



# Senate

General Assembly

**File No. 551**

January Session, 2023

Substitute Senate Bill No. 1

*Senate, April 13, 2023*

The Committee on Education reported through SEN. MCCRORY, D. of the 2nd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

## ***AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSPARENCY IN EDUCATION.***

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2023*) (a) Not later than January 1,  
2 2024, and annually thereafter, the Department of Education shall  
3 conduct a review of each chart of accounts for the previous fiscal year  
4 submitted pursuant to section 10-227 of the general statutes, as amended  
5 by this act. Following the review of each such chart of accounts, the  
6 department shall prepare a report for each local or regional board of  
7 education that includes school district financial information for the  
8 following categories: (1) Expense function, (2) expense object, (3)  
9 education type, (4) pre-k flag, (5) allocation, and (6) funding source.  
10 Within each such category, such financial information shall be  
11 disaggregated by each education financial system code utilized by the  
12 department as part of its education financial system.

13 (b) The department shall make the chart of accounts and report of  
14 such chart of accounts for each local or regional board of education  
15 available on its Internet web site.

16 Sec. 2. Section 10-227 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
17 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

18 [Each board of education shall cause the superintendent to make  
19 returns not later than September first of each year to the Commissioner  
20 of Education of the receipts, expenditures and statistics, as prescribed  
21 by the commissioner, provided each such board may submit revisions  
22 to the returns in such form and with such documentation as required by  
23 the commissioner no later than December thirty-first of each year  
24 following the September submission. Such reports or returns required]  
25 Not later than September first of each year, each board of education shall  
26 cause the superintendent to make returns of the receipts, expenditures  
27 and statistics of such board for the previous fiscal year by filing the chart  
28 of accounts described in section 10-10c, as amended by this act, with the  
29 Commissioner of Education. Each such board may submit revisions to  
30 its chart of accounts not later than December thirty-first of each year  
31 following the September submission. Such chart of accounts shall be  
32 [made] filed in accordance with the instructions furnished by the  
33 commissioner, shall be certified no later than December thirty-first of  
34 each year by the independent public accountant selected pursuant to  
35 section 7-392 for the purpose of auditing municipal accounts, and shall  
36 be subject to Department of Education verification. If the [returns and  
37 statistics] chart of accounts and revisions called for by said  
38 commissioner are not [sent] filed on or before the days specified in this  
39 section or if the [returns are] chart of accounts is not certified as required  
40 by the commissioner on or before December thirty-first, each local and  
41 regional board of education required by law to [make separate returns]  
42 file the chart of accounts, whose [returns and statistics] chart of accounts  
43 or revisions are delayed until after those days, shall forfeit of the total  
44 sum which is paid for such board of education from the State Treasurer  
45 an amount to be determined by the State Board of Education, which  
46 amount shall be not less than one thousand dollars nor more than ten  
47 thousand dollars. The amount so forfeited shall be withheld from a  
48 subsequent grant payment as determined by the commissioner.  
49 [Notwithstanding the penalty provision of this section, the  
50 Commissioner of Education may waive said forfeiture for good cause.]

51 Sec. 3. Section 10-10c of the general statutes is repealed and the  
52 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

53 (a) The Department of Education shall develop and implement a  
54 uniform system of accounting for school revenues and expenditures.  
55 Such uniform system of accounting shall include a chart of accounts to  
56 be used at the school and district level. Such chart of accounts shall  
57 include, but not be limited to, all amounts and sources of revenue and  
58 donations of cash and real or personal property in the aggregate totaling  
59 five hundred dollars or more, including federal impact aid, received by  
60 a local or regional board of education, regional educational service  
61 center, charter school or charter management organization on behalf of  
62 a school district or individual school. Select measures shall be required  
63 at the individual school level, as determined by the department. The  
64 department shall make such chart of accounts available on its Internet  
65 web site.

66 (b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, [2015] 2024, and each fiscal year  
67 thereafter, each local or regional board of education, regional  
68 educational service center and state charter school shall implement such  
69 uniform system of accounting by completing and filing annual financial  
70 reports with the department using the chart of accounts and meet the  
71 provisions of section 10-227, as amended by this act.

72 (c) The Office of Policy and Management may annually audit the  
73 financial reports submitted pursuant to subsection (b) of this section for  
74 any local or regional board of education, regional educational service  
75 center or state charter school.

76 (d) Not later than July 1, [2013] 2023, the Department of Education  
77 shall submit the chart of accounts described in subsection (a) of this  
78 section to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having  
79 cognizance of matters relating to education and appropriations and the  
80 budgets of state agencies, in accordance with the provisions of section  
81 11-4a.

82 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2023*) On and after July 1, 2023, the

83 Department of Education shall annually offer a training program to  
84 newly elected members of local and regional boards of education. Such  
85 training program shall be developed by the department, and include,  
86 but not be limited to, the role and responsibilities of a board member,  
87 the duties and obligations of a board of education and school district  
88 budgeting and education finance.

89 Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2023*) On and after July 1, 2023, any  
90 person who has been elected to a local or regional board of education  
91 for the first time shall complete, at a time and in a manner prescribed by  
92 the Department of Education, the training program for newly elected  
93 members of local and regional boards of education, as described in  
94 section 4 of this act. Each such member shall complete such training  
95 program not later than one year after assuming office.

