



General Assembly

February Session, 2026

Raised Bill No. 5323

LCO No. 1778



Referred to Committee on EDUCATION

Introduced by:
(ED)

AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES.

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) On and after January 1, 2028,
2 each school-based health center shall (1) use an evidence-based
3 screening tool for early identification of disordered eating behaviors, as
4 a supplement to existing methods used to diagnose disordered eating
5 behaviors, and (2) provide such screening tool to each patient who is in
6 grades nine to twelve, inclusive, during such patient's annual health
7 assessment pursuant to section 10-206 of the general statutes. Such
8 patient or such patient's parent or guardian may, in such patient's or
9 parent or guardian's discretion, complete such screening tool.

10 Sec. 2. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a task force to
11 develop recommendations for the early identification, awareness and
12 treatment of disordered eating behaviors in children, including, but not
13 limited to, recommendations for an evidence-based screening tool for
14 use in school-based health centers pursuant to section 1 of this act.

15 (b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

16 (1) The executive director of the Commission on Women, Children,
17 Seniors, Equity and Opportunity, or the executive director's designee;

18 (2) The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee;

19 (3) The Commissioner of Public Health, or the commissioner's
20 designee;

21 (4) The Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services, or
22 the commissioner's designee;

23 (5) The Child Advocate, or the Child Advocate's designee;

24 (6) The Comptroller, or the Comptroller's designee;

25 (7) The executive director of the Connecticut Association of Public
26 School Superintendents, or the executive director's designee;

27 (8) The executive director of the Connecticut Association of Boards of
28 Education, or the executive director's designee;

29 (9) The executive director of the Connecticut Association of School-
30 Based Health Centers, or the executive director's designee;

31 (10) The chief executive officer of the United Way of Connecticut, or
32 the chief executive officer's designee;

33 (11) The chief executive officer of the Connecticut Hospital
34 Association, or the chief executive officer's designee;

35 (12) A member of the Transforming Children's Behavioral Health
36 Policy and Planning Committee, established pursuant to section 2-137
37 of the general statutes, appointed jointly by the chairpersons of the
38 committee; and

39 (13) Any additional members with expertise in eating disorder
40 prevention, screening and early identification or any related services, as
41 designated by the executive director of the Commission on Women,

42 Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity.

43 (c) Any member of the task force appointed under subdivisions (7) to
44 (13), inclusive, of subsection (b) of this section may be a member of the
45 General Assembly.

46 (d) All initial appointments to the task force shall be made not later
47 than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall
48 be filled by the appointing authority.

49 (e) The chairperson of the task force shall be the executive director of
50 the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and
51 Opportunity, or the executive director's designee. Such chairperson
52 shall schedule the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held not
53 later than sixty days after the effective date of this section.

54 (f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the
55 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education
56 shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

57 (g) Not later than January 1, 2028, the task force shall submit a report
58 on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committees
59 of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to
60 education and public health, in accordance with the provisions of
61 section 11-4a of the general statutes. The task force shall terminate on
62 the date that it submits such report or January 1, 2028, whichever is later.

63 *Sec. 3. (Effective from passage)* (a) There is established a Holistic Food
64 Education Working Group to develop a state-wide food education
65 roadmap and a model school nutrition curriculum that includes, but is
66 not limited to, developmentally appropriate evidence-based education
67 programs on disordered eating behaviors, nutrition, culinary skills,
68 growing food, food safety and food systems.

69 (b) The working group shall consist of the following members:

70 (1) The executive director of the Commission on Women, Children,

- 71 Seniors, Equity and Opportunity, or the executive director's designee;
- 72 (2) The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee;
- 73 (3) The Commissioner of Public Health, or the commissioner's
74 designee;
- 75 (4) The Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services, or the
76 commissioner's designee;
- 77 (5) The Commissioner of Social Services, or the commissioner's
78 designee;
- 79 (6) The Commissioner of Agriculture, or the commissioner's
80 designee;
- 81 (7) The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection, or
82 the commissioner's designee;
- 83 (8) At least one representative representing each of the following
84 extension programs at The University of Connecticut, appointed by the
85 president of the university: Community nutrition, sustainable food
86 systems, 4-H, master gardeners and food safety;
- 87 (9) The executive director of the Connecticut Association of Public
88 School Superintendents, or the executive director's designee;
- 89 (10) The executive director of the Connecticut Association of Boards
90 of Education, or the executive director's designee;
- 91 (11) The president of the School Nutrition Association of Connecticut,
92 or the president's designee;
- 93 (12) The president of the Connecticut Academy of Nutrition and
94 Dietetics, or the president's designee;
- 95 (13) The chief executive officer of the Area Agencies on Aging, or the
96 chief executive officer's designee;

