



General Assembly

**Substitute Bill No. 5329**

February Session, 2026



**AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTICUT EDUCATION INNOVATION GRANT PROGRAM.**

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) For the fiscal year ending  
2 June 30, 2027, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Department of  
3 Education shall establish a competitive grant program to be known as  
4 the "Connecticut Education Innovation Grant Program" to fund  
5 educational innovations in schools. When awarding grants under said  
6 grant program, the department shall prioritize education innovation  
7 project proposals that are designed to improve one or more of the  
8 following: (1) Early literacy and numeracy outcomes for students from  
9 birth to grade eight, inclusive, (2) access to and the impact of high-  
10 dosage tutoring in reading and mathematics, (3) college, career and  
11 service navigation for students and families, (4) career and early college  
12 pathways for students in middle school and high school, (5) effective  
13 family and community engagement, including, but not limited to,  
14 language access, (6) staffing and talent management models, including,  
15 but not limited to, differentiated compensation, master educator and  
16 team-teaching models, (7) district and administrative structures, and (8)  
17 play-based learning, as defined in section 10-24f of the general statutes.

18 (b) Any local or regional board of education, regional educational  
19 service center, governing council of a charter school or other public or

20 nonprofit education provider approved by the Commissioner of  
21 Education may apply, in the form and manner specified by the  
22 commissioner, for a grant under the Connecticut Education Innovation  
23 Grant Program to plan, implement or scale an education innovation  
24 project. Each grant application shall include, but need not be limited to,  
25 (1) a description of the education challenge to be addressed and the  
26 student population to be served, (2) a plan of action and description of  
27 the proposed activities, (3) the baseline data and proposed outcome  
28 measures, including, but not limited to, targets for student achievement  
29 and other relevant indicators, (4) implementation steps and timelines,  
30 and (5) a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of and sharing lessons  
31 from the project.

32 (c) The Department of Education shall award grants under the  
33 Connecticut Education Innovation Grant Program for the following  
34 durations: (1) A period of not more than one year for planning grants,  
35 and (2) a period of not more than three years for implementation and  
36 scale grants.

37 (d) (1) Any applicant for a grant under the Connecticut Education  
38 Innovation Grant Program may request a waiver from the  
39 Commissioner of Education of one or more statutory or regulatory  
40 requirements that such recipient demonstrates are a significant barrier  
41 to the design or implementation of the education innovation project.

42 (2) The commissioner may grant such waiver request for a specified  
43 period of time, not to exceed the duration of the grant, if the  
44 commissioner finds the (A) waiver is necessary to carry out the project,  
45 (B) project is designed to improve student outcomes, and (C) applicant  
46 established clear and measurable goals for the project. The  
47 commissioner shall not waive the provisions of part I of chapter 166 of  
48 the general statutes, chapters 169 and 172 of the general statutes and  
49 sections 10-14n to 10-14w, inclusive, 10-15, 10-16, 10-16b, 10-76d, 10-186,  
50 10-221a, 10-223e, 10-226a to 10-226h, inclusive, and 10-233c of the  
51 general statutes, any requirement related to a state-approved literacy or  
52 numeracy instructional model or any requirement of federal law.

53 (3) The commissioner may terminate a waiver prior to the expiration  
54 of the waiver period or grant period if the commissioner determines that  
55 (A) an applicant has failed to make satisfactory progress toward the  
56 goals of the project, or (B) continuation of the project is inconsistent with  
57 state education goals.

58 (e) (1) Each recipient of a grant under the Connecticut Education  
59 Innovation Grant Program shall submit, at such time and in such  
60 manner as specified by the Department of Education, a report to the  
61 department on the implementation and results of the education  
62 innovation project, including, but not limited to, data on student  
63 outcomes disaggregated by grade, school and student subgroup in a  
64 manner that complies with the requirements of the Family Educational  
65 Rights and Privacy Act, 20 USC 1232g, as amended from time to time.  
66 Such report shall be submitted not less than annually, until at least one  
67 year after the termination of the grant period.

68 (2) Not later than January 1, 2028, and annually thereafter, the  
69 Department of Education shall submit, in accordance with the  
70 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing  
71 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
72 relating to education a report summarizing the grants awarded,  
73 outcomes achieved and promising practices identified under the  
74 Connecticut Education Innovation Grant Program during the prior  
75 fiscal year.

76 (f) There is established an account to be known as the "Connecticut  
77 education innovation fund", which shall be a separate, nonlapsing  
78 account. The account shall contain any moneys required by law to be  
79 deposited in the account. Moneys in the account shall be expended by  
80 the Department of Education for the purposes of the Connecticut  
81 Education Innovation Grant Program.

82 Sec. 2. Section 10-262j of the 2026 supplement to the general statutes  
83 is amended by adding subsection (l) as follows (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

84 (NEW) (l) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027, and each fiscal year

85 thereafter, any district that has received a grant under the Connecticut  
86 Education Innovation Grant Program, established pursuant to section 1  
87 of this act, during such fiscal year shall not be required to include the  
88 amount of such grant in the calculation of such district's budgeted  
89 appropriation for education for the subsequent fiscal year.

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>July 1, 2026</i>	10-262j(1)

**ED**                      *Joint Favorable Subst. C/R*    APP