



General Assembly

Amendment

January Session, 2025

LCO No. 9892



Offered by:

SEN. LOONEY, 11th Dist.

SEN. DUFF, 25th Dist.

SEN. MCCRORY, 2nd Dist.

SEN. GADKAR-WILCOX, 22nd Dist.

SEN. MAHER, 26th Dist.

REP. RITTER, 1st Dist.

REP. ROJAS, 9th 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 spaces in early care and education programs paid for with
164 funds from the Early Childhood Education Endowment under section 4
165 of this act shall be for at least thirty-five per cent infant and toddler
166 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 house bill 5001 of the
459 current session, as amended by House Amendment Schedule "A", (2)
460 subject to the provisions of this subsection, the educational needs of the
461 child for whom such special education is being provided cannot be met
462 by public school arrangements in the opinion of the commissioner who,
463 before granting approval of such contract for purposes of payment, shall
464 consider such factors as the particular needs of the child, the
465 appropriateness and efficacy of the program offered by such private
466 school, agency or institution, and the economic feasibility of comparable
467 alternatives, and (3) commencing with the 1987-1988 school year and for
468 each school year thereafter, each such private provider of special
469 education services, private school, agency or institution has been
470 approved for special education by the Commissioner of Education or by
471 the appropriate agency for facilities located out of state, except as
472 provided in subsection (b) of this section. Notwithstanding the
473 provisions of subdivision (2) of this subsection or any regulations
474 adopted by the State Board of Education setting placement priorities,
475 placements pursuant to this section and payments under section 10-76g,
476 may be made pursuant to such a contract if the public arrangements are
477 more costly than the private provider of special education services,
478 private school, institution or agency, provided the private provider of
479 special education services, private school, institution or agency meets
480 the educational needs of the child and its program is appropriate and
481 efficacious. Any payment under the provisions of section 10-76g or
482 section 7 of house bill 5001 of the current session, as amended by House
483 Amendment Schedule "A", shall include all expenditures incurred by a
484 local or regional board of education pursuant to a contract with a private
485 provider of special education services, private school, agency or
486 institution [,] that is in accordance with the rate schedule and to the
487 extent permitted under said [section] sections, during the school year in
488 which such private provider of special education services, private
489 school, agency or institution provided such services, even if such private

490 provider of special education services, private school, agency or
491 institution is approved for special education by the Commissioner of
492 Education during such school year. [Notwithstanding the provisions of
493 this subsection to the contrary, nothing in this subsection shall (A)
494 require the removal of a child from a nonapproved facility if the child
495 was placed there prior to July 7, 1987, pursuant to the determination of
496 a planning and placement team that such a placement was appropriate
497 and such placement was approved by the Commissioner of Education,
498 or (B) prohibit the placement of a child at a nonapproved facility if a
499 planning and placement team determines prior to July 7, 1987, that the
500 child be placed in a nonapproved facility for the 1987-1988 school year.]
501 Each child placed in a nonapproved facility [as described in
502 subparagraphs (A) and (B) of subdivision (3) of this subsection] may
503 continue at [the] such nonapproved facility provided the planning and
504 placement team, [or] a hearing officer appointed pursuant to section 10-
505 76h or a court determines that [the] such placement [is appropriate]
506 provides an appropriate public education and that there is not another
507 charging entity able to offer a placement for such child that provides an
508 appropriate public education. Expenditures incurred by any local or
509 regional board of education [to maintain children in] as a result of such
510 placement in such nonapproved facilities [as described in said
511 subparagraphs (A) and (B) shall] (A) by a planning and placement team
512 shall not be paid pursuant to the provisions of section 10-76g or section
513 7 of house bill 5001 of the current session, as amended by House
514 Amendment Schedule "A", and (B) pursuant to an order of a hearing
515 officer appointed pursuant to section 10-76h or a court may be paid
516 pursuant to the provisions of section 10-76g and section 7 of house bill
517 5001 of the current session, as amended by House Amendment Schedule
518 "A". Any local or regional board of education may enter into a contract
519 with the owners or operators of any sheltered workshop or
520 rehabilitation center for provision of an education occupational training
521 program for children requiring special education who are at least
522 sixteen years of age, provided such workshop or institution shall have
523 been approved by the appropriate state agency. Whenever any child is
524 identified by a local or regional board of education as a child requiring

525 special education and such board of education determines that the
526 requirements for special education could be met by a program provided
527 within the district or by agreement with another board of education
528 except for the child's need for services other than educational services
529 such as medical, psychiatric or institutional care or services, such board
530 of education may meet its obligation to furnish special education for
531 such child by paying the reasonable cost of special education instruction
532 in a private provider of special education services, private school,
533 hospital or other institution provided such board of education or the
534 commissioner concurs that placement in such institution is necessary
535 and proper and no state institution is available to meet such child's
536 needs. Any such private provider of special education services, private
537 school, hospital or other institution receiving such reasonable cost of
538 special education instruction by such board of education shall submit
539 all required documentation to such board of education for purposes of
540 submitting claims to the Medicaid School Based Child Health Program
541 administered by the Department of Social Services.

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

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

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

558 agency to create and annually update recommended coordinated bus
559 routes for all special education students traveling to and from special
560 education outplacements in the state that (i) maximize efficiency and
561 reduce expenses in the provision of special education and related
562 services, and (ii) are in accordance with state and federal law. Not later
563 than July 1, 2027, the department shall submit a report on the results of
564 such request for information to the joint standing committees of the
565 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education
566 and transportation, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of
567 the general statutes.

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

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

591 programming and services, and (7) any professional development
592 necessary for implementation of the programming and services. A local
593 or regional board of education shall submit such application in a form
594 and manner prescribed by the Commissioner of Education.

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

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

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

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

622 Sec. 20. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) Not later than December 1,
623 2026, the Department of Education, in consultation with the Child
624 Advocate, shall develop, and update not less than annually thereafter, a
625 listing of each special education program offered by (1) any regional
626 educational service center, (2) any private provider of special education,
627 as defined in section 10-91g of the general statutes, approved by the
628 Commissioner of Education, and (3) any local or regional board of
629 education that accepts out-of-district student placements. Such listing
630 shall specify for each program the (A) types of services provided, (B)
631 physical location where such program offers special education, (C) ages
632 served, and (D) approved classroom size of the program.

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

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

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

650 (b) Each nongovernmental school operator shall, subject to the
651 provisions of section 31-51i, (1) require each applicant for a position with
652 such nongovernmental school operator to state, in writing, whether
653 such applicant has ever been convicted of a crime or whether criminal

654 charges are pending against such applicant at the time of such
655 application and, if charges are pending, to state the charges and the
656 court in which such charges are pending, (2) require each applicant to
657 submit to a records check of the Department of Children and Families
658 child abuse and neglect registry established pursuant to section 17a-
659 101k, before such applicant may be hired by such nongovernmental
660 school operator, and (3) on and after July 1, 2019, require, subject to the
661 provisions of subsection (e) of this section, each applicant for a position
662 with such nongovernmental school operator to submit to state and
663 national criminal history records checks within thirty days from the date
664 of employment and may require, subject to the provisions of subsection
665 (e) of this section, any person hired prior to said date to submit to state
666 and national criminal history records checks. The criminal history
667 records checks required by this subsection shall be conducted in
668 accordance with section 29-17a, the federal National Child Protection
669 Act of 1993 and the federal Volunteers for Children Act of 1998. If the
670 nongovernmental school operator receives notice of a conviction of a
671 crime which has not previously been disclosed by such person to the
672 nongovernmental school operator, the nongovernmental school
673 operator may (A) terminate the contract of a certified employee, in
674 accordance with the provisions of section 10-151, if applicable, and (B)
675 dismiss a noncertified employee, provided such employee is notified of
676 the reason for such dismissal. If the nongovernmental school operator
677 receives notice of a conviction of a crime by a person holding a
678 certificate, authorization or permit issued by the State Board of
679 Education, the nongovernmental school operator shall send such notice
680 to the State Board of Education. The provisions of this subsection shall
681 not be construed to cause a nongovernmental school operator to
682 disseminate the results of any national criminal history records check.

