombudsperson shall:

846 (1) Receive, review and attempt to resolve any complaints from
847 students and students' families, including, but not limited to, attempts
848 to resolve such complaints in collaboration with schools and educators;

849 (2) Compile and analyze data on students and young people, through
850 available data systems, including, but not limited to, the Connecticut
851 Preschool through Twenty and Workforce Information Network,

852 established pursuant to section 10a-57g of the general statutes;

853 (3) Assist employees of local and regional boards of education
854 involved in planning and placement team meetings;

855 (4) Provide information to the public, agencies, legislators and others
856 regarding the issues and concerns of students and make
857 recommendations for resolving such issues and concerns;

858 (5) Analyze and monitor the development and implementation of
859 federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies relating to students
860 and recommend any changes the Educational Ombudsperson deems
861 necessary;

862 (6) Disseminate information concerning the availability of the Office
863 of the Educational Ombudsperson to assist students and families of
864 students, as well as local and regional boards of education with
865 educational resource concerns; and

866 (7) Take any other actions necessary to fulfill the duties of the Office
867 of the Educational Ombudsperson and the Educational Ombudsperson
868 as set forth in this subsection.

869 (c) On or before January 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the
870 Educational Ombudsperson shall submit a report, in accordance with
871 the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the Office of
872 Governmental Accountability and the joint standing committees of the
873 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education
874 and children. The Educational Ombudsperson shall report on: (1) The
875 implementation of this section; (2) the overall effectiveness of the
876 Educational Ombudsperson position; and (3) additional steps that need
877 to be taken for the Educational Ombudsperson to be more effective.

878 Sec. 28. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) For the school year
879 commencing July 1, 2026, and each school year thereafter, each local and
880 regional board of education shall hire or designate an existing employee
881 to serve as an instructional support teacher in each school under the

jurisdiction of such board. An instructional support teacher shall (1) assist school-based personnel in improving the quality of teaching and student learning for students with disabilities, (2) assume responsibility for the knowledge and application of the appropriate curriculum and the instructional programs for students with disabilities in compliance with all state and federal laws and any policies of the Department of Education or the school district, (3) collaborate with parents and school personnel regarding instructional decision-making for students with disabilities, (4) plan and deliver professional learning activities to staff, parents and others to increase achievement for students with disabilities, (5) provide coaching and follow-up to support district initiatives, including, but not limited to, effective literacy and math instruction, personalized learning and individualized instruction for students with disabilities, (6) assist teachers in improving classroom management and climate through the implementation of effective instructional methods and behavioral supports, and (7) consult with school-based instructional staff regarding individual education program development, extended school year, behavioral interventions and transition plans for students with disabilities.

(b) Any person hired or designated to serve as the instructional support teacher for the school shall (1) for the school year commencing July 1, 2026, spend at least fifty per cent of their time performing the responsibilities described in subsection (a) of this section, (2) for the school year commencing July 1, 2027, spend at least seventy-five per cent of their time performing said responsibilities, and (3) for the school year commencing July 1, 2028, and each school year thereafter, be employed full-time as the instructional support teacher.

Sec. 29. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) For the school year commencing July 1, 2026, and each school year thereafter, the Department of Education shall, at least quarterly, host trainings for persons hired or designated to serve as an instructional support teacher, as described in section 28 of this act. Such training shall include, but need not be limited to, effective literacy and math instruction, personalized learning and

915 individualized instruction for students with disabilities, improving
916 classroom management, effective instructional methods and behavioral
917 supports, and transition plans for students with disabilities.

918 Sec. 30. (*Effective from passage*) The Department of Education shall
919 conduct a study concerning the disproportionate or over-identification
920 of minority students for special education and related services. Such
921 study shall include, but need not be limited to, an examination of the
922 rates of identification for special education and related services,
923 disaggregated by race and gender. Not later than January 1, 2027, the
924 department shall submit a report on its findings and recommendations
925 to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having
926 cognizance of matters relating to education, in accordance with the
927 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

928 Sec. 31. Subsection (c) of section 10-4 of the general statutes is
929 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
930 *2025*):

931 (c) Said board shall prepare every five years a five-year
932 comprehensive plan for elementary, secondary, vocational, career and
933 adult education. Such comprehensive plan shall include, but need not
934 be limited to, (1) a policy statement of the State Board of Education's
935 long-term goals and short-term objectives, including, for any
936 comprehensive plan prepared on or after July 1, 2018, a policy statement
937 that the demographics of educators in the public schools should reflect
938 the racial and ethnic diversity of the total population of the state, (2) an
939 analysis of cost implications and measurement criteria and how said
940 board's programs and operations relate to such goals and objectives, and
941 (3) specific action plans, target dates and strategies and methods of
942 implementation for achieving such goals and objectives. The State Board
943 of Education shall establish, every five years, an advisory committee to
944 assist the board in the preparation of the comprehensive plan. Members
945 of the advisory committee shall be appointed by the State Board of
946 Education with representation on the committee to include, but not be
947 limited to, representatives of the Connecticut Advisory Council on

948 Vocational and Career Education, education organizations, parent
949 organizations, student organizations, business and industry, organized
950 labor and appropriate state agencies. Notwithstanding any requirement
951 for submission of a plan for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1984,
952 pursuant to section 10-96a of the general statutes, revision of 1958,
953 revised to January 1, 1983, the State Board of Education shall not be
954 required to submit the master plan for vocational and career education
955 but shall submit, pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, the
956 comprehensive plan for elementary and secondary, vocational, career
957 and adult education to the Governor and the joint standing committee
958 of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to
959 education on or before September 1, 1996, and every five years
960 thereafter provided, the master plan currently in effect shall remain in
961 effect until the comprehensive plan is submitted. The Commissioner of
962 Education shall make an annual presentation to the State Board of
963 Education, at regularly scheduled meetings of said board, to provide
964 updates on the strategic priorities, actions and outcomes outlined in the
965 comprehensive plan. The State Board of Education shall be responsible
966 for annually updating the progress in implementing the goals and
967 objectives of the comprehensive plan based on the presentations of the
968 commissioner and shall report on such progress to the Governor and to
969 said standing committee annually and make such information available
970 on the Internet web site of the Department of Education. The State Board
971 of Education shall provide opportunity for public comment prior to its
972 adoption of a plan.

