

# Education Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-945

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT  
**Title:** OF EDUCATION.

**Vote Date:** 3/15/2021

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/3/2021

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Education Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill puts in place the technical changes suggested by the State Department of Education.

Section 1: Requires that transition services be written into IEPs starting at age 14.

Sections 2-3: Change the requirements for certification of bilingual and resident teachers.

Sections 4-6: Edits and removes certain background check requirements.

Section 7: Allows SDE, through the Atty. General to bring a suit against an organization that misused state funds.

Sections 8: 10-12: Resolves contradictory language and removes obsolete language and requirements.

Section 9: Requires that a PPT be held prior to enrolling a special education student in a technical high school.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

### **Charlene Russel-Tucker, Deputy Commissioner, State Department of Education:**

Section 2 will help to address current areas of shortage. Section 6 changes to background checks for charter management employees will allow the statutes to reflect the system used by the FBI. Section 7 was recommended by the Auditor of Public Accounts following the

closure of the Path Academy. The meeting required by Section 9 will address the student's transition and ensure that their IEP reflects the supports and services that they require. Other sections edit and remove unnecessary language bring statutes into line with current practices.

**Sarah Healy Eagan, Acting Child Advocate, Office of the Child Advocate**: OCA strongly supports Section 1 of this bill, as transition planning is an urgent need for children with disabilities.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Maria Morelli-Wolfe, Attorney, Greater Hartford Legal Aid**: GHLA, as well as Connecticut Legal Services and New Haven Legal Assistance, supports Section 1's efforts to lower the age for transition services to be written into IEPs to match the age for autistic students.

**Andrew Feinstein, Attorney, Special Education Equity for Kids in Connecticut**  
**John Flanders, Board of Directors, Special Education Equity for Kids in Connecticut**  
Public Act 19-49, passed in 2019, already lowered the age for transition services to be written into IEPs to 14 for autistic students. Section 1 of this bill will not only clarify the law for autistic students but expand it to all students with disabilities. Section 9 will help address discrimination against students with disabilities, but it does not address the statutory misdirection of 10-76q, which gives the state board of education authority beyond their capacity and jurisdiction.

**Gale Heath, Administrative Associate, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc.**

**Orlando Rodriguez, Research and Policy Development Specialist, Connecticut Education Association**

**Daisy Torres, President-Elect, Connecticut Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents**

The new requirements in Section 2 of this bill would eliminate expensive and time-consuming assessments of proficiency without lowering standards. It will also help address shortages of bilingual teachers. CEA also recommends that this legislation go further than Section 7 to hold charter schools accountable for misuse of funds and mistreatment of students.

**Steven Hegedus, President, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education-CT Chapter**: Sections 2 and 3 of this bill would help expand the pool of people interested in becoming a teacher, particularly in terms of addressing the shortages of bilingual educators.

**Marie DeSanto Schweitzer, Council and Research Analyst, House Republican Office**  
**Win Evarts, Executive Director, The Arc Connecticut**

**Kathryn Scheinberg Meyer, Senior Staff Attorney, Medical Legal Partnership Project at Yale Child Study Center**

Section 9 of this bill will ensure that the needs of students with IEPs are being met. It will put these students in the position that all students should be in, having the right education programs and courses of study for them put in place prior to their enrollment. This will address the discrimination that has kept children out of the technical education and career system.

**Ed Leavy, President, State Vocational Federation of Teachers:** This bill is a helpful first step in establishing a PPT process for special education students in technical high schools, but the responsibility of decision making is unclear and seems to belong to the sending district. This sparks several safety concerns, as sending superintendents may not understand the situation in technical high schools, and my offload students simply for financial reasons.

**David Lenihan, Director of Government Affairs, Connecticut Association of School Business Officials:** They support this bill and ask that it include revisions to 10-51d (2), to allow regional school districts to deposit up to 2% of the annual district budget into a reserve fund for capital and nonrecurring expenditures, as they were overlooked for this policy in 2019.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

There are no sources of opposition for this bill.

**Reported by: Dallas Emerle**

**Date: 3/16/2021**