97 (14) At least one each of the following, appointed by the executive
98 director of the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and
99 Opportunity: (A) Public school educator in the state, (B) student in
100 grades nine to twelve, inclusive, in the state, (C) a representative from a
101 community-based nonprofit that provides food or nutrition education,
102 (D) a representative from a medical school in the state who teaches
103 nutrition, and (E) a parent of a public school student in the state; and

104 (15) Any additional members with expertise in eating disorder
105 prevention and nutrition education or any related services, as
106 designated by the executive director of the Commission on Women,
107 Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity.

108 (c) Any member of the working group appointed under subdivisions
109 (8) to (15), inclusive, of subsection (b) of this section may be a member
110 of the General Assembly.

111 (d) All initial appointments to the working group shall be made not
112 later than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy
113 shall be filled by the appointing authority.

114 (e) The executive director of the Commission on Women, Children,
115 Seniors, Equity and Opportunity shall select cochairpersons of the
116 working group from among the members of the working group. Such
117 cochairpersons shall schedule the first meeting of the working group,
118 which shall be held not later than sixty days after the effective date of
119 this section.

120 (f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the
121 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education
122 shall serve as administrative staff of the working group.

123 (g) Not later than January 1, 2028, the working group shall submit a
124 report on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing
125 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
126 relating to education, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a

127 of the general statutes. The working group shall terminate on the date
128 that it submits such report or January 1, 2028, whichever is later.

129 Sec. 4. (*Effective from passage*) (a) Notwithstanding any provision of
130 the general statutes or any public or special act, the Auditors of Public
131 Accounts shall conduct an audit of the financial operations of the
132 dissolved regional board of education for the former regional school
133 district six for the school year ending June 30, 2024, and for any expenses
134 incurred by or in the name of such regional board of education
135 thereafter. Not later than October 1, 2026, the Auditors of Public
136 Accounts shall submit such audit report to the chief executive officer of
137 each of the three member towns of former regional school district six.

138 (b) The chief executive officer of each member town of former
139 regional school district six shall pay any outstanding expenses owed by
140 such regional board of education, and such expenses shall be allocated
141 in accordance with the provisions of subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of
142 section 10-51 of the general statutes, except such chief executive officers
143 may agree to divide such expenses in any alternate manner.

144 Sec. 5. (*Effective from passage*) Notwithstanding any provision of the
145 general statutes or any public or special act, the Auditors of Public
146 Accounts shall conduct an audit of the financial operations of the
147 dissolved local board of education for the town of Litchfield for the
148 school year ending June 30, 2024, and for any expenses incurred by or
149 in the name of such local board of education thereafter. Not later than
150 October 1, 2026, the Auditors of Public Accounts shall submit such audit
151 report to the chief executive officer of the town of Litchfield.

152 Sec. 6. Section 10-244a of the general statutes is repealed and the
153 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

154 (a) For the school year commencing July 1, 2013, and each school year
155 thereafter, no municipality or local or regional board of education may
156 employ or enter into an agreement, as described in subdivision (2) of
157 subsection (b) of section 53a-217b, with any person, other than a sworn

158 member of an organized local police department or a retired [police]
159 officer as provided in subsection (b) of this section, to provide security
160 services in a public school if such person will possess a firearm, as
161 defined in section 53a-3, while in the performance of his or her duties.

162 (b) A municipality or a local or regional board of education may
163 employ or enter into an agreement with a retired [police] officer to
164 provide security services in a public school if such retired [police] officer
165 is a (1) qualified retired law enforcement officer, as defined in 18 USC
166 926C, as amended from time to time, or (2) parole officer who (A) served
167 as a parole officer for an aggregate of ten years or more, or separated
168 from such service, after completing any applicable probationary period,
169 due to a service-connected disability, as determined by the Department
170 of Correction, (B) during the most recent twelve-month period, has met,
171 at the expense of such parole officer, the standards for qualification in
172 firearms training for active parole officers, as determined by the
173 Department of Correction, (C) has not been found by a qualified medical
174 professional to be unqualified, for reasons relating to mental health, to
175 meet the active duty standards for qualification in firearms training, as
176 established by the Department of Correction, to carry a firearm and has
177 not entered an agreement with the department acknowledging that such
178 parole officer does not meet such qualification, (D) is not under the
179 influence of alcohol or another intoxicating or hallucinatory drug or
180 substance, and (E) is not prohibited by law from receiving a firearm.
181 Such retired [police] officer shall receive annual training pursuant to
182 section 7-294x and shall successfully complete annual firearms training
183 provided by a certified firearms instructor that meets or exceeds the
184 standards of the Police Officer Standards and Training Council or 18
185 USC 926C, as amended from time to time. Such retired [police] officer
186 shall not be subject to the licensing requirements of part II of chapter
187 534.