973 Sec. 32. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) On or after June first, but prior
974 to September thirtieth annually, the superintendent of schools for each
975 school district shall provide, at a regularly scheduled meeting of the
976 local or regional board of education for the school district, the following:

977 (1) The number and names of all community-based organizations
978 with whom the board of education has executed a formal memorandum
979 of understanding, memorandum of agreement or contract to provide
980 support services to students in the school district, disaggregated by

981 school and type of support service provided;

982 (2) The workforce development programs offered by the board of
983 education to students in which the board has partnered with an outside
984 entity, including, but not limited to, cooperatives, internships, in-school
985 job training programs provided by businesses and in-school workforce
986 board presentations; and

987 (3) Attrition data for certified and noncertified staff, disaggregated by
988 school and subject, not including in-district transfers.

989 Sec. 33. (*Effective from passage*) Any state agency that contributes data
990 for the purposes of the development of the report of disconnected youth
991 pursuant to section 22 of public act 24-45 shall post such report on the
992 agency's Internet web site.

993 Sec. 34. Section 10-198d of the general statutes is repealed and the
994 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

995 (a) Not later than January 1, 2016, the Department of Education, in
996 consultation with the Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement
997 Gap established pursuant to section 10-16nn, shall develop a chronic
998 absenteeism prevention and intervention plan for use by local and
999 regional boards of education to reduce chronic absenteeism in the school
1000 district.

1001 (b) (1) The department shall semiannually review, and revise as
1002 needed, the chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan. In
1003 making such revisions, the department shall incorporate the findings of
1004 the most recent report of disconnected youth, developed pursuant to
1005 section 22 of public act 24-45. In addition to the policies and procedures
1006 concerning truants described in section 10-198a, the plan shall include,
1007 but need not be limited to, the following: (A) Information that describes
1008 (i) chronic absenteeism, including, but not limited to, the definition of a
1009 chronically absent child under section 10-198c, and the causes of chronic
1010 absenteeism, such as poverty, violence, poor health and lack of access to
1011 transportation, (ii) the effect of chronic absenteeism on a student's

1012 academic performance, and (iii) how family and school partnerships
1013 with community resources, including, but not limited to, family
1014 resource centers and youth service bureaus, can reduce chronic
1015 absenteeism and improve student attendance, [and] (B) the use of an
1016 early indication tool provided by the department or other third party,
1017 provided such tool is designed to quickly identify students who are at
1018 risk for becoming chronically absent or disconnected from school, such
1019 as those students who (i) are at risk of not graduating or satisfying the
1020 high school graduation requirements pursuant to section 10-221a, (ii)
1021 have a history of behavioral concerns or disciplinary issues, including
1022 suspensions or expulsions, and (iii) are homeless children or youth, as
1023 defined in 42 USC 11343a, as amended from time to time, and (C) a
1024 means of collecting and analyzing data relating to student attendance,
1025 truancy and chronic absenteeism for the purpose of (i) disaggregating
1026 such data by school district, school, grade and subgroups, such as race,
1027 ethnicity, gender, eligibility for free or reduced priced lunches, housing
1028 status, students whose primary language is not English and students
1029 with disabilities, and (ii) assisting local and regional boards of education
1030 in (I) tracking chronic absenteeism over multiple years and for the
1031 current school year, (II) developing indicators to identify students who
1032 are at risk of being chronically absent children, (III) monitoring students'
1033 attendance over time, and (IV) making adjustments to interventions as
1034 they are being implemented.

1035 (2) The chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan may
1036 include, but need not be limited to, the following: (A) A research-based
1037 and data-driven home visiting or mentorship model that addresses and
1038 attempts to prevent or reduce chronic absenteeism through the use of
1039 mentors, such as students, teachers, administrators, intramural and
1040 interscholastic athletic coaches, school resource officers, family
1041 navigators, student success coaches and community partners, and (B)
1042 incentives and rewards that recognize schools and students that
1043 improve attendance and reduce the school chronic absenteeism rate.

1044 Sec. 35. Section 10-222 of the general statutes is repealed and the

1045 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1046 Each local board of education shall prepare an itemized estimate of
1047 the cost of maintenance of public schools for the ensuing year and shall
1048 submit such estimate to the board of finance in each town or city having
1049 a board of finance, to the board of selectmen in each town having no
1050 board of finance or otherwise to the authority making appropriations
1051 for the school district, not later than two months preceding the annual
1052 meeting at which appropriations are to be made. The board or authority
1053 that receives such estimate shall, not later than ten days after the date
1054 the board of education submits such estimate, make spending
1055 recommendations and suggestions to such board of education as to how
1056 such board of education may consolidate noneducational services and
1057 realize financial efficiencies. Such board of education may accept or
1058 reject the suggestions of the board of finance, board of selectmen or
1059 appropriating authority and shall provide the board of finance, board of
1060 selectmen or appropriating authority with a written explanation of the
1061 reason for any rejection. The money appropriated by any municipality
1062 for the maintenance of public schools shall be expended by and in the
1063 discretion of the board of education. Except as provided in this
1064 subsection, any such board may transfer any unexpended or
1065 uncontracted-for portion of any appropriation for school purposes to
1066 any other item of such itemized estimate. Boards may, by adopting
1067 policies and procedures, authorize designated personnel to make
1068 limited transfers under emergency circumstances if the urgent need for
1069 the transfer prevents the board from meeting in a timely fashion to
1070 consider such transfer. All transfers made in such instances shall be
1071 announced at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the board and a
1072 written explanation of such transfer shall be provided to the legislative
1073 body of the municipality or, in a municipality where the legislative body
1074 is a town meeting, to the board of selectmen. Expenditures by the board
1075 of education shall not exceed the appropriation made by the
1076 municipality, with such money as may be received from other sources
1077 for school purposes. If any occasion arises whereby additional funds are
1078 needed by such board, the chairman of such board shall notify the board

