



House of Representatives

File No. 717

General Assembly

January Session, 2021

(Reprint of File No. 393)

Substitute House Bill No. 6621
As Amended by House Amendment
Schedule "A"

Approved by the Legislative Commissioner
May 24, 2021

**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 Section 10-238 of the general statutes is repealed and the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12 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*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 during the school years commencing July 1, 2016, to July 1,
29 2020, inclusive. Such study shall include, but need not be limited to, an
30 examination of (1) the provision of special education and related
31 services, including whether local and regional boards of education are
32 providing such services directly or partnering with regional educational
33 service centers, contracting with a private provider of special education
34 services, as defined in section 10-91g of the general statutes, or as part
35 of a cooperative arrangement pursuant to section 10-158a of the general
36 statutes, (2) the cost of providing special education and related services,
37 the total aggregate amount per school district per year and the annual
38 percentage increase or decrease per school district of such cost, (3) the
39 effect that the cost of special education has on a board of education's
40 minimum budget requirement, (4) the level of state reimbursement to
41 boards of education for special education, including the total amount
42 for reimbursement submitted by each school district per year and the
43 total amount received by such school district per year, and the
44 percentage increase or decrease per year of the difference of the total
45 amount submitted and the total amount received for each school
46 district, and (5) the criteria and manner by which school districts are

47 identifying students who require special education and related services,
48 including whether school districts are overidentifying or
49 underidentifying such students and the causes and reasons for such
50 overidentification and underidentification.

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

52 (1) Three appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives,
53 one of whom is a representative of the Special Education Equity for Kids
54 of Connecticut, one of whom is a representative of the Connecticut
55 Association of Boards of Education and one of whom is the parent or
56 guardian of a student who is enrolled in a public school and receiving
57 special education services;

58 (2) Three appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, one
59 of whom is a representative of the Connecticut Association of Public
60 School Superintendents, one of whom is a representative of the
61 Connecticut Education Association and one of whom is the parent or
62 guardian of a student who is enrolled in a public school and receiving
63 special education services;

64 (3) Two appointed by the majority leader of the House of
65 Representatives, one of whom is a representative of the American
66 Federation of Teachers-Connecticut and one of whom is a representative
67 of the Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center;

68 (4) Two appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, one of whom
69 is a representative of the Connecticut Council of Administrators of
70 Special Education and one of whom is a representative of the RESC
71 Alliance;

72 (5) Two appointed by the minority leader of the House of
73 Representatives, one of whom is a representative of the Connecticut
74 Association of School Administrators and one of whom is a
75 representative of the School and State Finance Project;

76 (6) Two appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, one of whom

77 is a representative of the Connecticut Association of Schools and one of
78 whom is a representative of the Connecticut Association of School
79 Business Officials;

80 (7) The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee.

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

84 (d) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president
85 pro tempore of the Senate shall select the cochairpersons of the task force
86 from among the members of the task force. Such cochairpersons shall
87 schedule the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held not later
88 than sixty days after the effective date of this section.

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

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

98 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2021*) (a) For the school year
99 commencing July 1, 2021, and each school year thereafter, the
100 Department of Education shall, upon request, provide to and assist local
101 and regional boards of education in administering a social-emotional
102 learning assessment to students pursuant to subsections (b) and (c) of
103 this section.

104 (b) For the school year commencing July 1, 2021, each local and
105 regional board of education shall administer a social-emotional learning
106 assessment to students. A board may use (1) the social-emotional

107 learning assessment provided by the Department of Education pursuant
108 to subsection (a) of this section, or (2) another social-emotional learning
109 assessment or mental health and resiliency screening.

110 (c) For the school year commencing July 1, 2022, and each school year
111 thereafter, each local and regional board of education may administer a
112 social-emotional learning assessment to students. A board may use (1)
113 the social-emotional learning assessment provided by the Department
114 of Education pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, or (2) another
115 social-emotional learning assessment or mental health and resiliency
116 screening.

117 (d) The parent or guardian of a student shall receive prior written
118 notice of any social-emotional learning assessment or mental health and
119 resiliency screening that is to be administered pursuant to subsections
120 (b) and (c) of this section. No student shall complete such assessment or
121 screening unless such parent or guardian provides permission that such
122 student may complete such assessment or screening.