683 (c) If a nongovernmental school operator requests, a regional
684 educational service center shall arrange for the fingerprinting of any
685 person required to submit to state and national criminal history records
686 checks pursuant to this section or for conducting any other method of
687 positive identification required by the State Police Bureau of

688 Identification or the Federal Bureau of Investigation and shall forward
689 such fingerprints or other positive identifying information to the State
690 Police Bureau of Identification which shall conduct criminal history
691 records checks in accordance with section 29-17a, the federal National
692 Child Protection Act of 1993 and the federal Volunteers for Children Act
693 of 1998. Such regional educational service center shall maintain such
694 fingerprints or other positive identifying information, which may be in
695 an electronic format, for a period of four years, at the end of which such
696 fingerprints and positive identifying information shall be destroyed.
697 The State Police Bureau of Identification shall provide the results of such
698 checks to such nongovernmental school operator. No regional
699 educational service center shall charge a fee for services under this
700 subsection that exceeds any fee that the center may charge any applicant
701 for a position with such center.

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

716 (e) The provisions of this section shall not apply to (1) a student
717 employed by the nongovernmental school operator that operates a
718 school which the student attends, or (2) a person employed by a
719 nongovernmental school operator as a teacher for a noncredit adult class
720 or adult education activity, as defined in section 10-67, who is not

721 required to hold a teaching certificate pursuant to section 10-145b for his
722 or her position.

723 (f) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (g) of section 31-51i,
724 and to the extent permissible under state and federal laws regarding the
725 dissemination of criminal history records, the State Board of Education
726 shall, upon request of a nongovernmental school operator, make
727 available to such nongovernmental school operator requesting
728 information concerning an applicant for a position with such
729 nongovernmental school operator, (1) any information concerning the
730 applicant's eligibility for employment in a position with such
731 nongovernmental school operator requiring a certificate, authorization
732 or permit issued pursuant to chapter 166, (2) whether the department
733 has knowledge that the applicant has been disciplined for a finding of
734 abuse or neglect or sexual misconduct, as defined in section 10-222c, and
735 any information concerning such a finding, and (3) whether the
736 department has received notification that the applicant has been
737 convicted of a crime or of criminal charges pending against the
738 applicant and any information concerning such charges. The provisions
739 of this subsection shall not be construed to cause the state board to
740 investigate any such request or disseminate the results of any national
741 criminal history records check.

742 Sec. 22. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) Each regional educational
743 service center and private provider of special education services, as
744 defined in section 10-91g of the general statutes, shall send written
745 notification to the parent or legal guardian of a student receiving special
746 education services, the local or regional board of education that has
747 placed such student with such regional educational service center or
748 private provider for the provision of special education services and the
749 Department of Education regarding all staffing changes that impact the
750 provision of such special education services, including, but not limited
751 to, vacancies, long-term absences and assignments of long-term
752 substitutes, not later than five business days from the occurrence of such
753 staffing change. Such written notice shall include, but need not be

754 limited to, specification of (1) any change in services provided by
755 specialists, (2) any change to student to teacher ratios, and (3) the plan
756 to mitigate the impact of such staffing change on such student. As used
757 in this section, "long-term" means ten or more consecutive school days.

758 Sec. 23. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) The Department of Education
759 shall establish a model contract for special education transportation
760 services to and from special education outplacements provided by
761 providers of special education transportation services. Not later than
762 July 1, 2026, the department shall make such model contract available to
763 local and regional boards of education for use by such boards to enter
764 into a contract with providers of special education transportation
765 services for such special education transportation services.

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

782 Sec. 25. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) For the fiscal year ending
783 June 30, 2027, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Department of
784 Education shall administer the special education training, education
785 and testing competitive grant program. Under the grant program, the
786 department shall award grants to individual educators and

787 paraeducators for the purpose of covering the costs associated with any
788 professional training, education and testing requirements relating to
789 such individual's ability to provide special education and related
790 services. The department shall develop criteria for reviewing and
791 awarding grants under the program, and such criteria shall take into
792 consideration the financial need of the applicant and give priority to
793 those applicants with the greatest financial need. As used in this section,
794 "educators and paraeducators" includes individuals who are enrolled in
795 a teacher preparation program, as defined in section 10-10a of the
796 general statutes, candidates for professional certification as an educator
797 under chapter 166 of the general statutes, teachers employed by a local
798 or regional board of education, prospective paraeducators and
799 paraeducators employed by a local or regional board of education.

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

816 (c) The department shall develop repayment criteria for educators
817 and paraeducators who do not complete three years of employment in
818 a school under the jurisdiction of a town designated as an alliance
819 district pursuant to section 10-262u of the general statutes. Any amounts

820 repaid to the department shall be deposited in the General Fund.

821 Sec. 26. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) For the fiscal year ending
822 June 30, 2026, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Department Education
823 shall establish a grant program to support local and regional boards of
824 education in providing support services for students who require
825 special education and have experienced trauma or have behavioral
826 health needs. Such grant shall be available to each local or regional
827 board of education that provides support services, including, but not
828 limited to, trauma-informed care coordination and family outreach, for
829 such students and such students' families in partnership with
830 community service providers, including, but not limited to, family
831 service centers. Grants shall be funded in an amount prescribed by the
832 Commissioner of Education.

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

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

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

850 (1) Receive, review and attempt to resolve any complaints from

851 students and students' families, including, but not limited to, attempts
852 to resolve such complaints in collaboration with schools and educators;

853 (2) Compile and analyze data on students and young people, through
854 available data systems, including, but not limited to, the Connecticut
855 Preschool through Twenty and Workforce Information Network,
856 established pursuant to section 10a-57g of the general statutes;

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

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

862 (5) Analyze and monitor the development and implementation of
863 federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies relating to students
864 and recommend any changes the Educational Ombudsperson deems
865 necessary;

866 (6) Disseminate information concerning the availability of the Office
867 of the Educational Ombudsperson to assist students and families of
868 students, as well as local and regional boards of education with
869 educational resource concerns;

870 (7) On and after July 1, 2027, prioritize the office's efforts on those
871 school districts that have been identified in the study conducted
872 pursuant to section 30 of this act as disproportionately or over-
873 identifying minority students for special education and related services;
874 and

875 (8) Take any other actions necessary to fulfill the duties of the Office
876 of the Educational Ombudsperson and the Educational Ombudsperson
877 as set forth in this subsection.

878 (c) On or before January 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the
879 Educational Ombudsperson shall submit a report, in accordance with

880 the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the Office of
881 Governmental Accountability and the joint standing committees of the
882 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education
883 and children. The Educational Ombudsperson shall report on: (1) The
884 implementation of this section; (2) the overall effectiveness of the
885 Educational Ombudsperson position; and (3) additional steps that need
886 to be taken for the Educational Ombudsperson to be more effective.

