



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 393**

January Session, 2021

Substitute House Bill No. 6621

*House of Representatives, April 12, 2021*

The Committee on Education reported through REP. SANCHEZ, R. of the 25th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

## **AN ACT CONCERNING ASSORTED REVISIONS AND ADDITIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES.**

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

1 Section 1. Section 10-238 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

3 The board of education of any municipality, upon written petition  
4 signed by one per cent of the electors of such municipality or fifty such  
5 electors, whichever is greater, the signatures thereon to be verified by  
6 the clerk of the municipality, shall hold a public hearing on any question  
7 relating to the provision of education offered by such board specified in  
8 such petition. Such hearing shall be held at a time and place to be  
9 designated by such board, not later than three weeks after receipt by the  
10 board of such petition.

11 Sec. 2. Subsection (a) of section 10-214 of the general statutes is  
12 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
13 *2021*):

14 (a) Each local or regional board of education shall provide annually  
15 to each pupil in kindergarten and grades one and three to five, inclusive,  
16 a vision screening. [ ] Such vision screening may be performed using a  
17 Snellen chart [ ] or an equivalent screening device, [such as] or an  
18 automated vision screening device. The superintendent of schools shall  
19 give written notice to the parent or guardian of each pupil (1) who is  
20 found to have any defect of vision or disease of the eyes, with a brief  
21 statement describing such defect or disease and a recommendation for  
22 the pupil to be examined by an optometrist licensed under chapter 380  
23 or an ophthalmologist licensed under chapter 370, and (2) who did not  
24 receive such vision screening, with a brief statement explaining why  
25 such pupil did not receive such vision screening.

26 Sec. 3. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a task force to  
27 study issues relating to the provision and funding of special education  
28 in the state. Such study shall examine (1) the provision of special  
29 education and related services, including whether local and regional  
30 boards of education are providing such services directly or partnering  
31 with regional educational service centers, contracting with a private  
32 provider of special education services, as defined in section 10-91g of  
33 the general statutes, or as part of a cooperative arrangement pursuant  
34 to section 10-158a of the general statutes, (2) the cost of providing special  
35 education and related services, including the total aggregate amount per  
36 school district per year, and the annual percentage increase or decrease  
37 per school district of such cost, (3) the effect that the cost of special  
38 education has on a board of education's minimum budget requirement,  
39 and (4) the level of state reimbursement to boards of education for  
40 special education, including the total amount for reimbursement  
41 submitted by each school district per year and the total amount received  
42 by such school district per year, and the percentage increase or decrease  
43 per year of the difference of the total amount submitted and the total  
44 amount received for each school district.

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

46 (1) Two appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives,

47 one of whom is a representative of the Connecticut Association of  
48 Boards of Education and one of whom is the parent or guardian of a  
49 student who is enrolled in a public school and receiving special  
50 education services;

51 (2) Two appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, one of  
52 whom is a representative of the Connecticut Education Association and  
53 one of whom is the parent or guardian of a student who is enrolled in a  
54 public school and receiving special education services;

55 (3) Two appointed by the majority leader of the House of  
56 Representatives, one of whom is a representative of the American  
57 Federation of Teachers-Connecticut and one of whom is a representative  
58 of the Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center;

59 (4) Two appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, one of whom  
60 is a representative of the Connecticut Council of Administrators of  
61 Special Education and one of whom is a representative of the RESC  
62 Alliance;

63 (5) Two appointed by the minority leader of the House of  
64 Representatives, one of whom is a representative of the Connecticut  
65 Association of School Administrators and one of whom is a  
66 representative of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities;

67 (6) Two appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, one of whom  
68 is a representative of the Connecticut Association of Schools and one of  
69 whom is a representative of the Connecticut Association of School  
70 Business Officials;

71 (7) The executive director of the Connecticut Association of Public  
72 School Superintendents; and

73 (8) The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee.

74 (c) All appointments to the task force shall be made not later than  
75 thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall be  
76 filled by the appointing authority.

77 (d) The executive director of the Connecticut Association of Public  
 78 School Superintendents shall serve as the chairperson of the task force.  
 79 The chairperson shall schedule the first meeting of the task force, which  
 80 shall be held not later than sixty days after the effective date of this  
 81 section.