123 Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2021*) (a) The Social Emotional Learning
124 and School Climate Advisory Collaborative, established pursuant to
125 section 10-222q of the general statutes, in consultation with the
126 Department of Education, the Department of Mental Health and
127 Addiction Services, the Department of Children and Families, the Office
128 of Early Childhood and the Department of Public Health, shall design a
129 state-wide social-emotional support strategy to provide support and
130 assistance to local and regional boards of education for mental health,
131 social-emotional support, behavioral support, trauma support and
132 special education programs and services. The strategy shall include, but
133 need not be limited to, recommendations regarding (1) training and
134 recruiting mental health and social-emotional support staff and
135 deploying them to school districts, (2) resources for school districts for
136 the hiring of mental health and social-emotional support staff, (3)
137 assisting boards in the development and implementation of
138 comprehensive school counseling programs, in accordance with the
139 guidelines adopted pursuant to section 10-203c of the general statutes,

140 (4) building on existing school and community collaborations that
141 support student mental health and well-being, such as community
142 school models, family resource centers, health clinics, child care that is
143 available from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and year-round use of school
144 facilities, (5) developing or enhancing state, regional and local support
145 networks for mental health and trauma support services through
146 interagency agreements, local action plans and model programs, (6)
147 improving the knowledge and skill of educators and other school
148 personnel in order to develop social-emotional learning and restorative
149 practices competencies and capacities, (7) creating opportunities for
150 educators to collaborate, share support and problem solve through team
151 planning time and professional learning communities, (8) providing
152 resources for state-wide and local efforts to engage parents and families
153 to support the development of student social and emotional growth at
154 home and in the community, and (9) providing opportunities for
155 families to discuss topics relating to social-emotional learning,
156 restorative practices, resiliency and ways to ensure racial equity in
157 schools.

158 (b) The collaborative may consult with the national Collaborative for
159 Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning to implement the provisions
160 of this section.

161 Sec. 6. (*Effective July 1, 2021*) Not later than October 1, 2022, the
162 Department of Education shall develop student social-emotional
163 learning standards for grades four to twelve, inclusive. Such standards
164 shall be designed for a multitiered system of support that is culturally
165 relevant and responsive, emphasizes school connectedness and includes
166 restorative practices. Such standards shall be made available on the
167 department's Internet web site. As used in this section, "social-emotional
168 learning" means the process through which children and adults achieve
169 emotional intelligence through the competencies of self-awareness, self-
170 management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible
171 decision-making.

172 Sec. 7. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Not later than January 1, 2022,

173 the Social Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory
174 Collaborative, established pursuant to section 10-222q of the general
175 statutes, shall convene a working group to (1) review sections 10-222d
176 to 10-222p, inclusive, of the general statutes relating to bullying and safe
177 school climate plans, (2) make recommendations concerning (A)
178 amendments to said sections 10-222d to 10-222p, inclusive, (B) the
179 inclusion of restorative practices in safe school climate plans, and (C)
180 state-wide adoption of the National School Climate Standards, and (3)
181 provide technical assistance and support to local and regional boards of
182 education in adopting and implementing the Connecticut Model School
183 Climate Policy, policy number 5131.914. The Social Emotional Learning
184 and School Climate Advisory Collaborative may consult with or include
185 representatives from the national Collaborative for Academic, Social,
186 and Emotional Learning as members of the working group in
187 implementing the provisions of this section.

188 Sec. 8. Section 10-233m of the general statutes is repealed and the
189 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

190 Each local or regional board of education that assigns a school
191 resource officer to any school under the jurisdiction of such board shall
192 enter into a memorandum of understanding with a local law
193 enforcement agency regarding the role and responsibility of such school
194 resource officer. Such memorandum of understanding shall include
195 provisions addressing daily interactions between students and school
196 personnel with school resource officers and shall include a graduated
197 response model for student discipline. Any such memorandum of
198 understanding entered into, extended, updated or amended on or after
199 July 1, 2021, shall include a provision that requires all school resource
200 officers to complete, while in the performance of their duties as school
201 resource officers and during periods when such school resource officers
202 are assigned to be at the school, any separate training specifically related
203 to social-emotional learning and restorative practices provided to
204 certified employees of the school pursuant to sections 10-148a and 10-
205 220a, as amended by this act. For the purposes of this section, "school
206 resource officer" means a sworn police officer of a local law enforcement

207 agency who has been assigned to a school pursuant to an agreement
208 between the local or regional board of education and the chief of police
209 of a local law enforcement agency.