887 Sec. 28. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) For the school year
888 commencing July 1, 2026, and each school year thereafter, each local and
889 regional board of education shall hire or designate an existing employee
890 to serve as an instructional support partner in each school or in each
891 school building under the jurisdiction of such board. An instructional
892 support partner shall (1) alleviate the administrative burden of teachers,
893 including, but not limited to, the administrative burden of the
894 individualized education program process, scheduling of and taking
895 minutes during planning and placement team meetings, attending
896 professional development trainings, attending trainings for
897 individualized interventions for students, attending testing, and serving
898 as a designated staff member for the purposes of specialized
899 responsibilities, (2) assist school-based personnel in improving the
900 delivery and administration of the individualized education program
901 process, (3) collaborate with parents and school personnel regarding
902 instructional decision-making for students with disabilities, (4) pursue
903 and attend trainings and professional development on student
904 interventions as a representative of the school or school building, and
905 plan and deliver professional learning activities to staff, parents and
906 others to increase achievement for students with disabilities on the basis
907 of such training, and (5) consult with school-based instructional staff
908 regarding individualized education program development and writing,
909 extended school year, behavioral interventions and transition plans for
910 students with disabilities.

911 (b) Any person hired or designated to serve as the instructional
912 support partner for the school or school building shall (1) for the school

913 year commencing July 1, 2026, spend at least fifty per cent of their time
914 performing the responsibilities described in subsection (a) of this
915 section, (2) for the school year commencing July 1, 2027, spend at least
916 seventy-five per cent of their time performing said responsibilities, and
917 (3) for the school year commencing July 1, 2028, and each school year
918 thereafter, be employed full-time as the instructional support partner.

919 Sec. 29. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) For the school year commencing
920 July 1, 2026, and each school year thereafter, the Department of
921 Education shall, at least quarterly, host trainings for persons hired or
922 designated to serve as an instructional support partner, as described in
923 section 28 of this act. Such training shall include, but need not be limited
924 to, effective literacy and math instruction, personalized learning and
925 individualized instruction for students with disabilities, improving
926 classroom management, effective instructional methods and behavioral
927 supports, and transition plans for students with disabilities.

928 Sec. 30. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) The Department of Education
929 shall conduct a study concerning the disproportionate or over-
930 identification of minority students for special education and related
931 services. Such study shall include, but need not be limited to, an
932 examination of the rates of identification for special education and
933 related services, disaggregated by race and gender for each school
934 district. Not later than January 1, 2027, the department shall submit a
935 report on its findings and recommendations to the Office of the
936 Educational Ombudsperson, established pursuant to section 27 of this
937 act, and to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having
938 cognizance of matters relating to education, in accordance with the
939 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

940 Sec. 31. Subsection (c) of section 10-4 of the general statutes is
941 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
942 *2025*):

943 (c) Said board shall prepare every five years a five-year
944 comprehensive plan for elementary, secondary, vocational, career and

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

980 commissioner and shall report on such progress to the Governor and to
981 said standing committee annually and make such information available
982 on the Internet web site of the Department of Education. The State Board
983 of Education shall provide opportunity for public comment prior to its
984 adoption of a plan.

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

989 (1) The number and names of all community-based organizations
990 with whom the board of education has executed a formal memorandum
991 of understanding, memorandum of agreement or contract to provide
992 support services to students in the school district, disaggregated by
993 school and type of support service provided;

994 (2) The workforce development programs offered by the board of
995 education to students in which the board has partnered with an outside
996 entity, including, but not limited to, cooperatives, internships, in-school
997 job training programs provided by businesses and in-school workforce
998 board presentations; and

999 (3) Attrition data for certified and noncertified staff, disaggregated by
1000 school and subject, not including in-district transfers.

1001 Sec. 33. (*Effective from passage*) Any state agency that contributes data
1002 for the purposes of the development of the report of disconnected youth
1003 pursuant to section 22 of public act 24-45 shall post such report on the
1004 agency's Internet web site.

1005 Sec. 34. Section 10-198d of the general statutes is repealed and the
1006 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1007 (a) Not later than January 1, 2016, the Department of Education, in
1008 consultation with the Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement
1009 Gap established pursuant to section 10-16nn, shall develop a chronic

1010 absenteeism prevention and intervention plan for use by local and
1011 regional boards of education to reduce chronic absenteeism in the school
1012 district.

1013 (b) (1) The department shall semiannually review, and revise as
1014 needed, the chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan. In
1015 making such revisions, the department shall incorporate the findings of
1016 the most recent report of disconnected youth, developed pursuant to
1017 section 22 of public act 24-45. In addition to the policies and procedures
1018 concerning truants described in section 10-198a, the plan shall include,
1019 but need not be limited to, the following: (A) Information that describes
1020 (i) chronic absenteeism, including, but not limited to, the definition of a
1021 chronically absent child under section 10-198c, and the causes of chronic
1022 absenteeism, such as poverty, violence, poor health and lack of access to
1023 transportation, (ii) the effect of chronic absenteeism on a student's
1024 academic performance, and (iii) how family and school partnerships
1025 with community resources, including, but not limited to, family
1026 resource centers and youth service bureaus, can reduce chronic
1027 absenteeism and improve student attendance, [and] (B) the use of an
1028 early indication tool provided by the department or other third party,
1029 provided such tool is designed to quickly identify students who are at
1030 risk for becoming chronically absent or disconnected from school, such
1031 as those students who (i) are at risk of not graduating or satisfying the
1032 high school graduation requirements pursuant to section 10-221a, (ii)
1033 have a history of behavioral concerns or disciplinary issues, including
1034 suspensions or expulsions, and (iii) are homeless children or youth, as
1035 defined in 42 USC 11343a, as amended from time to time, and (C) a
1036 means of collecting and analyzing data relating to student attendance,
1037 truancy and chronic absenteeism for the purpose of (i) disaggregating
1038 such data by school district, school, grade and subgroups, such as race,
1039 ethnicity, gender, eligibility for free or reduced priced lunches, housing
1040 status, students whose primary language is not English and students
1041 with disabilities, and (ii) assisting local and regional boards of education
1042 in (I) tracking chronic absenteeism over multiple years and for the
1043 current school year, (II) developing indicators to identify students who

1044 are at risk of being chronically absent children, (III) monitoring students'
1045 attendance over time, and (IV) making adjustments to interventions as
1046 they are being implemented.

1047 (2) The chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan may
1048 include, but need not be limited to, the following: (A) A research-based
1049 and data-driven home visiting or mentorship model that addresses and
1050 attempts to prevent or reduce chronic absenteeism through the use of
1051 mentors, such as students, teachers, administrators, intramural and
1052 interscholastic athletic coaches, school resource officers, family
1053 navigators, student success coaches and community partners, and (B)
1054 incentives and rewards that recognize schools and students that
1055 improve attendance and reduce the school chronic absenteeism rate.