188 (c) For the purposes of subsection (b) of this section, ["retired police
189 officer"] (1) "retired officer" means [(1)] (A) a sworn member of an
190 organized local police department who was certified by the Police

191 Officer Standards and Training Council and retired or separated in good
192 standing from such department or a sworn member of the Division of
193 State Police within the Department of Emergency Services and Public
194 Protection who retired or separated in good standing from said division,
195 [(2)] (B) a sworn federal law enforcement agent who retired or separated
196 in good standing from such federal law enforcement service and who
197 meets or exceeds the standards of the Police Officer Standards and
198 Training Council for certification in this state, [or (3)] (C) a sworn officer
199 of an organized police department in another state who was certified
200 under standards that meet or exceed the standards of the Police Officer
201 Standards and Training Council for certification in this state and who
202 retired or separated in good standing from such department, or (D) a
203 parole officer who retired or separated in good standing from the
204 Department of Correction, and (2) "good standing" means the status of
205 a police officer whose employment in a law enforcement unit, as defined
206 in section 7-294a, or a parole officer whose employment with the
207 Department of Correction, was terminated for a reason other than as a
208 result of disciplinary action or during a period when such police officer
209 or parole officer was under investigation or disciplinary action was
210 pending.

211 Sec. 7. (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) The Connecticut Advisory Council for
212 School Administrator Professional Standards, established pursuant to
213 section 10-144e of the general statutes, in consultation with the
214 Connecticut Association of Schools, shall establish a pilot program for a
215 new school administrator mentorship program. Such pilot program
216 shall include, but need not be limited to, supports, training and
217 professional development for new school administrators. Not later than
218 July 1, 2027, the council shall report the plan for implementation of the
219 pilot program to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly
220 having cognizance of matters relating to education, in accordance with
221 the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

222 (b) For the school year commencing July 1, 2027, the Connecticut
223 Advisory Council for School Administrator Professional Standards shall

224 implement the pilot program in school districts identified in the plan
225 developed pursuant to subsection (a) of this section. Not later than
226 January 1, 2029, the council shall report on the results of the pilot
227 program, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint
228 standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of
229 matters relating to education. Such report shall include, but need not be
230 limited to, recommendations for improvement to and requirements for
231 the further implementation of the pilot program.

232 Sec. 8. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) Not later than July 1, 2026, each
233 local or regional board of education shall require students in grades nine
234 to twelve, inclusive, to meet the following academic standards for
235 participation in any extracurricular activity, including, but not limited
236 to, after-school clubs, student newspapers or intramural and
237 interscholastic athletics: (1) For participation during the first quarter of
238 a school year, (A) a student in grade nine, who is not repeating such
239 grade, may participate automatically, and (B) a student in grades ten to
240 twelve, inclusive, may participate if such student earned not fewer than
241 four Carnegie units during the prior academic year, including any
242 summer sessions, and (2) for each quarter of a school year thereafter, a
243 student may participate if such student earns passing grades in not
244 fewer than four credit-bearing classes.

245 Sec. 9. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) The Department of Education
246 shall, within available appropriations, establish a grant program for the
247 provision of a therapeutic arts program in public schools for the school
248 year commencing July 1, 2027, and each school year thereafter. Such
249 grant shall be in an amount determined by the Commissioner of
250 Education and available to any local or regional board of education or
251 regional educational service center interested in providing a therapeutic
252 arts program, but the department shall prioritize boards of education or
253 regional educational service centers serving school districts with a high
254 rate of exclusionary discipline, lack of access to behavioral health
255 services and supports and an existing social-emotional learning
256 program. Not later than January 1, 2027, the department shall post in a

257 conspicuous location on its Internet web site information about the
258 grant program, including, but not limited to, eligibility criteria,
259 application forms and the amount of grant funds available to applicants.

260 (b) Not later than July 1 2028, and annually thereafter, the
261 Department of Education shall submit a report, in accordance with the
262 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing
263 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
264 relating to education. Such report shall include the number of grants
265 awarded and recipients of such grants.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2026</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>July 1, 2026</i>	10-244a
Sec. 7	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 8	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 9	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section

Statement of Purpose:

To make various revisions to the education statutes.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]