210 Sec. 9. Subsection (a) of section 10-148a of the general statutes is
211 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
212 *2021*):

213 (a) For the school year commencing July 1, [2019] 2021, and each
214 school year thereafter, each certified employee shall participate in a
215 program of professional development. Each local and regional board of
216 education shall make available, annually, at no cost to its certified
217 employees, a program of professional development that is not fewer
218 than eighteen hours in length, of which a preponderance is in a small
219 group or individual instructional setting. Such program of professional
220 development shall (1) be a comprehensive, sustained and intensive
221 approach to improving teacher and administrator effectiveness in
222 increasing student knowledge achievement, (2) focus on refining and
223 improving various effective teaching methods that are shared between
224 and among educators, (3) foster collective responsibility for improved
225 student performance, (4) be comprised of professional learning that (A)
226 is aligned with rigorous state student academic achievement standards,
227 (B) is conducted among educators at the school and facilitated by
228 principals, coaches, mentors, distinguished educators, as described in
229 section 10-145s, or other appropriate teachers, (C) occurs frequently on
230 an individual basis or among groups of teachers in a job-embedded
231 process of continuous improvement, and (D) includes a repository of
232 best practices for teaching methods developed by educators within each
233 school that is continuously available to such educators for comment and
234 updating, and (5) include training in culturally responsive pedagogy
235 and practice. Each program of professional development shall include
236 professional development activities in accordance with the provisions
237 of subsection (b) of this section. The principles and practices of social-
238 emotional learning and restorative practices shall be integrated
239 throughout the components of such program of professional
240 development described in subdivisions (1) to (5), inclusive, of this

241 subsection.

242 Sec. 10. Subsections (a) and (b) of section 10-220a of the general
243 statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof
244 (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

245 (a) Each local or regional board of education shall provide an in-
246 service training program for its teachers, administrators and pupil
247 personnel who hold the initial educator, provisional educator or
248 professional educator certificate. Such program shall provide such
249 teachers, administrators and pupil personnel with information on (1)
250 the nature and the relationship of alcohol and drugs, as defined in
251 subdivision (17) of section 21a-240, to health and personality
252 development, and procedures for discouraging their abuse, (2) health
253 and mental health risk reduction education that includes, but need not
254 be limited to, the prevention of risk-taking behavior by children and the
255 relationship of such behavior to substance abuse, pregnancy, sexually
256 transmitted diseases, including HIV-infection and AIDS, as defined in
257 section 19a-581, violence, teen dating violence, domestic violence and
258 child abuse, (3) school violence prevention, conflict resolution, the
259 prevention of and response to youth suicide and the identification and
260 prevention of and response to bullying, as defined in subsection (a) of
261 section 10-222d, except that those boards of education that implement
262 any evidence-based model approach that is approved by the
263 Department of Education and is consistent with subsection (c) of section
264 10-145a, sections 10-222d, 10-222g and 10-222h, subsection (g) of section
265 10-233c and sections 1 and 3 of public act 08-160, shall not be required
266 to provide in-service training on the identification and prevention of
267 and response to bullying, (4) cardiopulmonary resuscitation and other
268 emergency life saving procedures, (5) the requirements and obligations
269 of a mandated reporter, (6) the detection and recognition of, and
270 evidence-based structured literacy interventions for, students with
271 dyslexia, as defined in section 10-3d, [and] (7) culturally responsive
272 pedagogy and practice, and (8) the principles and practices of social-
273 emotional learning and restorative practices. Each local or regional
274 board of education may allow any paraprofessional or noncertified

275 employee to participate, on a voluntary basis, in any in-service training
276 program provided pursuant to this section.

277 (b) Not later than a date prescribed by the commissioner, each local
278 and regional board of education shall establish a professional
279 development and evaluation committee. Such professional
280 development and evaluation committee shall consist of (1) at least one
281 teacher, as defined in subsection (a) of section 10-144d, selected by the
282 exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees chosen
283 pursuant to section 10-153b, (2) at least one administrator, as defined in
284 subsection (a) of section 10-144e, selected by the exclusive bargaining
285 representative for certified employees chosen pursuant to section 10-
286 153b, and (3) such other school personnel as the board deems
287 appropriate. The duties of such committees shall include, but not be
288 limited to, participation in the development or adoption of a teacher
289 evaluation and support program for the district, pursuant to section 10-
290 151b, and the development, evaluation and annual updating of a
291 comprehensive local professional development plan for certified
292 employees of the district. Such plan shall: (A) Be directly related to the
293 educational goals prepared by the local or regional board of education
294 pursuant to subsection (b) of section 10-220, as amended by this act, (B)
295 on and after July 1, [2011] 2021, be developed with full consideration of
296 the priorities and needs related to student social-emotional learning and
297 restorative practices, in accordance with the provisions of section 10-
298 148a, as amended by this act, and student academic outcomes as
299 determined by the State Board of Education, [and] (C) provide for the
300 ongoing and systematic assessment and improvement of both teacher
301 evaluation and professional development of the professional staff
302 members of each such board, including personnel management and
303 evaluation training or experience for administrators, [shall] and (D) be
304 related to regular and special student needs and may include provisions
305 concerning career incentives and parent involvement. The State Board
306 of Education shall develop guidelines to assist local and regional boards
307 of education in determining the objectives of the plans and in
308 coordinating staff development activities with student needs and school

309 programs.