1056 Sec. 35. Section 10-222 of the general statutes is repealed and the
1057 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1058 Each local board of education shall prepare an itemized estimate of
1059 the cost of maintenance of public schools for the ensuing year and shall
1060 submit such estimate to the board of finance in each town or city having
1061 a board of finance, to the board of selectmen in each town having no
1062 board of finance or otherwise to the authority making appropriations
1063 for the school district, not later than two months preceding the annual
1064 meeting at which appropriations are to be made. The board or authority
1065 that receives such estimate shall, not later than ten days after the date
1066 the board of education submits such estimate, make spending
1067 recommendations and suggestions to such board of education as to how
1068 such board of education may consolidate noneducational services and
1069 realize financial efficiencies. Such board of education may accept or
1070 reject the suggestions of the board of finance, board of selectmen or
1071 appropriating authority and shall provide the board of finance, board of
1072 selectmen or appropriating authority with a written explanation of the
1073 reason for any rejection. The money appropriated by any municipality
1074 for the maintenance of public schools shall be expended by and in the
1075 discretion of the board of education. Except as provided in this
1076 subsection, any such board may transfer any unexpended or

1077 uncontracted-for portion of any appropriation for school purposes to
1078 any other item of such itemized estimate. Boards may, by adopting
1079 policies and procedures, authorize designated personnel to make
1080 limited transfers under emergency circumstances if the urgent need for
1081 the transfer prevents the board from meeting in a timely fashion to
1082 consider such transfer. All transfers made in such instances shall be
1083 announced at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the board and a
1084 written explanation of such transfer shall be provided to the legislative
1085 body of the municipality or, in a municipality where the legislative body
1086 is a town meeting, to the board of selectmen. Expenditures by the board
1087 of education shall not exceed the appropriation made by the
1088 municipality, with such money as may be received from other sources
1089 for school purposes. If any occasion arises whereby additional funds are
1090 needed by such board, the chairman of such board shall notify the board
1091 of finance, board of selectmen or appropriating authority, as the case
1092 may be, and shall submit a request for additional funds in the same
1093 manner as is provided for departments, boards or agencies of the
1094 municipality and no additional funds shall be expended unless such
1095 supplemental appropriation shall be granted and no supplemental
1096 expenditures shall be made in excess of those granted through the
1097 appropriating authority. The annual report of the board of education
1098 shall, in accordance with section 10-224, include a summary showing (1)
1099 the total cost of the maintenance of schools, (2) the amount received
1100 from the state and other sources for the maintenance of schools, [and]
1101 (3) the net cost to the municipality of the maintenance of schools, and
1102 (4) the balance of any nonlapsing, unexpended funds account described
1103 in section 10-248a, as amended by this act. For purposes of this
1104 subsection, "meeting" means a meeting, as defined in section 1-200, and
1105 "itemized estimate" means an estimate in which broad budgetary
1106 categories including, but not limited to, salaries, fringe benefits, utilities,
1107 supplies and grounds maintenance are divided into one or more line
1108 items.

1109 Sec. 36. Section 10-248a of the general statutes is repealed and the
1110 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1111 (a) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, and each fiscal year
1112 thereafter, notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes or any
1113 special act, municipal charter, home rule ordinance or other ordinance,
1114 a local board of education may deposit into a nonlapsing account any
1115 unexpended funds from the prior fiscal year from the budgeted
1116 appropriation for education, provided (1) such deposited amount does
1117 not exceed two per cent of the total budgeted appropriation for
1118 education for such prior fiscal year, (2) each expenditure from such
1119 account shall be made only for educational purposes, and (3) each such
1120 expenditure shall be authorized by the local board of education for such
1121 town.

1122 (b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, and each fiscal year
1123 thereafter, each local board of education shall compile a report
1124 regarding the nonlapsing, unexpended funds account described in this
1125 section, including, but not limited to, the total balance of the account,
1126 the amount deposited into such account in a fiscal year and an
1127 accounting of the expenditures made from such account. Each such
1128 board shall submit such report to the Department of Education and the
1129 exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees chosen
1130 pursuant to section 10-153b.

1131 (c) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, and each fiscal year
1132 thereafter, each local board of education shall, not later than thirty days
1133 from the adoption of such board's budget, notify the exclusive
1134 bargaining representative for certified employees, chosen pursuant to
1135 section 10-153b, of (1) the establishment of a nonlapsing, unexpended
1136 funds account described in this section, or (2) the board's intended uses
1137 for any funds in such nonlapsing, unexpended funds account during the
1138 next fiscal year.

1139 Sec. 37. Subdivision (2) of subsection (d) of section 10-51 of the
1140 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
1141 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

1142 (2) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, and each fiscal year

1143 thereafter, a regional board of education, by a majority vote of its
1144 members, may create a reserve fund for educational expenditures. Such
1145 fund shall thereafter be termed "reserve fund for educational
1146 expenditures". The aggregate amount of annual and supplemental
1147 appropriations by a district to such fund shall not exceed two per cent
1148 of the annual district budget for such fiscal year. Annual appropriations
1149 to such fund shall be included in the share of net expenses to be paid by
1150 each member town. Supplemental appropriations to such fund may be
1151 made from estimated fiscal year end surplus in operating funds. Interest
1152 and investment earnings received with respect to amounts held in the
1153 fund shall be credited to such fund. The board shall annually submit a
1154 complete and detailed report of the condition of such fund to the
1155 member towns. Upon the recommendation and approval by the
1156 regional board of education, any part or the whole of such fund may be
1157 used for educational expenditures. Upon the approval of any such
1158 expenditure an appropriation shall be set up, plainly designated for the
1159 educational expenditure for which it has been authorized. Any
1160 unexpended portion of such appropriation remaining shall revert to
1161 said fund. If any authorized appropriation is set up pursuant to the
1162 provisions of this subsection and through unforeseen circumstances the
1163 board is unable to expend the total amount of such appropriation, the
1164 board, by a majority vote of its members, may terminate such
1165 appropriation which then shall no longer be in effect. Such fund may be
1166 discontinued, after the recommendation and approval by the regional
1167 board of education, and any amounts held in the fund shall be
1168 transferred to the general fund of the district. For the fiscal year ending
1169 June 30, 2026, and each fiscal year thereafter, each board shall (A) make
1170 available and annually update information regarding such fund,
1171 including, but not limited to, the total balance of the fund, the amount
1172 deposited into such fund in a fiscal year and an accounting of the
1173 expenditures made from such fund, and (B) not later than thirty days
1174 from the adoption of such board's budget, notify the exclusive
1175 bargaining representative for certified employees, chosen pursuant to
1176 section 10-153b, of (i) the establishment of the reserve fund for
1177 educational expenditures, or (ii) the board's intended uses for any funds

1178 in such fund during the next fiscal year.

1179 Sec. 38. Subsection (a) of section 10-233d of the general statutes is
1180 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
1181 *2025*):

1182 (a) (1) Any local or regional board of education, at a meeting at which
1183 three or more members of such board are present, or the impartial
1184 hearing board established pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, may
1185 expel, subject to the provisions of this subsection, any pupil in grades
1186 three to twelve, inclusive, whose conduct on school grounds or at a
1187 school-sponsored activity is violative of a publicized policy of such
1188 board and is seriously disruptive of the educational process or
1189 endangers persons or property or whose conduct off school grounds is
1190 violative of such policy and is seriously disruptive of the educational
1191 process, provided a majority of the board members sitting in the
1192 expulsion hearing vote to expel and that at least three affirmative votes
1193 for expulsion are cast. In making a determination as to whether conduct
1194 is seriously disruptive of the educational process, the board of education
1195 or impartial hearing board may consider, but such consideration shall
1196 not be limited to: (A) Whether the incident occurred within close
1197 proximity of a school; (B) whether other students from the school were
1198 involved or whether there was any gang involvement; (C) whether the
1199 conduct involved violence, threats of violence or the unlawful use of a
1200 weapon, as defined in section 29-38, and whether any injuries occurred;
1201 and (D) whether the conduct involved the use of alcohol.