1079 of finance, board of selectmen or appropriating authority, as the case
1080 may be, and shall submit a request for additional funds in the same
1081 manner as is provided for departments, boards or agencies of the
1082 municipality and no additional funds shall be expended unless such
1083 supplemental appropriation shall be granted and no supplemental
1084 expenditures shall be made in excess of those granted through the
1085 appropriating authority. The annual report of the board of education
1086 shall, in accordance with section 10-224, include a summary showing (1)
1087 the total cost of the maintenance of schools, (2) the amount received
1088 from the state and other sources for the maintenance of schools, [and]
1089 (3) the net cost to the municipality of the maintenance of schools, and
1090 (4) the balance of any nonlapsing, unexpended funds account described
1091 in section 10-248a, as amended by this act. For purposes of this
1092 subsection, "meeting" means a meeting, as defined in section 1-200, and
1093 "itemized estimate" means an estimate in which broad budgetary
1094 categories including, but not limited to, salaries, fringe benefits, utilities,
1095 supplies and grounds maintenance are divided into one or more line
1096 items.

1097 Sec. 36. Section 10-248a of the general statutes is repealed and the
1098 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1099 (a) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, and each fiscal year
1100 thereafter, notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes or any
1101 special act, municipal charter, home rule ordinance or other ordinance,
1102 a local board of education may deposit into a nonlapsing account any
1103 unexpended funds from the prior fiscal year from the budgeted
1104 appropriation for education, provided (1) such deposited amount does
1105 not exceed two per cent of the total budgeted appropriation for
1106 education for such prior fiscal year, (2) each expenditure from such
1107 account shall be made only for educational purposes, and (3) each such
1108 expenditure shall be authorized by the local board of education for such
1109 town.

1110 (b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, and each fiscal year
1111 thereafter, each local board of education shall compile a report

1112 regarding the nonlapsing, unexpended funds account described in this
1113 section, including, but not limited to, the total balance of the account,
1114 the amount deposited into such account in a fiscal year and an
1115 accounting of the expenditures made from such account. Each such
1116 board shall submit such report to the Department of Education and the
1117 exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees chosen
1118 pursuant to section 10-153b.

1119 (c) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, and each fiscal year
1120 thereafter, each local board of education shall, not later than thirty days
1121 from the adoption of such board's budget, notify the exclusive
1122 bargaining representative for certified employees, chosen pursuant to
1123 section 10-153b, of (1) the establishment of a nonlapsing, unexpended
1124 funds account described in this section, or (2) the board's intended uses
1125 for any funds in such nonlapsing, unexpended funds account during the
1126 next fiscal year.

1127 Sec. 37. Subdivision (2) of subsection (d) of section 10-51 of the
1128 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
1129 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1130 (2) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, and each fiscal year
1131 thereafter, a regional board of education, by a majority vote of its
1132 members, may create a reserve fund for educational expenditures. Such
1133 fund shall thereafter be termed "reserve fund for educational
1134 expenditures". The aggregate amount of annual and supplemental
1135 appropriations by a district to such fund shall not exceed two per cent
1136 of the annual district budget for such fiscal year. Annual appropriations
1137 to such fund shall be included in the share of net expenses to be paid by
1138 each member town. Supplemental appropriations to such fund may be
1139 made from estimated fiscal year end surplus in operating funds. Interest
1140 and investment earnings received with respect to amounts held in the
1141 fund shall be credited to such fund. The board shall annually submit a
1142 complete and detailed report of the condition of such fund to the
1143 member towns. Upon the recommendation and approval by the
1144 regional board of education, any part or the whole of such fund may be

1145 used for educational expenditures. Upon the approval of any such
1146 expenditure an appropriation shall be set up, plainly designated for the
1147 educational expenditure for which it has been authorized. Any
1148 unexpended portion of such appropriation remaining shall revert to
1149 said fund. If any authorized appropriation is set up pursuant to the
1150 provisions of this subsection and through unforeseen circumstances the
1151 board is unable to expend the total amount of such appropriation, the
1152 board, by a majority vote of its members, may terminate such
1153 appropriation which then shall no longer be in effect. Such fund may be
1154 discontinued, after the recommendation and approval by the regional
1155 board of education, and any amounts held in the fund shall be
1156 transferred to the general fund of the district. For the fiscal year ending
1157 June 30, 2026, and each fiscal year thereafter, each board shall (A) make
1158 available and annually update information regarding such fund,
1159 including, but not limited to, the total balance of the fund, the amount
1160 deposited into such fund in a fiscal year and an accounting of the
1161 expenditures made from such fund, and (B) not later than thirty days
1162 from the adoption of such board's budget, notify the exclusive
1163 bargaining representative for certified employees, chosen pursuant to
1164 section 10-153b, of (i) the establishment of the reserve fund for
1165 educational expenditures, or (ii) the board's intended uses for any funds
1166 in such fund during the next fiscal year.

1167 Sec. 38. Subsection (a) of section 10-233d of the general statutes is
1168 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
1169 *2025*):

1170 (a) (1) Any local or regional board of education, at a meeting at which
1171 three or more members of such board are present, or the impartial
1172 hearing board established pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, may
1173 expel, subject to the provisions of this subsection, any pupil in grades
1174 three to twelve, inclusive, whose conduct on school grounds or at a
1175 school-sponsored activity is violative of a publicized policy of such
1176 board and is seriously disruptive of the educational process or
1177 endangers persons or property or whose conduct off school grounds is

1178 violative of such policy and is seriously disruptive of the educational
1179 process, provided a majority of the board members sitting in the
1180 expulsion hearing vote to expel and that at least three affirmative votes
1181 for expulsion are cast. In making a determination as to whether conduct
1182 is seriously disruptive of the educational process, the board of education
1183 or impartial hearing board may consider, but such consideration shall
1184 not be limited to: (A) Whether the incident occurred within close
1185 proximity of a school; (B) whether other students from the school were
1186 involved or whether there was any gang involvement; (C) whether the
1187 conduct involved violence, threats of violence or the unlawful use of a
1188 weapon, as defined in section 29-38, and whether any injuries occurred;
1189 and (D) whether the conduct involved the use of alcohol.