310 Sec. 11. Subsection (b) of section 10-220 of the general statutes is
311 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
312 *2021*):

313 (b) The board of education of each local or regional school district
314 shall, with the participation of parents, students, school administrators,
315 teachers, citizens, local elected officials and any other individuals or
316 groups such board shall deem appropriate, prepare a statement of
317 educational goals for such local or regional school district. The
318 statement of goals shall be consistent with state-wide goals pursuant to
319 subsection (c) of section 10-4 and include goals for the integration of
320 principles and practices of social-emotional learning and restorative
321 practices in the program of professional development for the school
322 district, in accordance with the provisions of section 10-148a, as
323 amended by this act, and career placement for students who do not
324 pursue an advanced degree immediately after graduation. Each local or
325 regional board of education shall annually establish student objectives
326 for the school year which relate directly to the statement of educational
327 goals prepared pursuant to this subsection and which identify specific
328 expectations for students in terms of skills, knowledge and competence.

329 Sec. 12. Section 10-155k of the general statutes is repealed and the
330 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

331 On and after July 1, 2013, the Commissioner of Education shall
332 establish a School Paraprofessional Advisory Council, which on and
333 after July 1, 2021, shall be known as the School Paraeducator Advisory
334 Council, consisting of (1) one school paraprofessional from each state-
335 wide bargaining representative organization that represents school
336 paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities, (2) one
337 representative from each of the exclusive bargaining units for certified
338 employees, chosen pursuant to section 10-153b, (3) the most recent
339 recipient of the Connecticut Paraprofessional of the Year Award, (4) two
340 representatives from the regional educational service centers, appointed

341 by the Commissioner of Education, and (5) a school administrator,
342 appointed by the Connecticut Federation of School Administrators. The
343 council shall hold quarterly meetings and advise, at least quarterly, the
344 Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee, of the
345 needs for (A) professional development and the training of
346 paraprofessionals and the effectiveness of the content and the delivery
347 of existing training for such paraprofessionals, (B) appropriate staffing
348 strategies for paraprofessionals, and (C) other relevant issues relating to
349 paraprofessionals. The council shall report, annually, in accordance
350 with the provisions of section 11-4a, on the recommendations given to
351 the commissioner, or the commissioner's designee, pursuant to the
352 provisions of this section, to the joint standing committee of the General
353 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education.

354 Sec. 13. (*Effective from passage*) (a) Not later than January 1, 2022, the
355 School Paraeducator Advisory Council, established pursuant to section
356 10-155k of the general statutes, as amended by this act, shall conduct a
357 study concerning the following: (1) Appropriate minimum employment
358 standards, including pay rates, health care coverage, retirement benefits
359 and professional development opportunities for paraeducators that
360 focus on maximizing the success of paraeducators in the classroom; (2)
361 safety issues relating to paraeducators who work with students who
362 have behavioral issues, including the availability of appropriate safety
363 equipment for paraeducators at each school; (3) issues relating to the
364 assignment of substitute teaching duties to paraeducators, including
365 emergency situations when a paraeducator is asked to serve as a
366 substitute teacher; and (4) issues relating to the duties of paraeducators
367 who work with students who have individualized education programs.

368 (b) Not later than January 1, 2022, the council shall develop proposals
369 for the creation of a pathway for continued career and professional
370 development, including, but not limited to, (1) paraeducator certificate
371 and apprenticeship programs that offer course credits that apply to
372 transferrable associate degree programs; (2) associate degree programs
373 that (A) build upon and do not duplicate the courses and competencies
374 of paraeducator certificate programs, (B) incorporate field experiences,

375 (C) are aligned with the standards and competencies for teachers, and
376 (D) are transferrable to a bachelor's degree in education and teacher
377 certification programs; and (3) bachelor's degree programs that lead to
378 teacher certification that build upon and do not duplicate the courses
379 and competencies of transferrable associate degrees.

380 (c) The council shall submit the study described in subsection (a) of
381 this section and the proposals described in subsection (b) of this section,
382 and any recommendations for legislation to the joint standing
383 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
384 relating to education, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a
385 of the general statutes.