1202 (2) Expulsion proceedings pursuant to this section, except as
1203 provided in subsection (i) of this section, shall be required for any pupil
1204 in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, whenever there is reason to
1205 believe that any pupil (A) on school grounds or at a school-sponsored
1206 activity, was in possession of a firearm, as defined in 18 USC 921, as
1207 amended from time to time, or deadly weapon, dangerous instrument
1208 or martial arts weapon, as defined in section 53a-3, (B) off school
1209 grounds, did possess such a firearm in violation of section 29-35 or did
1210 possess and use such a firearm, instrument or weapon in the

1211 commission of a crime under chapter 952, or (C) on or off school
1212 grounds, offered for sale or distribution a controlled substance, as
1213 defined in section 21a-240, whose manufacture, distribution, sale,
1214 prescription, dispensing, transporting or possessing with intent to sell
1215 or dispense, offering, or administering is subject to criminal penalties
1216 under sections 21a-277 and 21a-278. Such a pupil shall be expelled for
1217 one calendar year if the local or regional board of education or impartial
1218 hearing board finds that the pupil did so possess or so possess and use,
1219 as appropriate, such a firearm, instrument or weapon or did so offer for
1220 sale or distribution such a controlled substance, provided the board of
1221 education or the hearing board may modify the period of expulsion for
1222 a pupil on a case-by-case basis, and as provided for in subdivision (2) of
1223 subsection (c) of this section.

1224 (3) Unless an emergency exists, no pupil shall be expelled without a
1225 formal hearing held pursuant to sections 4-176e to 4-180a, inclusive, and
1226 section 4-181a, provided whenever such pupil is a minor, the notice
1227 required by section 4-177 and section 4-180 shall also be given to the
1228 parents or guardian of the pupil at least five business days before such
1229 hearing, not including the day of such hearing. If an emergency exists,
1230 such hearing shall be held as soon after the expulsion as possible. The
1231 notice shall include information concerning the parent's or guardian's
1232 and the pupil's legal rights and concerning legal services provided free
1233 of charge or at a reduced rate that are available locally and how to access
1234 such services. An attorney or other advocate may represent any pupil
1235 subject to expulsion proceedings. The parent or guardian of the pupil
1236 shall have the right to have the expulsion hearing postponed for up to
1237 one week to allow time to obtain representation, except that if an
1238 emergency exists, such hearing shall be held as soon after the expulsion
1239 as possible.

1240 (4) (A) Prior to conducting an expulsion hearing as required by this
1241 subsection, an administrator, school counselor or school social worker
1242 at the school in which the pupil is enrolled shall contact the local
1243 homeless education liaison designated by the local or regional board of

1244 education for the school district, pursuant to Subtitle B of Title VII of the
1245 McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 USC 11431 et seq., as
1246 amended from time to time, to make a determination whether such
1247 pupil is a homeless child or youth, as defined in 42 USC 11343a, as
1248 amended from time to time. If it is determined that such pupil is a
1249 homeless child or youth, the local or regional board of education, or the
1250 impartial hearing board established pursuant to subsection (b) of this
1251 section, shall consider the impact of homelessness on the behavior of the
1252 pupil during the hearing. No such pupil may be expelled without a plan
1253 of interventions and supports to mitigate the impact of homelessness on
1254 the behavior of the student.

1255 (B) Any pupil who is determined to be a homeless child or youth and
1256 has been expelled for a second time shall be provided a meeting with
1257 the local homeless education liaison by the local or regional board of
1258 education.

1259 Sec. 39. Subsections (a) and (b) of section 10-16z of the general statutes
1260 are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
1261 *1, 2025*):

1262 (a) There is established the Early Childhood Cabinet. The cabinet
1263 shall consist of: (1) The Commissioner of Early Childhood, or the
1264 commissioner's designee, (2) the Commissioner of Education, or the
1265 commissioner's designee, (3) the Commissioner of Social Services, or the
1266 commissioner's designee, (4) the chancellor of the Connecticut State
1267 Colleges and Universities, or the chancellor's designee, (5) the
1268 Commissioner of Public Health, or the commissioner's designee, (6) the
1269 Commissioner of Developmental Services, or the commissioner's
1270 designee, (7) the Commissioner of Children and Families, or the
1271 commissioner's designee, (8) the executive director of the Commission
1272 on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity or the executive
1273 director's designee, (9) the project director of the Connecticut Head Start
1274 State Collaboration Office, (10) a parent or guardian of a child who
1275 attends or attended a school readiness program appointed by the
1276 minority leader of the House of Representatives, (11) a representative of

1277 a local provider of early childhood education appointed by the minority
1278 leader of the Senate, (12) a representative of the Connecticut Family
1279 Resource Center Alliance appointed by the majority leader of the House
1280 of Representatives, (13) a representative of a state-funded child care
1281 center appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, (14) two
1282 appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, one of whom
1283 is a member of a board of education for a town designated as an alliance
1284 district, as defined in section 10-262u, and one of whom is a parent who
1285 has a child attending a school in an educational reform district, as
1286 defined in section 10-262u, (15) two appointed by the president pro
1287 tempore of the Senate, one of whom is a representative of an association
1288 of early education and child care providers and one of whom is a
1289 representative of a public elementary school with a prekindergarten
1290 program, (16) ten appointed by the Governor, one of whom is a
1291 representative of the Connecticut Head Start Association, one of whom
1292 is a representative of the business community in this state, one of whom
1293 is a representative of the philanthropic community in this state, one of
1294 whom is a representative of the Connecticut State Employees
1295 Association, one of whom is an administrator of the child care
1296 development block grant pursuant to the Child Care and Development
1297 Block Grant Act of 1990, one of whom is responsible for administering
1298 grants received under section 1419 of Part B of the Individuals with
1299 Disabilities Education Act, 20 USC 1419, as amended from time to time,
1300 one of whom is responsible for administering the provisions of Title I of
1301 the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 USC 6301 et seq., one
1302 of whom is responsible for coordinating education services to children
1303 and youth who are homeless, one of whom is a licensed family child
1304 care home provider and a member of a staffed family child care network
1305 identified by the Commissioner of Early Childhood, and one of whom
1306 is a parent recommended by a parent advisory group that has been
1307 appointed by the Commissioner of Early Childhood, (17) the Secretary
1308 of the Office of Policy and Management, or the secretary's designee, (18)
1309 the Lieutenant Governor, or the Lieutenant Governor's designee, (19)
1310 the Commissioner of Housing, or the commissioner's designee, [and]
1311 (20) the Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services, or the

1312 commissioner's designee, and (21) the executive director of the
1313 Connecticut Library Consortium, or a cooperating library service unit
1314 as defined in section 11-9e, or the executive director's designee.

1315 (b) The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall serve as a
1316 cochairperson of the cabinet. The other cochairperson of the cabinet
1317 shall be appointed from among its members by the Governor. The
1318 cabinet shall meet at least quarterly. Members shall not be compensated
1319 for their services, except the following members, who are parents or
1320 guardians, may, within available appropriations, be compensated for
1321 any time and travel related to meetings of the cabinet: (1) The parent or
1322 guardian of a child who attends or attended a school readiness program
1323 and was appointed by the minority leader of the House of
1324 Representatives under subdivision (10) of subsection (a) of this section,
1325 (2) the parent who has a child attending a school in an educational
1326 reform district, as defined in section 10-262u, and was appointed by the
1327 speaker of the House of Representatives under subdivision (14) of
1328 subsection (a) of this section, and (3) the parent who was recommended
1329 by a parent advisory group and appointed by the Governor under
1330 subdivision (16) of subsection (a) of this section.

