



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 6556

January Session, 2021



**AN ACT ADDRESSING ISSUES CREATED BY THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC ON PUBLIC EDUCATION IN CONNECTICUT.**

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) As used in this section:

2 (1) "Learning loss" means any specific or general loss of knowledge
3 and skills, or to reversals in academic progress due to extended gaps or
4 discontinuities in a student's education related to the COVID-19
5 pandemic; and

6 (2) "COVID-19" means the respiratory disease designated by the
7 World Health Organization on February 11, 2020, as coronavirus 2019,
8 and any related mutation thereof recognized by the World Health
9 Organization as a communicable respiratory disease.

10 (b) For the school years commencing July 1, 2020, to July 1, 2022,
11 inclusive, the Department of Education shall collect and evaluate
12 student performance data on the state-wide mastery examination,
13 administered pursuant to section 10-14n of the general statutes, for the
14 purpose of identifying and measuring the existence and severity of
15 learning loss and student disengagement in public schools as a result of
16 the COVID-19 pandemic. Such evaluation shall include an examination
17 of which students are most impacted by learning loss and student

18 disengagement, where such students are attending school, and the
19 nature and severity of the learning loss.

20 (c) Not later than October 1, 2021, the department shall develop
21 learning loss and student disengagement mitigation strategies for use
22 by local and regional boards of education. Such strategies shall include,
23 but need not be limited to, in-school interventions and opportunities for
24 small group instruction, tutoring services for individual or small groups
25 of students, expanded afterschool and summer academic instruction
26 and enrichment programs, and community-based learning pods. Any
27 such strategy shall include periodic assessments to track student
28 academic progress and to make any necessary changes to the provision
29 of such strategy based on the results of such periodic assessments.

30 (d) The department shall provide resources and technical assistance
31 to local and regional boards of education to extend the school day or
32 school year for the purpose of increasing student learning time and
33 addressing the immediate academic needs of students who have
34 experienced learning loss. Such resources shall include, but need not be
35 limited to, technical support to analyze and determine how to
36 restructure the school day or school year, matching funds for additional
37 school personnel, and partnering with the exclusive bargaining
38 representative for certified teachers chosen pursuant to section 10-153b
39 of the general statutes to negotiate the parameters of such extended
40 school day or school year.

41 (e) Not later than July 1, 2021, the department shall define "student
42 engagement" for purposes of mitigating learning loss and student
43 disengagement and improving academic growth and school
44 connectedness.

45 (f) Not later than January 1, 2022, and annually thereafter until
46 January 1, 2024, the department shall submit a state-wide learning loss
47 and student disengagement report to the joint standing committee of the
48 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education,
49 in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

50 Sec. 2. (*Effective from passage*) For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2022,
51 and June 30, 2023, each local or regional board of education for an
52 alliance district, as defined in section 10-262u of the general statutes,
53 shall offer the summer learning program described in section 3 of this
54 act in order to mitigate student learning loss, as defined in section 1 of
55 this act, and student disengagement.

56 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Department of
57 Education, in consultation with the after school committee established
58 pursuant to section 10-16v of the general statutes, may, within available
59 appropriations, administer a grant program to provide grants to local
60 and regional boards of education, municipalities and not-for-profit
61 organizations that are exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of
62 the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or any subsequent corresponding
63 internal revenue code of the United States, as amended from time to
64 time, for summer learning programs that provide direct services and for
65 entities that provide support to summer learning programs. For
66 purposes of this section, "summer learning program" means a program
67 that (1) provides a minimum of two hundred forty hours of educational,
68 enrichment and recreational activities during the summer recess period
69 for public schools and includes small group instruction in literacy and
70 math for children in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, and (2)
71 has a parental involvement component.

72 (b) (1) Applications for grants pursuant to subsection (a) of this
73 section shall be filed biennially with the Commissioner of Education at
74 such time and in such manner as the commissioner prescribes. As part
75 of the application, an applicant shall submit a plan for the expenditure
76 of grant funds.

77 (2) Eligibility for grants pursuant to this section shall be determined
78 for a two-year period and shall be based on the applicant's plan for
79 expenditure of grant funds. Prior to the payment of funds to the grant
80 recipient for the second year of the grant, the grant recipient shall report
81 to the Department of Education on performance outcomes of the
82 program and file an expenditure report pursuant to subsection (f) of this

83 section. The report concerning performance outcomes shall include, but
84 need not be limited to, measurements of the impact on student
85 achievement, including grade-level reading ability and the behavior of
86 student participants.