386 Sec. 14. Subsection (c) of section 10-222k of the general statutes is
387 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
388 *2021*):

389 (c) (1) For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school
390 year thereafter, the principal of each school shall establish a committee
391 or designate at least one existing committee in the school to be
392 responsible for developing and fostering a safe school climate and
393 addressing issues relating to bullying in the school. Such committee
394 shall include at least one parent or guardian of a student enrolled in the
395 school appointed by the school principal, and for the school year
396 commencing July 1, 2021, and each school year thereafter, such
397 committee shall also include (A) school personnel, including, but not
398 limited to, at least one teacher selected by the exclusive bargaining
399 representative for certified employees chosen pursuant to section 10-
400 153b, (B) medical and mental health personnel assigned to such school,
401 and (C) in the case of a committee for a high school, at least one student
402 enrolled at such high school who is selected by the students of such
403 school in a manner determined by the school principal.

404 (2) Any such committee shall: (A) Receive copies of completed
405 reports following investigations of bullying, (B) identify and address
406 patterns of bullying among students in the school, (C) implement the

407 provisions of the school security and safety plan, developed pursuant to
408 section 10-222m, regarding the collection, evaluation and reporting of
409 information relating to instances of disturbing or threatening behavior
410 that may not meet the definition of bullying, (D) review and amend
411 school policies relating to bullying, (E) review and make
412 recommendations to the district safe school climate coordinator
413 regarding the district's safe school climate plan based on issues and
414 experiences specific to the school, (F) educate students, school
415 employees and parents and guardians of students on issues relating to
416 bullying, (G) collaborate with the district safe school climate coordinator
417 in the collection of data regarding bullying, in accordance with the
418 provisions of subsection (b) of section 10-222d and subsection (a) of
419 section 10-222h, and (H) perform any other duties as determined by the
420 school principal that are related to the prevention, identification and
421 response to school bullying for the school.

422 (3) Any parent or guardian or student serving as a member of any
423 such committee shall not participate in the activities described in
424 subparagraphs (A) to (C), inclusive, of subdivision (2) of this subsection
425 or any other activity that may compromise the confidentiality of a
426 student.

427 Sec. 15. (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Department of Education shall
428 develop a plan for the creation and implementation of a state-wide
429 virtual school that offers grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, and
430 provides virtual learning instruction by means of one or more Internet-
431 based software platforms.

432 (b) The virtual school contemplated and created under such plan,
433 shall (1) be maintained by and under the direction and control of the
434 State Board of Education, (2) provide in each school year no less than
435 one hundred eighty days of actual school sessions and nine hundred
436 hours of actual school work for grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive,
437 provided not more than seven hours of actual school work in any school
438 day shall count toward the total required for the school year, (3) offer
439 coursework and a curriculum that is rigorous, aligned with curriculum

440 guidelines approved by the State Board of Education, and in accordance
 441 with the state-wide subject matter content standards, adopted by the
 442 state board pursuant to section 10-4 of the general statutes, (4) grant a
 443 diploma, in accordance with the provisions of section 10-5 of the general
 444 statutes, to any student enrolled in such virtual school who has
 445 satisfactorily completed the high school graduation requirements
 446 described in section 10-221a of the general statutes, and (5) be created
 447 with consideration given to best practices in virtual learning,
 448 technological capabilities of students throughout the state and equity.

449 (c) Not later than February 1, 2022, the department shall submit the
 450 plan and any recommendations for legislation related to the
 451 implementation of such plan to the joint standing committee of the
 452 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education,
 453 in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

454 Sec. 16. (*Effective from passage*) Notwithstanding the provisions of
 455 subsection (b) of section 10-157 of the general statutes, the
 456 Commissioner of Education may grant an additional one-time extension
 457 of the probationary period for the school year commencing July 1, 2021,
 458 to any person who has been appointed as an acting superintendent and
 459 has not been able to become properly certified or successfully complete
 460 a school leadership program approved by the State Board of Education
 461 during the school years commencing July 1, 2019, and July 1, 2020.

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|---|---------------------|--------------------|
| 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 |
| Sec. 4 | <i>July 1, 2021</i> | New section |
| Sec. 5 | <i>July 1, 2021</i> | New section |
| Sec. 6 | <i>July 1, 2021</i> | New section |
| Sec. 7 | <i>from passage</i> | New section |
| Sec. 8 | <i>July 1, 2021</i> | 10-233m |
| Sec. 9 | <i>July 1, 2021</i> | 10-148a(a) |
| Sec. 10 | <i>July 1, 2021</i> | 10-220a(a) and (b) |

| | | |
|---------|---------------------|-------------|
| Sec. 11 | <i>July 1, 2021</i> | 10-220(b) |
| Sec. 12 | <i>July 1, 2021</i> | 10-155k |
| Sec. 13 | <i>from passage</i> | New section |
| Sec. 14 | <i>July 1, 2021</i> | 10-222k(c) |
| Sec. 15 | <i>from passage</i> | New section |
| Sec. 16 | <i>from passage</i> | New section |

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.