1190 (2) Expulsion proceedings pursuant to this section, except as
1191 provided in subsection (i) of this section, shall be required for any pupil
1192 in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, whenever there is reason to
1193 believe that any pupil (A) on school grounds or at a school-sponsored
1194 activity, was in possession of a firearm, as defined in 18 USC 921, as
1195 amended from time to time, or deadly weapon, dangerous instrument
1196 or martial arts weapon, as defined in section 53a-3, (B) off school
1197 grounds, did possess such a firearm in violation of section 29-35 or did
1198 possess and use such a firearm, instrument or weapon in the
1199 commission of a crime under chapter 952, or (C) on or off school
1200 grounds, offered for sale or distribution a controlled substance, as
1201 defined in section 21a-240, whose manufacture, distribution, sale,
1202 prescription, dispensing, transporting or possessing with intent to sell
1203 or dispense, offering, or administering is subject to criminal penalties
1204 under sections 21a-277 and 21a-278. Such a pupil shall be expelled for
1205 one calendar year if the local or regional board of education or impartial
1206 hearing board finds that the pupil did so possess or so possess and use,
1207 as appropriate, such a firearm, instrument or weapon or did so offer for
1208 sale or distribution such a controlled substance, provided the board of
1209 education or the hearing board may modify the period of expulsion for
1210 a pupil on a case-by-case basis, and as provided for in subdivision (2) of
1211 subsection (c) of this section.

1212 (3) Unless an emergency exists, no pupil shall be expelled without a
1213 formal hearing held pursuant to sections 4-176e to 4-180a, inclusive, and
1214 section 4-181a, provided whenever such pupil is a minor, the notice
1215 required by section 4-177 and section 4-180 shall also be given to the
1216 parents or guardian of the pupil at least five business days before such
1217 hearing, not including the day of such hearing. If an emergency exists,
1218 such hearing shall be held as soon after the expulsion as possible. The
1219 notice shall include information concerning the parent's or guardian's
1220 and the pupil's legal rights and concerning legal services provided free
1221 of charge or at a reduced rate that are available locally and how to access
1222 such services. An attorney or other advocate may represent any pupil
1223 subject to expulsion proceedings. The parent or guardian of the pupil
1224 shall have the right to have the expulsion hearing postponed for up to
1225 one week to allow time to obtain representation, except that if an
1226 emergency exists, such hearing shall be held as soon after the expulsion
1227 as possible.

1228 (4) (A) Prior to conducting an expulsion hearing as required by this
1229 subsection, an administrator, school counselor or school social worker
1230 at the school in which the pupil is enrolled shall contact the local
1231 homeless education liaison designated by the local or regional board of
1232 education for the school district, pursuant to Subtitle B of Title VII of the
1233 McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 USC 11431 et seq., as
1234 amended from time to time, to make a determination whether such
1235 pupil is a homeless child or youth, as defined in 42 USC 11343a, as
1236 amended from time to time. If it is determined that such pupil is a
1237 homeless child or youth, the local or regional board of education, or the
1238 impartial hearing board established pursuant to subsection (b) of this
1239 section, shall consider the impact of homelessness on the behavior of the
1240 pupil during the hearing. No such pupil may be expelled without a plan
1241 of interventions and supports to mitigate the impact of homelessness on
1242 the behavior of the student.

1243 (B) Any pupil who is determined to be a homeless child or youth and
1244 has been expelled for a second time shall be provided a meeting with

1245 the local homeless education liaison by the local or regional board of
1246 education.

1247 Sec. 39. Subsections (a) and (b) of section 10-16z of the general statutes
1248 are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
1249 *1, 2025*):

1250 (a) There is established the Early Childhood Cabinet. The cabinet
1251 shall consist of: (1) The Commissioner of Early Childhood, or the
1252 commissioner's designee, (2) the Commissioner of Education, or the
1253 commissioner's designee, (3) the Commissioner of Social Services, or the
1254 commissioner's designee, (4) the chancellor of the Connecticut State
1255 Colleges and Universities, or the chancellor's designee, (5) the
1256 Commissioner of Public Health, or the commissioner's designee, (6) the
1257 Commissioner of Developmental Services, or the commissioner's
1258 designee, (7) the Commissioner of Children and Families, or the
1259 commissioner's designee, (8) the executive director of the Commission
1260 on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity or the executive
1261 director's designee, (9) the project director of the Connecticut Head Start
1262 State Collaboration Office, (10) a parent or guardian of a child who
1263 attends or attended a school readiness program appointed by the
1264 minority leader of the House of Representatives, (11) a representative of
1265 a local provider of early childhood education appointed by the minority
1266 leader of the Senate, (12) a representative of the Connecticut Family
1267 Resource Center Alliance appointed by the majority leader of the House
1268 of Representatives, (13) a representative of a state-funded child care
1269 center appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, (14) two
1270 appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, one of whom
1271 is a member of a board of education for a town designated as an alliance
1272 district, as defined in section 10-262u, and one of whom is a parent who
1273 has a child attending a school in an educational reform district, as
1274 defined in section 10-262u, (15) two appointed by the president pro
1275 tempore of the Senate, one of whom is a representative of an association
1276 of early education and child care providers and one of whom is a
1277 representative of a public elementary school with a prekindergarten