82 (e) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the  
 83 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education  
 84 shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

85 (f) Not later than January 1, 2020, the task force shall submit a report  
 86 on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committee of  
 87 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to  
 88 education, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the  
 89 general statutes. The task force shall terminate on the date that it  
 90 submits such report or January 1, 2022, whichever is later.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2021</i>	10-238
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2021</i>	10-214(a)
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	New section

**Statement of Legislative Commissioners:**

In Section 3, Subsec. (c) was deleted as unnecessary and the remaining subsections were relettered accordingly for proper form.

**ED**            *Joint Favorable Subst.*

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

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### **OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:** None

**Municipal Impact:** None

### **Explanation**

The bill, which establishes a task force to study special education services and special education funding and makes various other changes, results in no fiscal impact.

The special education task force must submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the Education Committee by January 1, 2020. The task force will terminate on the date that it submits the report or January 1, 2022, whichever is later. This section of the bill has no fiscal impact as PA 17-236 prohibits transportation allowances for task force members.

The bill makes various other procedural changes that do not result in a fiscal impact.

### **The Out Years**

**State Impact:** None

**Municipal Impact:** None

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**OLR Bill Analysis****sHB 6621*****AN ACT CONCERNING ASSORTED REVISIONS AND ADDITIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES.*****SUMMARY**

This bill makes three unrelated changes in the education statutes. It narrows the topics for which a board of education can be petitioned to hold a public hearing. It also specifies permissible equipment for conducting in-school vision screenings. Finally, it establishes a 14-member task force to study special education services and funding.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2021, except the task force provisions take effect upon passage.

**§ 1 — PETITIONED BOARD OF EDUCATION HEARINGS**

Current law allows 1% of a town's electors to petition the board of education to hold a public hearing on any question. The bill limits the hearing topic to only questions related to the board's provision of education.

**§ 2 — VISION SCREENING EQUIPMENT**

Current law allows the annual in-school vision screening in public schools for grades K-1 and 3-5 to be performed using (1) a Snellen chart or (2) an equivalent screening device, such as an automated vision screening device. The bill instead specifies that the screening may be performed using (1) a Snellen chart or an equivalent screening device or (2) an automated vision screening device. This allows for use of an automated vision screening device that is not equivalent to a Snellen chart.

**§ 3 — SPECIAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE**

The bill establishes a 14-member task force to study the provision of

special education services and special education funding.

**Study Scope**

The task force’s study must examine the following topics:

1. provision of special education services and related services, including whether local and regional boards of education provide these services (a) directly, (b) by partnering with regional education service centers (RESCs), (c) by contracting with a private special education services provider, or (d) as part of a cooperative arrangement between two or more boards;
2. the cost of providing special education and related services, including the total aggregate amount per school district per year, and its annual percentage increase or decrease per school district;
3. the special education cost effect on boards’ minimum budget requirement; and
4. the state reimbursement level to boards for special education, including the (a) total reimbursement amount submitted by each school district per year and the amount received per year and (b) percentage increase or decrease per year of the difference between the total amount submitted and the total amount received for each school district (though it is unclear in the bill how many years the task force must study).

**Membership**

Table 1 describes the task force membership and the members’ appointing authorities. Under the bill, all appointments must be made within 30 days after this section takes effect, and the appointing authority must fill any vacancy.

**Table 1: Special Education Task Force Membership**

<i>Appointing Authority</i>	<i>Member(s)</i>
House speaker	Connecticut Association of Boards of

	<p>Education (CABE) representative</p> <p>Parent or guardian of a public school student receiving special education services</p>
Senate president pro tempore	<p>Connecticut Education Association (CEA) representative</p> <p>Parent or guardian of a public school student receiving special education services</p>
House majority leader	<p>American Federation of Teachers – Connecticut (AFT) representative</p> <p>Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC) representative</p>
Senate majority leader	<p>Connecticut Council of Administrators of Special Education representative</p> <p>RESC Alliance representative</p>
House minority leader	<p>Connecticut Association of School Administrators (CASA) representative</p> <p>Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) representative</p>
Senate minority leader	<p>Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) representative</p> <p>Connecticut Association of School Business Officials (CASBO) representative</p>
N/A	<p>Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) executive director</p>



N/A	Education commissioner, or commissioner's designee
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**Leadership, Meetings, and Staff**

The bill requires the CAPSS executive director to serve as the task force chairperson, who must schedule the first meeting within 60 days after this section takes effect. The Education Committee's administrative staff must serve as the task force's staff.

Under the bill, the task force must submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the Education Committee by January 1, 2020. The task force must terminate on the day it submits the report or January 1, 2022, whichever is later.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 38 Nay 0 (03/22/2021)