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.

House "A" made various procedural and clarifying changes that did not result in a fiscal impact.

The Out Years

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 6621 (as amended by House “A”)*****AN ACT CONCERNING ASSORTED REVISIONS AND ADDITIONS
TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES.**

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§ 14 — SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Adds additional members to each school's safe school climate committee; prohibits student members of the committee from participating in any activity that may compromise a student's confidentiality

§ 15 — STATEWIDE VIRTUAL SCHOOL PLAN

Requires SDE to develop a plan for a grade K-12 statewide virtual school

§ 16 — ACTING SUPERINTENDENTS

Allows a one-time probationary period extension for acting superintendents who were unable to complete certification or training programs during the past two school years

BACKGROUND

COMMITTEE ACTION

SUMMARY

This bill requires a number of actions related to social-emotional learning, including assessing students for social-emotional learning, developing a statewide social-emotional learning strategy, and developing social-emotional learning standards. The bill includes provisions on social-emotional learning and teacher professional development and school resource officer training. It also requires the state law regarding bullying in school to be reviewed for possible changes and modifies the membership of safe school climate committees.

The bill also makes various unrelated changes in the education

statutes about (1) the topics for which a board of education can be petitioned to hold a public hearing, (2) in-school vision screening equipment, (3) a special education services and funding task force, (4) a plan for a statewide virtual school, and (5) acting superintendents' probationary periods.

*House Amendment "A" adds provisions about social-emotional learning and training (§§ 4-11), the School Paraeducator Advisory Council (§§ 12 & 13), safe school climate committee membership (§ 14), a statewide virtual school plan (§ 15), and acting superintendents' probationary periods (§ 16). The amendment also changes the membership of the new special education task force, adjusts its reporting deadline, and adds to and clarifies the scope of its study (§ 3).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2021, except where noted otherwise.

§ 1 — PETITIONED BOARD OF EDUCATION HEARINGS

Narrows the topics for which a board of education can be petitioned to hold a public hearing

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

Specifies permissible equipment for conducting in-school vision screenings

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

Establishes a 15-member task force to study special education services and funding

The bill establishes a 15-member task force to study the provision of special education services and special education funding during the 2016-17 through 2019-20 school years.

Study Scope

The task force's study must examine at least 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, 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;
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 in these amounts per year; and
5. the criteria and way school districts are identifying students requiring special education and related services, including whether districts are overidentifying or underidentifying these students and the associated causes and reasons.

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 the bill's passage, 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 | Special Education Equity for Kids of Connecticut (SEEK) representative Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) representative Parent or guardian of a public school student receiving special education services |
| Senate president pro tempore | Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents representative Connecticut Education Association (CEA) representative Parent or guardian of a public school student receiving special education services |
| House majority leader | American Federation of Teachers – Connecticut (AFT) representative Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC) representative |
| Senate majority leader | Connecticut Council of Administrators of Special Education representative RESC Alliance representative |
| House minority leader | Connecticut Association of School Administrators (CASA) representative School and State Finance Project representative |
| Senate minority leader | Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) representative Connecticut Association of School Business Officials (CASBO) representative |
| N/A | Education commissioner, or |

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| | commissioner's designee |
|--|-------------------------|

Leadership, Meetings, and Staff

The bill requires the House speaker and Senate president pro tempore to select the task force co-chairpersons from among the task force members. The co-chairs must schedule the first meeting within 60 days after the bill's passage. 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, 2022. The task force terminates on the day it submits the report or January 1, 2022, whichever is later.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 4 — SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING ASSESSMENT FOR STUDENTS

Requires each board of education to administer a social-emotional learning assessment to students for the upcoming school year and allows them to administer these assessments in the following years; requires parents and guardians to be given prior notice of the assessment and grant permission before the assessment can be administered

The bill requires each local and regional board of education to administer, for the 2021-2022 school year, a social-emotional learning assessment to students. Boards can choose between (1) an SDE-provided social-emotional learning assessment or (2) another social-emotional learning assessment or mental health and resiliency screening. Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, the bill allows boards to administer either of these assessments.

It also requires SDE, beginning with the 2021-2022 school year, upon request, to provide to boards and assist them in administering a social-emotional learning assessment to students as provided under the bill.

Under the bill, parents or guardians must (1) receive prior written notice of the upcoming assessment and (2) grant permission before a student can be given the screening.