1278 program, (16) ten appointed by the Governor, one of whom is a
1279 representative of the Connecticut Head Start Association, one of whom
1280 is a representative of the business community in this state, one of whom
1281 is a representative of the philanthropic community in this state, one of
1282 whom is a representative of the Connecticut State Employees
1283 Association, one of whom is an administrator of the child care
1284 development block grant pursuant to the Child Care and Development
1285 Block Grant Act of 1990, one of whom is responsible for administering
1286 grants received under section 1419 of Part B of the Individuals with
1287 Disabilities Education Act, 20 USC 1419, as amended from time to time,
1288 one of whom is responsible for administering the provisions of Title I of
1289 the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 USC 6301 et seq., one
1290 of whom is responsible for coordinating education services to children
1291 and youth who are homeless, one of whom is a licensed family child
1292 care home provider and a member of a staffed family child care network
1293 identified by the Commissioner of Early Childhood, and one of whom
1294 is a parent recommended by a parent advisory group that has been
1295 appointed by the Commissioner of Early Childhood, (17) the Secretary
1296 of the Office of Policy and Management, or the secretary's designee, (18)
1297 the Lieutenant Governor, or the Lieutenant Governor's designee, (19)
1298 the Commissioner of Housing, or the commissioner's designee, [and]
1299 (20) the Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services, or the
1300 commissioner's designee, and (21) the executive director of the
1301 Connecticut Library Consortium, or a cooperating library service unit
1302 as defined in section 11-9e, or the executive director's designee.

1303 (b) The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall serve as a
1304 cochairperson of the cabinet. The other cochairperson of the cabinet
1305 shall be appointed from among its members by the Governor. The
1306 cabinet shall meet at least quarterly. Members shall not be compensated
1307 for their services, except the following members, who are parents or
1308 guardians, may, within available appropriations, be compensated for
1309 any time and travel related to meetings of the cabinet: (1) The parent or
1310 guardian of a child who attends or attended a school readiness program
1311 and was appointed by the minority leader of the House of

1312 Representatives under subdivision (10) of subsection (a) of this section,
1313 (2) the parent who has a child attending a school in an educational
1314 reform district, as defined in section 10-262u, and was appointed by the
1315 speaker of the House of Representatives under subdivision (14) of
1316 subsection (a) of this section, and (3) the parent who was recommended
1317 by a parent advisory group and appointed by the Governor under
1318 subdivision (16) of subsection (a) of this section.

1319 Sec. 40. Subsection (a) of section 10-223h of the general statutes is
1320 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
1321 *2025*):

1322 (a) [The] For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2013, to June 30, 2027,
1323 inclusive, the Commissioner of Education shall establish, within
1324 available appropriations, a commissioner's network of schools to
1325 improve student academic achievement in low-performing schools. The
1326 commissioner may select not more than twenty-five schools in any
1327 single school year that have been classified as a category four school or
1328 a category five school pursuant to section 10-223e to participate in the
1329 commissioner's network of schools, except the commissioner shall not
1330 select any additional school to participate in the commissioner's
1331 network of schools on or after July 1, 2025. The commissioner shall issue
1332 guidelines regarding the development of turnaround plans, and such
1333 guidelines shall include, but not be limited to, annual deadlines for the
1334 submission or nonsubmission of a turnaround plan and annual
1335 deadlines for approval or rejection of turnaround plans. The
1336 commissioner shall give preference for selection in the commissioner's
1337 network of schools to such schools (1) that volunteer to participate in
1338 the commissioner's network of schools, provided the local or regional
1339 board of education for such school and the representatives of the
1340 exclusive bargaining unit for certified employees chosen pursuant to
1341 section 10-153b mutually agree to participate in the commissioner's
1342 network of schools, (2) in which an existing collective bargaining
1343 agreement between the local or regional board of education for such
1344 school and the representatives of the exclusive bargaining unit for

1345 certified employees chosen pursuant to section 10-153b will have
1346 expired for the school year in which a turnaround plan will be
1347 implemented, or (3) that are located in school districts that (A) have
1348 experience in school turnaround reform, or (B) previously received a
1349 school improvement grant pursuant to Section 1003(g) of Title I of the
1350 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 USC 6301 et seq. [The
1351 commissioner may select not more than five schools in any single school
1352 year from a single school district to participate in the commissioner's
1353 network of schools.] Each school so selected shall begin implementation
1354 of a turnaround plan, as described in subsection (d) of this section. Each
1355 school so selected shall participate in the commissioner's network of
1356 schools for three school years, and may continue such participation for
1357 an additional year, not to exceed two additional years, upon approval
1358 from the State Board of Education in accordance with the provisions of
1359 subsection (h) of this section, except no school that is participating in the
1360 commissioner's network of schools on July 1, 2025, may continue such
1361 participation for an additional year or an additional two years. The
1362 commissioner shall provide funding, technical assistance and
1363 operational support to schools participating in the commissioner's
1364 network of schools and may provide financial support to teachers and
1365 administrators working at a school that is participating in the
1366 commissioner's network of schools. All costs attributable to developing
1367 and implementing a turnaround plan in excess of the ordinary operating
1368 expenses for such school shall be paid by the State Board of Education.

1369 Sec. 41. Subsection (h) of section 10-223h of the general statutes is
1370 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
1371 *2025*):

1372 (h) Each school participating in the commissioner's network of
1373 schools shall participate for three school years, and may continue such
1374 participation for an additional year, not to exceed two additional years,
1375 upon approval from the State Board of Education, [. Before] except no
1376 school that is participating in the commissioner's network of schools on
1377 July 1, 2025, may continue such participation for an additional year or

1378 an additional two years. On and after July 1, 2025, before the end of the
1379 third year that a school is participating in the commissioner's network
1380 of schools, the commissioner shall conduct an evaluation [to determine
1381 whether such school is prepared to exit the commissioner's network of
1382 schools. In determining whether such school may exit the
1383 commissioner's network of schools, the commissioner shall consider
1384 whether the local or regional board of education has the capacity to
1385 ensure that such school will maintain or improve its student academic
1386 performance. If the commissioner determines that such school is ready
1387 to exit the commissioner's network of schools, the] of the school's
1388 participation in the commissioner's network of schools. The local or
1389 regional board of education for such school shall develop, in
1390 consultation with the commissioner, a plan, subject to the approval by
1391 the State Board of Education, for the transition of such school back to
1392 full control by the local or regional board of education. [If such school is
1393 not ready to exit the commissioner's network of schools and participates
1394 in the commissioner's network of schools for an additional year, the
1395 commissioner shall conduct an evaluation in accordance with the
1396 provisions of this subsection. Before the end of the fifth year that a
1397 school is participating in the commissioner's network of schools, the
1398 commissioner shall develop, in consultation with the local or regional
1399 board of education for such school, a plan, subject to the approval by the
1400 State Board of Education, for the transition of such school back to full
1401 control by the local or regional board of education.]