1331 Sec. 40. Subsection (a) of section 10-223h of the general statutes is
1332 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
1333 *2025*):

1334 (a) [The] For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2013, to June 30, 2027,
1335 inclusive, the Commissioner of Education shall establish, within
1336 available appropriations, a commissioner's network of schools to
1337 improve student academic achievement in low-performing schools. The
1338 commissioner may select not more than twenty-five schools in any
1339 single school year that have been classified as a category four school or
1340 a category five school pursuant to section 10-223e to participate in the
1341 commissioner's network of schools, except the commissioner shall not
1342 select any additional school to participate in the commissioner's
1343 network of schools on or after July 1, 2025. The commissioner shall issue
1344 guidelines regarding the development of turnaround plans, and such

1345 guidelines shall include, but not be limited to, annual deadlines for the
1346 submission or nonsubmission of a turnaround plan and annual
1347 deadlines for approval or rejection of turnaround plans. The
1348 commissioner shall give preference for selection in the commissioner's
1349 network of schools to such schools (1) that volunteer to participate in
1350 the commissioner's network of schools, provided the local or regional
1351 board of education for such school and the representatives of the
1352 exclusive bargaining unit for certified employees chosen pursuant to
1353 section 10-153b mutually agree to participate in the commissioner's
1354 network of schools, (2) in which an existing collective bargaining
1355 agreement between the local or regional board of education for such
1356 school and the representatives of the exclusive bargaining unit for
1357 certified employees chosen pursuant to section 10-153b will have
1358 expired for the school year in which a turnaround plan will be
1359 implemented, or (3) that are located in school districts that (A) have
1360 experience in school turnaround reform, or (B) previously received a
1361 school improvement grant pursuant to Section 1003(g) of Title I of the
1362 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 USC 6301 et seq. [The
1363 commissioner may select not more than five schools in any single school
1364 year from a single school district to participate in the commissioner's
1365 network of schools.] Each school so selected shall begin implementation
1366 of a turnaround plan, as described in subsection (d) of this section. Each
1367 school so selected shall participate in the commissioner's network of
1368 schools for three school years, and may continue such participation for
1369 an additional year, not to exceed two additional years, upon approval
1370 from the State Board of Education in accordance with the provisions of
1371 subsection (h) of this section, except no school that is participating in the
1372 commissioner's network of schools on July 1, 2025, may continue such
1373 participation for an additional year or an additional two years. The
1374 commissioner shall provide funding, technical assistance and
1375 operational support to schools participating in the commissioner's
1376 network of schools and may provide financial support to teachers and
1377 administrators working at a school that is participating in the
1378 commissioner's network of schools. All costs attributable to developing
1379 and implementing a turnaround plan in excess of the ordinary operating

1380 expenses for such school shall be paid by the State Board of Education.

1381 Sec. 41. Subsection (h) of section 10-223h of the general statutes is
1382 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
1383 *2025*):

1384 (h) Each school participating in the commissioner's network of
1385 schools shall participate for three school years, and may continue such
1386 participation for an additional year, not to exceed two additional years,
1387 upon approval from the State Board of Education, [. Before] except no
1388 school that is participating in the commissioner's network of schools on
1389 July 1, 2025, may continue such participation for an additional year or
1390 an additional two years. On and after July 1, 2025, before the end of the
1391 third year that a school is participating in the commissioner's network
1392 of schools, the commissioner shall conduct an evaluation [to determine
1393 whether such school is prepared to exit the commissioner's network of
1394 schools. In determining whether such school may exit the
1395 commissioner's network of schools, the commissioner shall consider
1396 whether the local or regional board of education has the capacity to
1397 ensure that such school will maintain or improve its student academic
1398 performance. If the commissioner determines that such school is ready
1399 to exit the commissioner's network of schools, the] of the school's
1400 participation in the commissioner's network of schools. The local or
1401 regional board of education for such school shall develop, in
1402 consultation with the commissioner, a plan, subject to the approval by
1403 the State Board of Education, for the transition of such school back to
1404 full control by the local or regional board of education. [If such school is
1405 not ready to exit the commissioner's network of schools and participates
1406 in the commissioner's network of schools for an additional year, the
1407 commissioner shall conduct an evaluation in accordance with the
1408 provisions of this subsection. Before the end of the fifth year that a
1409 school is participating in the commissioner's network of schools, the
1410 commissioner shall develop, in consultation with the local or regional
1411 board of education for such school, a plan, subject to the approval by the
1412 State Board of Education, for the transition of such school back to full

1413 control by the local or regional board of education.]

1414 Sec. 42. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) As used in this section:

1415 (1) "Library and other educational material" means any material
1416 belonging to, on loan to or otherwise in the custody of a school library
1417 media center, including, but not limited to, nonfiction and fiction books,
1418 magazines, reference books, supplementary titles, multimedia and
1419 digital material, software and other material not required as part of
1420 classroom instruction.

1421 (2) "School library staff member" means a school library media
1422 specialist, school librarian, any certificated or noncertificated staff
1423 member whose assignment is in the school library or any individual
1424 carrying out or assisting with the functions of a school library media
1425 specialist or school librarian.

1426 (3) "Individual with a vested interest" means any school staff member
1427 employed by a local or regional board of education, parent or guardian
1428 of a student currently enrolled in a school at the time a reconsideration
1429 form is filed under subsection (e) of this section and any student
1430 currently enrolled in a school at the time a reconsideration form is filed
1431 under subsection (e) of this section.

1432 (4) "Remove" means deliberately taking library material out of a
1433 library's collection. "Remove" does not include the process of clearing
1434 such collection of any materials that are no longer useful.

1435 (b) Each local and regional board of education, after consulting with
1436 the superintendent of schools, the director of curriculum and a librarian
1437 employed by such board, shall adopt a (1) collection development and
1438 maintenance policy, (2) library display and program policy, and (3)
1439 library material review and reconsideration policy. Each such policy
1440 shall ensure that all library materials are evaluated and made accessible
1441 in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in
1442 section 10-15c of the general statutes, including, but not limited to,
1443 discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender identity, religion,

1444 national origin, sexual orientation or disability. In developing each such
1445 policy, the board shall have control over the content of each such policy,
1446 provided such policies are in accordance with the provisions of this
1447 section. Each local and regional board of education shall review, and
1448 update as necessary, each such policy every five years.

1449 (c) The collection development and maintenance policy shall, at a
1450 minimum:

1451 (1) Recognize that library and other educational materials should (A)
1452 be provided for the interest, information and enlightenment of all
1453 students, and (B) represent a wide range of varied and diverging
1454 viewpoints in the collection as a whole;

1455 (2) Require student access to age-appropriate and grade-level-
1456 appropriate material, and provide access to library and other
1457 educational material that is relevant to the research, independent
1458 reading interests and educational needs of students based on a student's
1459 age, development or grade level;

1460 (3) Recognize the importance of the school library media center as a
1461 place for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas
1462 and the promotion of free expression and free access to ideas by
1463 students;

1464 (4) Acknowledge that a school library media specialist is
1465 professionally trained to curate and develop a collection that provides
1466 students with access to the widest array of age-appropriate and grade-
1467 level-appropriate library and other educational material; and

1468 (5) Establish a procedure for a certified school library media specialist
1469 to continually review library and other educational material within a
1470 school library media center using professionally accepted standards,
1471 which shall include, but need not be limited to, the material's relevance,
1472 physical condition of the material, availability of duplicates or copies of
1473 the material, availability of more recent age-appropriate or grade-level-
1474 appropriate material and continued demand for the material.