§ 5 — SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORT STRATEGY

Requires the development of a statewide social-emotional support strategy to provide support and assistance to boards of education; specifies items to be included in the strategy

The bill requires the Social Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative (“SEL collaborative”) (see BACKGROUND), in consultation with several state agencies, to design a statewide social-emotional support strategy to provide support and assistance to local and regional boards of education for mental health, social-emotional support, behavioral support, trauma support, and special education programs and services.

The strategy must include recommendations on:

1. training, recruiting, and deploying mental health and social-emotional support staff;
2. providing resources for school districts for hiring mental health and social-emotional support staff;
3. assisting boards in the development and implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs in accordance with statutory guidelines;
4. building on school and community efforts that support student mental health and well-being, such as community school models, family resource centers, health clinics, child care available from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., and year-round use of school buildings;
5. developing or enhancing support networks for mental health and trauma support services through interagency agreements, local action plans, and model programs;
6. improving the knowledge and skill of educators and other school personnel to develop social-emotional learning and restorative practices competencies and capacities;
7. creating opportunities for educators to collaborate, share support, and problem solve through team planning time and

- professional learning communities;
8. providing resources to engage parents and families to support the development of student social and emotional growth at home and in the community; and
 9. providing opportunities for families to discuss topics relating to social-emotional learning, restorative practices, resiliency, and ways to ensure racial equity in schools.

For the strategy, the SEL collaborative must consult with the departments of Education, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Children and Families, and Public Health, and the Office of Early Childhood. It may also consult with the national Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning to implement these provisions.

§ 6 — SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING STANDARDS

Requires SDE to develop, by October 1, 2022, student social-emotional learning standards for grades 4 through 12, inclusive; defines social-emotional learning

The bill requires SDE to develop, by October 1, 2022, student social-emotional learning standards for grades 4 through 12, inclusive (SBE has already adopted standards for pre-K through grade 3). The standards must be designed for a multitiered system of support that is culturally relevant and responsive, emphasizes school connectedness, and includes restorative practices. The bill requires SDE to make the standards available on its website.

For use in developing these standards, the bill defines “social-emotional learning” as the process through which children and adults achieve emotional intelligence through the competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

§ 7 — WORKING GROUP TO STUDY THE SCHOOL BULLYING STATUTE

Requires the SEL collaborative to convene a working group to (1) study the state school bullying statutes and make legislative recommendations and (2) provide technical support

to local school districts regarding adoption of the Connecticut Association of Schools' Connecticut Model School Climate Policy

The bill requires the SEL collaborative to convene a working group to do the following:

1. study the state laws defining school bullying and cyberbullying, requiring safe school climate plans, and specifying steps that must be taken in response to bullying;
2. make legislative recommendations regarding these laws, including restorative practices in safe school climate plans, and statewide adoption of the National School Climate Standards; and
3. provide technical support to local school districts regarding adoption of the Connecticut Association of Schools' Connecticut Model School Climate Policy.

The bill permits the SEL collaborative to consult with or include as members of the working group representatives from the national Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 8 — SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS (SRO) AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL TRAINING

Requires all SRO memos of understanding (MOUs) between boards of education and local law enforcement agencies entered into on and after July 1, 2021 to require SROs to complete any social-emotional learning training provided to teachers and administrators as part of professional development

The bill requires, on and after July 1, 2021, all SRO memos of understanding entered into, extended, updated, or amended between boards of education and local law enforcement agencies to require SROs to complete any separate training specifically related to social-emotional learning and restorative practices provided to teachers and administrators as part of professional development. The training must be completed while officers are performing their duties as SROs and while they are assigned to be at the school.

By law, any school district that assigns an SRO to a school under its jurisdiction must enter into an MOU with the local law enforcement agency regarding the role and responsibility of the officer.

§§ 9-11 — PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL TRAINING

Integrates social-emotional learning into various aspects of professional development for certified employees; adds social-emotional learning to teacher in-service training

The bill makes the following changes regarding professional development for teachers and other certified school employees such as administrators and counselors:

1. requires social-emotional learning and restorative practices to be integrated throughout teacher professional development and in-service training,
2. requires local school districts to include student social-emotional learning and restorative practices in their professional development plans, and
3. requires local districts to add the integration of social-emotional learning and restorative practices into professional development as part of the district's statement of educational goals.

By law, school districts are required to provide 18 hours of professional development training a year to each teacher at no cost to the teacher.

The bill also adds the principles and practices of social-emotional learning and restorative practices to the list of topics that must be included in the required in-service training that all teachers receive by law.