1402 Sec. 42. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) As used in this section:

1403 (1) "Library and other educational material" means any material
1404 belonging to, on loan to or otherwise in the custody of a school library
1405 media center, including, but not limited to, nonfiction and fiction books,
1406 magazines, reference books, supplementary titles, multimedia and
1407 digital material, software and other material not required as part of
1408 classroom instruction.

1409 (2) "School library staff member" means a school library media
1410 specialist, school librarian, any certificated or noncertificated staff

1411 member whose assignment is in the school library or any individual
1412 carrying out or assisting with the functions of a school library media
1413 specialist or school librarian.

1414 (3) "Individual with a vested interest" means any school staff member
1415 employed by a local or regional board of education, parent or guardian
1416 of a student currently enrolled in a school at the time a reconsideration
1417 form is filed under subsection (e) of this section and any student
1418 currently enrolled in a school at the time a reconsideration form is filed
1419 under subsection (e) of this section.

1420 (4) "Remove" means deliberately taking library material out of a
1421 library's collection. "Remove" does not include the process of clearing
1422 such collection of any materials that are no longer useful.

1423 (b) Each local and regional board of education, after consulting with
1424 the superintendent of schools, the director of curriculum and a librarian
1425 employed by such board, shall adopt a (1) collection development and
1426 maintenance policy, (2) library display and program policy, and (3)
1427 library material review and reconsideration policy. Each such policy
1428 shall ensure that all library materials are evaluated and made accessible
1429 in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in
1430 section 10-15c of the general statutes, including, but not limited to,
1431 discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender identity, religion,
1432 national origin, sexual orientation or disability. In developing each such
1433 policy, the board shall have control over the content of each such policy,
1434 provided such policies are in accordance with the provisions of this
1435 section. Each local and regional board of education shall review, and
1436 update as necessary, each such policy every five years.

1437 (c) The collection development and maintenance policy shall, at a
1438 minimum:

1439 (1) Recognize that library and other educational materials should (A)
1440 be provided for the interest, information and enlightenment of all
1441 students, and (B) represent a wide range of varied and diverging

1442 viewpoints in the collection as a whole;

1443 (2) Require student access to age-appropriate and grade-level-
1444 appropriate material, and provide access to library and other
1445 educational material that is relevant to the research, independent
1446 reading interests and educational needs of students based on a student's
1447 age, development or grade level;

1448 (3) Recognize the importance of the school library media center as a
1449 place for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas
1450 and the promotion of free expression and free access to ideas by
1451 students;

1452 (4) Acknowledge that a school library media specialist is
1453 professionally trained to curate and develop a collection that provides
1454 students with access to the widest array of age-appropriate and grade-
1455 level-appropriate library and other educational material; and

1456 (5) Establish a procedure for a certified school library media specialist
1457 to continually review library and other educational material within a
1458 school library media center using professionally accepted standards,
1459 which shall include, but need not be limited to, the material's relevance,
1460 physical condition of the material, availability of duplicates or copies of
1461 the material, availability of more recent age-appropriate or grade-level-
1462 appropriate material and continued demand for the material.

1463 (d) The library display and program policy shall, at a minimum:

1464 (1) Recognize that library displays should (A) be provided for the
1465 interest, information and enlightenment of all students, (B) represent a
1466 wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints, (C) require student
1467 access to age-appropriate and grade-level-appropriate content, and (D)
1468 provide access to content that is relevant to the research, independent
1469 interests and educational needs of students;

1470 (2) Recognize the importance of displays and student programs as
1471 resources for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information

1472 and ideas and to promote free expression and free access to ideas by
1473 students; and

1474 (3) Acknowledge that a school library media specialist is
1475 professionally trained to curate and develop displays and programs that
1476 provide students with access to the widest array of age-appropriate and
1477 grade-level-appropriate library and other educational material.

1478 (e) The library material review and reconsideration policy shall, at a
1479 minimum:

1480 (1) Establish a process for individuals with a vested interest to
1481 challenge any library and other educational materials, display or
1482 student program;

1483 (2) Limit consideration of requests to reconsider and remove
1484 material, displays or student programs to the parents and guardians of
1485 students and eligible students currently enrolled in the school or school
1486 district;

1487 (3) Require that no library and other educational material, display or
1488 program shall be removed from library media centers, or programs be
1489 cancelled, because of the origin, background or viewpoints expressed in
1490 such material, display or program, or because of the origin, background
1491 or viewpoints of the creator of such material, display or program;

1492 (4) Require that library and other educational materials, displays and
1493 student programs shall only be excluded for legitimate pedagogical
1494 purposes or for professionally accepted standards of collection
1495 maintenance practices as adopted in the collection development and
1496 maintenance policy or the display and program policy;

1497 (5) Require that any process for petitioners to challenge any library
1498 and other educational material, display or student program shall neither
1499 favor nor disfavor any group based on protected characteristics;

1500 (6) Provide for the creation of a request for reconsideration form that

1501 may be submitted by an individual with a vested interest to the
1502 principal of the school in which the library and other educational
1503 material is being challenged to initiate a review of such material. The
1504 form shall require such individual to specify which portion or portions
1505 of such material such individual objects to and provide an explanation
1506 of the reasons for such objection. Such individual shall not submit a
1507 request for reconsideration form without including such individual's
1508 full legal name, address and telephone number;