1475 (d) The library display and program policy shall, at a minimum:

1476 (1) Recognize that library displays should (A) be provided for the
1477 interest, information and enlightenment of all students, (B) represent a
1478 wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints, (C) require student
1479 access to age-appropriate and grade-level-appropriate content, and (D)
1480 provide access to content that is relevant to the research, independent
1481 interests and educational needs of students;

1482 (2) Recognize the importance of displays and student programs as
1483 resources for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information
1484 and ideas and to promote free expression and free access to ideas by
1485 students; and

1486 (3) Acknowledge that a school library media specialist is
1487 professionally trained to curate and develop displays and programs that
1488 provide students with access to the widest array of age-appropriate and
1489 grade-level-appropriate library and other educational material.

1490 (e) The library material review and reconsideration policy shall, at a
1491 minimum:

1492 (1) Establish a process for individuals with a vested interest to
1493 challenge any library and other educational materials, display or
1494 student program;

1495 (2) Limit consideration of requests to reconsider and remove
1496 material, displays or student programs to the parents and guardians of
1497 students and eligible students currently enrolled in the school or school
1498 district;

1499 (3) Require that no library and other educational material, display or
1500 program shall be removed from library media centers, or programs be
1501 cancelled, because of the origin, background or viewpoints expressed in
1502 such material, display or program, or because of the origin, background
1503 or viewpoints of the creator of such material, display or program;

1504 (4) Require that library and other educational materials, displays and
1505 student programs shall only be excluded for legitimate pedagogical
1506 purposes or for professionally accepted standards of collection
1507 maintenance practices as adopted in the collection development and
1508 maintenance policy or the display and program policy;

1509 (5) Require that any process for petitioners to challenge any library
1510 and other educational material, display or student program shall neither
1511 favor nor disfavor any group based on protected characteristics;

1512 (6) Provide for the creation of a request for reconsideration form that
1513 may be submitted by an individual with a vested interest to the
1514 principal of the school in which the library and other educational
1515 material is being challenged to initiate a review of such material. The
1516 form shall require such individual to specify which portion or portions
1517 of such material such individual objects to and provide an explanation
1518 of the reasons for such objection. Such individual shall not submit a
1519 request for reconsideration form without including such individual's
1520 full legal name, address and telephone number;

1521 (7) Require the principal, or the principal's designee, to promptly
1522 forward the request for reconsideration to the superintendent of schools
1523 for the school district. The superintendent, or the superintendent's
1524 designee, shall appoint a review committee consisting of: (A) The
1525 superintendent, or the superintendent's designee, (B) the principal of the
1526 school in which the library and other educational material is being
1527 challenged, or the principal's designee, (C) the director of curriculum,
1528 or a person in an equivalent position, employed by such board, (D) a
1529 representative from the local or regional board of education, (E) at least
1530 one grade-level-appropriate teacher familiar with the library material,
1531 provided the teacher selected is not the individual who submitted the
1532 form, (F) a parent or guardian of a student age thirteen years or younger
1533 enrolled in the school district, provided the parent or guardian selected
1534 is not the individual who submitted the form, (G) a parent or guardian
1535 of a student age fourteen years or older enrolled in the school district,
1536 provided the parent or guardian selected is not the individual who

1537 submitted the form, and (H) a certified school librarian employed by
1538 such board or employed by another board of education in the state. In
1539 cases where such form is submitted by a student enrolled in grades nine
1540 to twelve, inclusive, and when appropriate and at the discretion of the
1541 superintendent, a student enrolled in grades nine to twelve, inclusive,
1542 may serve on the review committee if such student did not submit the
1543 reconsideration form, provided the superintendent consults with the
1544 principal of the school involved in such reconsideration request prior to
1545 making this determination whether to include such student on the
1546 review committee;

1547 (8) Require that any library and other educational material being
1548 challenged remain available in the school library media center
1549 according to such material's catalog record and be available for a
1550 student to reserve, check out or access until a final decision is made by
1551 the review committee;

1552 (9) Require the review committee to evaluate the request for
1553 reconsideration form, read the challenged material in its entirety,
1554 evaluate the challenged material against the school district's collection
1555 development and maintenance policy and make a written decision on
1556 whether or not to remove the challenged material not later than sixty
1557 school days from the date of receiving such request. The review
1558 committee shall provide a copy of the committee's decision and report
1559 to the individual with a vested interest who submitted the form and to
1560 the principal of the school;

1561 (10) Permit the individual with a vested interest who submitted the
1562 request for reconsideration form to appeal the review committee's
1563 decision to the local or regional board of education for the school
1564 district. The board shall determine whether the reconsideration process
1565 was followed and publish the decision on the Internet web site of the
1566 school district;

1567 (11) Provide that once a decision has been made by the review
1568 committee on any library and other educational material, such material

1569 cannot be subject to a new request for review and reconsideration for a
1570 period of three years;

1571 (12) Permit a school district to consolidate any requests for review
1572 and reconsideration of the same challenged library and other
1573 educational material; and

1574 (13) Prohibit the removal, exclusion or censoring of any book on the
1575 sole basis that a person with a vested interest finds such book offensive.

1576 (f) Any school library media specialist or school library staff member
1577 who, in good faith, implements the policies described in this section
1578 shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might
1579 otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity
1580 with respect to any judicial proceeding that results from such
1581 implementation.

1582 (g) Each local and regional board of education shall make the (1)
1583 collection development and maintenance policy, (2) library program
1584 and display policy, and (3) library material review and reconsideration
1585 policy adopted under this section available on the board's or governing
1586 body's Internet web site, or, if no such Internet web site exists, inside the
1587 school library or included as part of such school library's policy manual.

1588 Sec. 43. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) As used in this section:

1589 (1) "Library and other educational material" means any material
1590 belonging to, on loan to or otherwise in the custody of a public library,
1591 including, but not limited to, nonfiction and fiction books, magazines,
1592 reference books, supplementary titles, multimedia and digital material
1593 and software.

1594 (2) "Public library staff member" means a staff member of a public
1595 library, a public librarian, any staff member whose assignment is in the
1596 public library or any individual carrying out or assisting with the
1597 functions of a public library.

1598 (3) "Individual with a vested interest" means any individual residing
1599 in the town in which the public library is located or the town in which
1600 the contract library is located at the time a reconsideration form is filed
1601 under subsection (e) of this section.

1602 (4) "Remove" means deliberately taking library material out of a
1603 library's collection. "Remove" does not include the process of clearing
1604 such collection of any materials that are no longer useful.

1605 (b) The board of trustees, or other governing body, of each public
1606 library shall adopt a (1) collection development and maintenance policy,
1607 (2) library display and program policy, and (3) library material review
1608 and reconsideration policy. Each such policy shall ensure that all library
1609 materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the
1610 protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the
1611 general statutes, including, but not limited to, discrimination based on
1612 race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual
1613 orientation or disability. In developing each such policy, the board shall
1614 have control over the content of each such policy, provided such policies
1615 are in accordance with the provisions of this section. The board of
1616 trustees or other governing body shall review, and update as necessary,
1617 each such policy every five years.