§§ 12 & 13 — SCHOOL PARAEDUCATOR ADVISORY COUNCIL

Changes the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council's name to the School Paraeducator Advisory Council; requires the council to study issues related to this field and develop paraeducator career development pathway proposals and report the study and proposals to the Education Committee

The bill changes the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council's name to the School Paraeducator Advisory Council. It also requires the council to conduct a study addressing issues related to this field and develop paraeducator career development pathway proposals. Paraeducators are school staff who assist teachers in the classroom and are not certified as professional teachers.

The council must submit the study and proposals, along with any recommendations for legislation, to the Education Committee.

Study

By January 1, 2022, the council must conduct a study concerning the following:

1. minimum employment standards, including pay rates, health care coverage, retirement benefits, and professional development for paraeducators that focus on maximizing the success of paraeducators in the classroom;
2. safety issues for paraeducators who work with students who have behavioral issues, including the availability of appropriate safety equipment at each school;
3. issues related to assigning substitute teaching duties to paraeducators, including emergency situations when a paraeducator is asked to serve as a substitute teacher; and
4. issues related to the duties of paraeducators who work with students who have individualized education programs (IEPs).

Career and Professional Development Proposals

By January 1, 2022, the bill requires the council to develop proposals for the creation of a pathway for continued paraeducator career and professional development, including:

1. paraeducator certificate and apprenticeship programs that offer course credits that apply to transferrable associate degree

- programs;
2. associate degree programs that (a) build upon and do not duplicate the courses and competencies of paraeducator certificate programs, (b) incorporate field experiences, (c) are aligned with the standards and competencies for teachers, and (d) are transferrable to a bachelor's degree in education and teacher certification programs; and
 3. bachelor's degree programs that lead to teacher certification that build upon and do not duplicate the courses and competencies of transferrable associate degrees.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage for the study and career proposal provisions.

§ 14 — SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Adds additional members to each school's safe school climate committee; prohibits student members of the committee from participating in any activity that may compromise a student's confidentiality

The bill adds additional members to each school's safe school climate committee. Under the state's anti-bullying law, each school must have a safe school climate committee to address issues related to bullying in schools.

Beginning with the 2021-2022 school year, the bill requires each committee to include (1) at least one teacher, appointed by the teachers' union; (2) medical and mental health staff assigned to the school; and (3) in the case of a committee at a high school, at least one student from the high school who is selected by the students from the school in a manner the school principal determines.

The bill specifies that student members of the committee cannot participate in any activity that may compromise the confidentiality of a student, including the committee's specific duties to (1) receive copies of completed reports following bullying investigations; (2) identify and address patterns of bullying among students in the school; and (3)

implement the school security and safety plan regarding the collection, evaluation, and reporting of information relating to disturbing or threatening behavior that may not meet the definition of bullying. Existing law provides the same prohibition for parents or guardians serving on the committees.

Student members can participate in other committee duties such as reviewing and amending school bullying policies and making recommendations regarding the school district's safe school climate plan.

§ 15 — STATEWIDE VIRTUAL SCHOOL PLAN

Requires SDE to develop a plan for a grade K-12 statewide virtual school

The bill requires SDE to develop a plan to create and implement a statewide virtual school that provides virtual learning instruction for grades kindergarten to 12 through one or more Internet-based software platforms. The department must submit the plan, along with any recommendations for related legislation, to the Education Committee by February 1, 2022.

Under the bill, this virtual school must:

1. be maintained by and under the direction and control of the State Board of Education (SBE);
2. provide at least 180 days of actual school sessions and 900 hours of actual school work for grades kindergarten to 12, so long as no more than seven hours of actual school work in any school day count toward the school year's required total;
3. offer rigorous coursework and a curriculum that is (a) aligned with SBE-approved curriculum guidelines and (b) in accordance with the SBE-adopted statewide subject matter content standards;
4. grant a diploma to any enrolled student who has satisfactorily completed the high school graduation requirements under state

law; and

- 5. be created with consideration for (a) best practices in virtual learning, (b) technological capabilities of students throughout Connecticut, and (c) equity.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 16 — ACTING SUPERINTENDENTS

Allows a one-time probationary period extension for acting superintendents who were unable to complete certification or training programs during the past two school years

The bill allows the education commissioner to grant a one-time extension to any appointed acting superintendent’s probationary period if, during the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, he or she was unable to (1) become properly certified or (2) successfully complete an SBE-approved school leadership program. Under the bill, this extension applies to the probationary period for the 2021-22 school year.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

BACKGROUND

SEL Collaborative

The 33-member collaborative was created by statute and is tasked with a number of duties related to social-emotional learning and safe school climate efforts (PA 19-166). The collaborative is chaired by the executive director of the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity and a member selected from its membership.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 38 Nay 0 (03/22/2021)