1509 (7) Require the principal, or the principal's designee, to promptly
1510 forward the request for reconsideration to the superintendent of schools
1511 for the school district. The superintendent, or the superintendent's
1512 designee, shall appoint a review committee consisting of: (A) The
1513 superintendent, or the superintendent's designee, (B) the principal of the
1514 school in which the library and other educational material is being
1515 challenged, or the principal's designee, (C) the director of curriculum,
1516 or a person in an equivalent position, employed by such board, (D) a
1517 representative from the local or regional board of education, (E) at least
1518 one grade-level-appropriate teacher familiar with the library material,
1519 provided the teacher selected is not the individual who submitted the
1520 form, (F) a parent or guardian of a student age thirteen years or younger
1521 enrolled in the school district, provided the parent or guardian selected
1522 is not the individual who submitted the form, (G) a parent or guardian
1523 of a student age fourteen years or older enrolled in the school district,
1524 provided the parent or guardian selected is not the individual who
1525 submitted the form, and (H) a certified school librarian employed by
1526 such board or employed by another board of education in the state. In
1527 cases where such form is submitted by a student enrolled in grades nine
1528 to twelve, inclusive, and when appropriate and at the discretion of the
1529 superintendent, a student enrolled in grades nine to twelve, inclusive,
1530 may serve on the review committee if such student did not submit the
1531 reconsideration form, provided the superintendent consults with the
1532 principal of the school involved in such reconsideration request prior to
1533 making this determination whether to include such student on the
1534 review committee;

1535 (8) Require that any library and other educational material being
1536 challenged remain available in the school library media center
1537 according to such material's catalog record and be available for a
1538 student to reserve, check out or access until a final decision is made by
1539 the review committee;

1540 (9) Require the review committee to evaluate the request for
1541 reconsideration form, read the challenged material in its entirety,
1542 evaluate the challenged material against the school district's collection
1543 development and maintenance policy and make a written decision on
1544 whether or not to remove the challenged material not later than sixty
1545 school days from the date of receiving such request. The review
1546 committee shall provide a copy of the committee's decision and report
1547 to the individual with a vested interest who submitted the form and to
1548 the principal of the school;

1549 (10) Permit the individual with a vested interest who submitted the
1550 request for reconsideration form to appeal the review committee's
1551 decision to the local or regional board of education for the school
1552 district. The board shall determine whether the reconsideration process
1553 was followed and publish the decision on the Internet web site of the
1554 school district;

1555 (11) Provide that once a decision has been made by the review
1556 committee on any library and other educational material, such material
1557 cannot be subject to a new request for review and reconsideration for a
1558 period of three years;

1559 (12) Permit a school district to consolidate any requests for review
1560 and reconsideration of the same challenged library and other
1561 educational material; and

1562 (13) Prohibit the removal, exclusion or censoring of any book on the
1563 sole basis that a person with a vested interest finds such book offensive.

1564 (f) Any school library media specialist or school library staff member
1565 who, in good faith, implements the policies described in this section

1566 shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might
1567 otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity
1568 with respect to any judicial proceeding that results from such
1569 implementation.

1570 (g) Each local and regional board of education shall make the (1)
1571 collection development and maintenance policy, (2) library program
1572 and display policy, and (3) library material review and reconsideration
1573 policy adopted under this section available on the board's or governing
1574 body's Internet web site, or, if no such Internet web site exists, inside the
1575 school library or included as part of such school library's policy manual.

1576 Sec. 43. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) As used in this section:

1577 (1) "Library and other educational material" means any material
1578 belonging to, on loan to or otherwise in the custody of a public library,
1579 including, but not limited to, nonfiction and fiction books, magazines,
1580 reference books, supplementary titles, multimedia and digital material
1581 and software.

1582 (2) "Public library staff member" means a staff member of a public
1583 library, a public librarian, any staff member whose assignment is in the
1584 public library or any individual carrying out or assisting with the
1585 functions of a public library.

1586 (3) "Individual with a vested interest" means any individual residing
1587 in the town in which the public library is located or the town in which
1588 the contract library is located at the time a reconsideration form is filed
1589 under subsection (e) of this section.

1590 (4) "Remove" means deliberately taking library material out of a
1591 library's collection. "Remove" does not include the process of clearing
1592 such collection of any materials that are no longer useful.

1593 (b) The board of trustees, or other governing body, of each public
1594 library shall adopt a (1) collection development and maintenance policy,
1595 (2) library display and program policy, and (3) library material review

1596 and reconsideration policy. Each such policy shall ensure that all library
1597 materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the
1598 protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the
1599 general statutes, including, but not limited to, discrimination based on
1600 race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual
1601 orientation or disability. In developing each such policy, the board shall
1602 have control over the content of each such policy, provided such policies
1603 are in accordance with the provisions of this section. The board of
1604 trustees or other governing body shall review, and update as necessary,
1605 each such policy every five years.

1606 (c) The collection development and maintenance policy shall, at a
1607 minimum:

1608 (1) Recognize that library materials should (A) be provided for the
1609 interest, information and enlightenment of all residents, and (B)
1610 represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints in the
1611 collection as a whole;

1612 (2) Recognize the importance of the public library as a place for
1613 voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas and the
1614 promotion of free expression and free access to ideas by residents;

1615 (3) Acknowledge that librarians are professionally trained to curate
1616 and develop a collection that provides resident with access to the widest
1617 array of library and other educational materials; and

1618 (4) Establish a procedure for a librarian to continually review library
1619 and other educational material within a public library using
1620 professionally accepted standards, which shall include, but not be
1621 limited to, the material's relevance, the physical condition of the
1622 material, the availability of duplicates or copies of the material, the
1623 availability of more recent age-appropriate or grade-level-appropriate
1624 material and the continued demand for the material.