1618 (c) The collection development and maintenance policy shall, at a
1619 minimum:

1620 (1) Recognize that library materials should (A) be provided for the
1621 interest, information and enlightenment of all residents, and (B)
1622 represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints in the
1623 collection as a whole;

1624 (2) Recognize the importance of the public library as a place for
1625 voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas and the
1626 promotion of free expression and free access to ideas by residents;

1627 (3) Acknowledge that librarians are professionally trained to curate
1628 and develop a collection that provides resident with access to the widest

1629 array of library and other educational materials; and

1630 (4) Establish a procedure for a librarian to continually review library
1631 and other educational material within a public library using
1632 professionally accepted standards, which shall include, but not be
1633 limited to, the material's relevance, the physical condition of the
1634 material, the availability of duplicates or copies of the material, the
1635 availability of more recent age-appropriate or grade-level-appropriate
1636 material and the continued demand for the material.

1637 (d) The library display and program policy shall, at a minimum:

1638 (1) Recognize that library displays should (A) be provided for the
1639 interest, information and enlightenment of all residents, (B) represent a
1640 wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints, and (C) provide access
1641 to content that is relevant to the research, independent interests and
1642 educational needs of residents;

1643 (2) Recognize the importance of displays and programs as resources
1644 for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas
1645 and to promote free expression and free access to ideas by residents;

1646 (3) Acknowledge that librarians are professionally trained to curate
1647 and develop displays and programs; and

1648 (4) Differentiate between library displays and programs that are
1649 created or curated by librarians or staff members of the public library
1650 and those displays and programs created by members of the public or
1651 community groups and exhibited in the public library.

1652 (e) The library material review and reconsideration policy shall, at a
1653 minimum:

1654 (1) Establish a process for individuals with a vested interest to
1655 challenge any library and other educational material, display or
1656 program;

1657 (2) Limit consideration of requests to reconsider material, displays or

1658 programs to individuals residing in the town in which the library is
1659 located or the town in which the contract library is located;

1660 (3) Require that no library material, display or program shall be
1661 removed, or programs be cancelled, because of the origin, background
1662 or viewpoints expressed in such material, display or program or
1663 because of the origin, background or viewpoints of the creator of such
1664 material, display or program;

1665 (4) Require that library materials, displays and programs shall only
1666 be excluded for legitimate pedagogical purposes or for professionally
1667 accepted standards of collection maintenance practices as adopted in the
1668 collection development and maintenance policy or the display and
1669 program policy;

1670 (5) Require that any process for petitioners to challenge any library
1671 material, display or program shall neither favor nor disfavor any group
1672 based on protected characteristics;

1673 (6) Provide for the creation of a request for reconsideration form that
1674 may be submitted by an individual to the library director to initiate a
1675 review of such material. The form shall require such individual to
1676 specify which portion or portions of such material such individual
1677 objects to and provide an explanation of the reasons for such objection.
1678 Such individual shall not submit a request for reconsideration form
1679 without including such individual's full legal name, address and
1680 telephone number;

1681 (7) Acknowledge that reconsideration requests are not confidential
1682 patron records under section 11-25 of the general statutes;

1683 (8) Require that any library material being challenged remain
1684 available in the library according to its catalog record and be available
1685 for a resident to reserve, check out or access until a final decision is made
1686 by the library director;

1687 (9) Require the library director to evaluate the request for

1688 reconsideration form, read the challenged material in its entirety,
1689 evaluate the challenged material against the collection development and
1690 maintenance policy and make a written decision on whether or not to
1691 remove the challenged material not later than sixty days from the date
1692 of receiving such request. The library director shall provide a copy of
1693 the library director's decision and report to the individual who
1694 submitted the form;

1695 (10) Permit the individual who submitted the request for
1696 reconsideration form to appeal, in writing, the library director's decision
1697 to the board of trustees or other governing body for the library. The
1698 board, after evaluating the challenged material under the collection
1699 development and maintenance policy, shall (A) consult with (i) the
1700 library director, (ii) the State Librarian, or the State Librarian's designee,
1701 (iii) a representative of the cooperating library service unit, as defined
1702 in section 11-9e of the general statutes, (iv) the president of the
1703 Connecticut Library Association, or the president's designee, and (v) the
1704 president of the Association of Connecticut Library Boards, or the
1705 president's designee, (B) deliberate on such request for reconsideration,
1706 (C) provide a written statement of the reasons for the reconsideration or
1707 refusal to reconsider the library material, and (D) provide any final
1708 decision that is contrary to the decision of the library director;

1709 (11) Provide that once a decision has been made by the library
1710 director or the board of trustees or other governing board on the
1711 reconsideration of any library material, such material cannot be subject
1712 to a new request for reconsideration for a period of three years;

1713 (12) Permit a library director to consolidate any requests for
1714 reconsideration of the same challenged library material; and

1715 (13) Prohibit the removal, exclusion or censoring of any book on the
1716 sole basis that an individual finds such book offensive.

1717 (f) Any librarian or staff member of a public library who, in good
1718 faith, implements the policies described in this section shall be immune

1719 from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or
 1720 imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial
 1721 proceeding that results from such implementation.

1722 (g) The board of trustees, or other governing body, of each public
 1723 library shall make available the (1) collection development and
 1724 maintenance policy, (2) library display and program policy, and (3)
 1725 library material review and reconsideration policy adopted under this
 1726 section on the board's or governing body's Internet web site, or, if no
 1727 such Internet web site exists, inside the library or included as part of
 1728 such library's policy manual.

1729 Sec. 44. Subsection (i) of section 11-24b of the general statutes is
 1730 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from*
 1731 *passage*):

1732 (i) No principal public library shall be eligible to receive a state grant
 1733 in accordance with the provisions of subsections (b), (c) and (d) of this
 1734 section if such principal public library does not maintain and adhere to
 1735 a collection development [, collection management and collection
 1736 reconsideration policies] and maintenance policy, a library display and
 1737 program policy and a library material review and reconsideration policy
 1738 that have been [approved] adopted by the board of trustees or other
 1739 governing body of such library pursuant to section 43 of this act. Such
 1740 [collection reconsideration] material review and reconsideration policy
 1741 shall offer residents a clear process to request a reconsideration of
 1742 library materials. In the instance of a book challenge, these policies shall
 1743 govern.

1744 Sec. 45. Sections 10-511 and 10-511a of the general statutes are
 1745 repealed. (*Effective from passage*)"

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	July 1, 2025	3-13c
Sec. 15	July 1, 2025	New section
Sec. 16	July 1, 2025	10-76d(d)
Sec. 17	July 1, 2025	10-262j(j)
Sec. 18	July 1, 2025	New section
Sec. 19	July 1, 2025	New section
Sec. 20	July 1, 2025	New section
Sec. 21	July 1, 2025	10-232a
Sec. 22	July 1, 2025	New section
Sec. 23	July 1, 2025	New section
Sec. 24	July 1, 2025	New section
Sec. 25	July 1, 2025	New section
Sec. 26	July 1, 2025	New section
Sec. 27	July 1, 2025	New section
Sec. 28	July 1, 2025	New section
Sec. 29	July 1, 2025	New section
Sec. 30	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 31	July 1, 2025	10-4(c)
Sec. 32	July 1, 2025	New section
Sec. 33	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 34	July 1, 2025	10-198d
Sec. 35	July 1, 2025	10-222
Sec. 36	July 1, 2025	10-248a
Sec. 37	July 1, 2025	10-51(d)(2)
Sec. 38	July 1, 2025	10-233d(a)
Sec. 39	July 1, 2025	10-16z(a) and (b)
Sec. 40	July 1, 2025	10-223h(a)
Sec. 41	July 1, 2025	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)
Sec. 45	<i>from passage</i>	Repealer section