87 (c) The Department of Education and the after school committee
88 established pursuant to section 10-16v of the general statutes shall
89 develop and apply an appropriate evaluation process to measure the
90 effectiveness of the grant program established pursuant to this section.

91 (d) For purposes of carrying out the provisions of this section, the
92 Department of Education may accept funds from private sources and
93 from any state agency that is a member of the after school committee
94 established pursuant to section 10-16v of the general statutes.

95 (e) The Department of Education shall, in collaboration with regional
96 educational service centers, support grant recipients by (1) monitoring
97 and evaluating programs and activities, (2) conducting a comprehensive
98 evaluation of the effectiveness of programs and implementing risk
99 assessments, (3) providing technical assistance and training to eligible
100 applicants, and (4) ensuring program activities are aligned with state
101 academic standards. The department may retain up to seven and one-
102 half per cent of the amount appropriated for the grant program for
103 purposes of this subsection.

104 (f) Grant recipients shall file expenditure reports with the
105 Commissioner of Education in accordance with subdivision (2) of
106 subsection (b) of this section and at such other times and in such manner
107 as the commissioner prescribes. Grant recipients shall refund (1) any
108 unexpended amounts at the close of the program for which the grant
109 was awarded, and (2) any amounts not expended in accordance with
110 the approved grant application. Any unexpended funds appropriated
111 for purposes of this section shall not lapse at the end of the fiscal year
112 but shall be available for expenditure under this section during the next
113 succeeding fiscal year.

114 (g) Not later than March 15, 2023, and biennially thereafter, the
115 Department of Education shall report, in accordance with the provisions
116 of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee
117 of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to
118 education on performance outcomes of recipients of grants under this
119 section. The report shall include, but need not be limited to,
120 measurements of the impact on student achievement, including grade-
121 level reading ability, the social-emotional learning and behavior of
122 student participants, and the mitigation of learning loss, as defined in
123 section 1 of this act.

124 Sec. 4. Subsection (e) of section 10-16x of the general statutes is
125 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from*
126 *passage*):

127 (e) [The Department of Education shall provide grant recipients with
128 technical assistance, evaluation, program monitoring, professional
129 development and accreditation support.] The Department of Education
130 shall, in collaboration with regional educational service centers, support
131 grant recipients by (1) monitoring and evaluating programs and
132 activities, (2) conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the
133 effectiveness of programs and implementing risk assessments, (3)
134 providing technical assistance and training to eligible applicants, and (4)
135 ensuring program activities are aligned with state academic standards.
136 The department may retain up to [four] seven and one-half per cent of
137 the amount appropriated for the grant program for purposes of this
138 subsection.

139 Sec. 5. Subsection (a) of section 10-145 of the general statutes is
140 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from*
141 *passage*):

142 (a) No teacher, supervisor, administrator, special service staff
143 member or school superintendent, except as provided for in section 10-
144 157, shall be employed in any of the schools of any local or regional
145 board of education unless such person possesses an appropriate state

146 certificate, nor shall any such person be entitled to any salary unless
 147 such person can produce such certificate dated prior to or on the first
 148 day of employment, except as provided for in section 10-157; provided
 149 nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prevent the board of
 150 education from prescribing qualifications additional to those prescribed
 151 by the regulations of the State Board of Education and provided nothing
 152 in this subsection shall be construed to prevent any local or regional
 153 board of education from contracting with a licensed drivers' school
 154 approved by the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles for the behind-the-
 155 wheel instruction of a driver instruction course, to be given by driving
 156 instructors licensed by the Department of Motor Vehicles. No person
 157 shall be employed in any of the schools of any local or regional board of
 158 education as a substitute teacher unless such person (1) holds a
 159 bachelor's degree, provided the Commissioner of Education may waive
 160 such requirement for good cause upon the request of a superintendent
 161 of schools, except for the school years commencing July 1, 2020, and July
 162 1, 2021, (A) holds at least an associate degree if such person will be in
 163 the same assignment for more than ten school days, or (B) has obtained
 164 a high school diploma or its equivalent if such person will be in the same
 165 assignment for ten or fewer school days, and (2) is on a list maintained
 166 by the local or regional board of education pursuant to subsection (f) of
 167 section 10-222c.

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| This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections: | | |
| Section 1 | <i>from passage</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> | 10-16x(e) |
| Sec. 5 | <i>from passage</i> | 10-145(a) |

ED *Joint Favorable Subst. C/R* APP