1625 (d) The library display and program policy shall, at a minimum:

1626 (1) Recognize that library displays should (A) be provided for the
1627 interest, information and enlightenment of all residents, (B) represent a
1628 wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints, and (C) provide access
1629 to content that is relevant to the research, independent interests and
1630 educational needs of residents;

1631 (2) Recognize the importance of displays and programs as resources
1632 for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas
1633 and to promote free expression and free access to ideas by residents;

1634 (3) Acknowledge that librarians are professionally trained to curate
1635 and develop displays and programs; and

1636 (4) Differentiate between library displays and programs that are
1637 created or curated by librarians or staff members of the public library
1638 and those displays and programs created by members of the public or
1639 community groups and exhibited in the public library.

1640 (e) The library material review and reconsideration policy shall, at a
1641 minimum:

1642 (1) Establish a process for individuals with a vested interest to
1643 challenge any library and other educational material, display or
1644 program;

1645 (2) Limit consideration of requests to reconsider material, displays or
1646 programs to individuals residing in the town in which the library is
1647 located or the town in which the contract library is located;

1648 (3) Require that no library material, display or program shall be
1649 removed, or programs be cancelled, because of the origin, background
1650 or viewpoints expressed in such material, display or program or
1651 because of the origin, background or viewpoints of the creator of such
1652 material, display or program;

1653 (4) Require that library materials, displays and programs shall only
1654 be excluded for legitimate pedagogical purposes or for professionally

1655 accepted standards of collection maintenance practices as adopted in the
1656 collection development and maintenance policy or the display and
1657 program policy;

1658 (5) Require that any process for petitioners to challenge any library
1659 material, display or program shall neither favor nor disfavor any group
1660 based on protected characteristics;

1661 (6) Provide for the creation of a request for reconsideration form that
1662 may be submitted by an individual to the library director to initiate a
1663 review of such material. The form shall require such individual to
1664 specify which portion or portions of such material such individual
1665 objects to and provide an explanation of the reasons for such objection.
1666 Such individual shall not submit a request for reconsideration form
1667 without including such individual's full legal name, address and
1668 telephone number;

1669 (7) Acknowledge that reconsideration requests are not confidential
1670 patron records under section 11-25 of the general statutes;

1671 (8) Require that any library material being challenged remain
1672 available in the library according to its catalog record and be available
1673 for a resident to reserve, check out or access until a final decision is made
1674 by the library director;

1675 (9) Require the library director to evaluate the request for
1676 reconsideration form, read the challenged material in its entirety,
1677 evaluate the challenged material against the collection development and
1678 maintenance policy and make a written decision on whether or not to
1679 remove the challenged material not later than sixty days from the date
1680 of receiving such request. The library director shall provide a copy of
1681 the library director's decision and report to the individual who
1682 submitted the form;

1683 (10) Permit the individual who submitted the request for
1684 reconsideration form to appeal, in writing, the library director's decision
1685 to the board of trustees or other governing body for the library. The

1686 board, after evaluating the challenged material under the collection
1687 development and maintenance policy, shall (A) consult with (i) the
1688 library director, (ii) the State Librarian, or the State Librarian's designee,
1689 (iii) a representative of the cooperating library service unit, as defined
1690 in section 11-9e of the general statutes, (iv) the president of the
1691 Connecticut Library Association, or the president's designee, and (v) the
1692 president of the Association of Connecticut Library Boards, or the
1693 president's designee, (B) deliberate on such request for reconsideration,
1694 (C) provide a written statement of the reasons for the reconsideration or
1695 refusal to reconsider the library material, and (D) provide any final
1696 decision that is contrary to the decision of the library director;

1697 (11) Provide that once a decision has been made by the library
1698 director or the board of trustees or other governing board on the
1699 reconsideration of any library material, such material cannot be subject
1700 to a new request for reconsideration for a period of three years;

1701 (12) Permit a library director to consolidate any requests for
1702 reconsideration of the same challenged library material; and

1703 (13) Prohibit the removal, exclusion or censoring of any book on the
1704 sole basis that an individual finds such book offensive.

1705 (f) Any librarian or staff member of a public library who, in good
1706 faith, implements the policies described in this section shall be immune
1707 from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or
1708 imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial
1709 proceeding that results from such implementation.

1710 (g) The board of trustees, or other governing body, of each public
1711 library shall make available the (1) collection development and
1712 maintenance policy, (2) library display and program policy, and (3)
1713 library material review and reconsideration policy adopted under this
1714 section on the board's or governing body's Internet web site, or, if no
1715 such Internet web site exists, inside the library or included as part of
1716 such library's policy manual.

1717 Sec. 44. Subsection (i) of section 11-24b of the general statutes is
 1718 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from*
 1719 *passage*):

1720 (i) No principal public library shall be eligible to receive a state grant
 1721 in accordance with the provisions of subsections (b), (c) and (d) of this
 1722 section if such principal public library does not maintain and adhere to
 1723 a collection development [, collection management and collection
 1724 reconsideration policies] and maintenance policy, a library display and
 1725 program policy and a library material review and reconsideration policy
 1726 that have been [approved] adopted by the board of trustees or other
 1727 governing body of such library pursuant to section 43 of this act. Such
 1728 [collection reconsideration] material review and reconsideration policy
 1729 shall offer residents a clear process to request a reconsideration of
 1730 library materials. In the instance of a book challenge, these policies shall
 1731 govern."

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>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 11	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 12	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 13	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 14	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	3-13c
Sec. 15	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 16	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10-76d(d)
Sec. 17	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10-262j(j)
Sec. 18	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section

Sec. 19	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 20	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 21	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10-232a
Sec. 22	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 23	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 24	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 25	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 26	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 27	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 28	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 29	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 30	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 31	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10-4(c)
Sec. 32	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 33	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 34	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10-198d
Sec. 35	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10-222
Sec. 36	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10-248a
Sec. 37	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10-51(d)(2)
Sec. 38	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10-233d(a)
Sec. 39	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10-16z(a) and (b)
Sec. 40	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10-223h(a)
Sec. 41	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10-223h(h)
Sec. 42	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 43	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 44	<i>from passage</i>	11-24b(i)