96 Sec. 6. Subsection (i) of section 10-145a of the general statutes is  
97 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
98 *2023*):

99 (i) On and after July 1, [2016] 2023, any program of teacher  
100 preparation leading to professional certification shall require, as part of  
101 the curriculum, clinical experience, field experience or student teaching  
102 experience in a classroom during four semesters of such program of  
103 teacher preparation. [Such clinical experience, field experience or  
104 student teaching experience shall occur: (1) In a school district that has  
105 been categorized by the Department of Education as District Reference  
106 Group A, B, C, D or E, and (2) in a school district that has been  
107 categorized by the department as District Reference Group F, G, H or I.]  
108 Such clinical experience, field experience or student teaching experience  
109 may include a cooperating teacher serving as a mentor to student  
110 teachers, provided such cooperating teacher has received a performance  
111 evaluation designation of exemplary or proficient, pursuant to section  
112 10-151b, for the prior school year.

113 Sec. 7. Subsections (a) to (c), inclusive, of section 10-262u of the  
114 general statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
115 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2023*):

116 (a) As used in this section and section 10-262i:

117 (1) "Alliance district" means a school district for a town that (A) is  
118 among the towns with the [thirty-three] lowest accountability index  
119 scores [, as calculated] and so designated by the [Department]  
120 Commissioner of Education, or (B) was previously designated as an  
121 alliance district by the Commissioner of Education [for the fiscal years  
122 ending June 30, 2013, to June 30, 2022, inclusive] on or before July 1,  
123 2023.

124 (2) "Accountability index" has the same meaning as provided in  
125 section 10-223e.

126 (3) "Mastery test data of record" has the same meaning as provided  
127 in section 10-262f.

128 (4) "Educational reform district" means an alliance district that is  
129 among the ten lowest accountability index scores when all towns are  
130 ranked highest to lowest in accountability index scores.

131 (b) (1) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, the Commissioner of  
132 Education shall designate thirty school districts as alliance districts.  
133 [Any school district designated as an alliance district shall be so  
134 designated for a period of five years. On or before June 30, 2016, the  
135 Department of Education shall determine if there are any additional  
136 alliance districts.]

137 (2) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2018, the commissioner shall  
138 designate thirty-three school districts as alliance districts. [Any school  
139 district designated as an alliance district shall be so designated for a  
140 period of five years.]

141 (3) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, the commissioner shall  
142 designate thirty-six school districts as alliance districts. [Any school  
143 district designated as an alliance district shall be so designated for a  
144 period of five years.]

145 (4) On and after July 1, 2023, the commissioner may designate

146 additional school districts as alliance districts.

147 (c) (1) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, and each fiscal year  
148 thereafter, the Comptroller shall withhold from any town that [(A)] was  
149 designated as an alliance district (A) pursuant to subdivision (2) of  
150 subsection (b) of this section any increase in funds received over the  
151 amount the town received for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012,  
152 pursuant to subsection (a) of section 10-262i, [and (B) was designated as  
153 an alliance district] (B) for the first time pursuant to subdivision (3) of  
154 subsection (b) of this section, any increase in funds received over the  
155 amount the town received for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022,  
156 pursuant to subsection (a) of section 10-262i, or (C) pursuant to  
157 subdivision (4) of subsection (b) of this section any increase in funds  
158 received over the amount the town received for the fiscal year prior to  
159 such designation as an alliance district pursuant to subsection (a) of  
160 section 10-262i. The Comptroller shall transfer such funds to the  
161 Commissioner of Education.

162 (2) Upon receipt of an application pursuant to subsection (d) of this  
163 section or section 10-156gg, the Commissioner of Education may pay  
164 such funds to the town designated as an alliance district and such town  
165 shall pay all such funds to the local or regional board of education for  
166 such town on the condition that such funds shall be expended in  
167 accordance with (A) the plan described in subsection (d) of this section,  
168 (B) the minority candidate certification, retention or residency year  
169 program pursuant to section 10-156gg, (C) the family resource center  
170 program, pursuant to section 10-4o, to establish a family resource center  
171 in each elementary school under the jurisdiction of such board, (D) the  
172 provisions of subsection (c) of section 10-262i, and [(D)] (E) any  
173 guidelines developed by the State Board of Education for such funds.  
174 Such funds shall be used to improve student achievement and recruit  
175 and retain minority teachers in such alliance district and to offset any  
176 other local education costs approved by the commissioner.

177 Sec. 8. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2023*) (a) As used in this section:

178 (1) "Alliance district" has the same meaning as provided in section 10-

179 262u of the general statutes, as amended by this act;

180 (2) "Private entity" means any individual, corporation, general  
181 partnership, limited partnership, limited liability partnership, joint  
182 venture, nonprofit organization or other business entity;

183 (3) "Public-private partnership" means the relationship established  
184 between the local or regional board of education for a town designated  
185 as an alliance district, a community college and a private entity for the  
186 purpose of implementing a pathways in technology early college high  
187 school program; and

188 (4) "Pathways in technology early college high school program"  
189 means a program of instruction in which students in grades nine to  
190 twelve, inclusive, complete high school and college-level coursework  
191 while simultaneously engaging in industry-guided workforce  
192 development.

193 (b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, and each fiscal year  
194 thereafter, the Department of Education shall annually issue a request  
195 for proposals to local and regional boards of education for towns  
196 designated as alliance districts for the establishment of a new public-  
197 private partnership or the enhancement of an existing pathways in  
198 technology early college high school program. The department shall  
199 review such proposals and award a grant to two such boards for the  
200 costs associated with the establishment of a new public-private  
201 partnership or enhancement of a pathways in technology early college  
202 high school program.

203 Sec. 9. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2023*) No person shall sell or offer for  
204 sale to any local or regional board of education, or in any public school,  
205 any food product in which the name and branding on the packaging  
206 that is available at retail in the general market place is the same or  
207 similar to the name and branding on the packaging for sale in a public  
208 school, but in which the nutritional value per portion or ingredients in  
209 such food product deviate from the same or similarly named and  
210 branded food product that is for sale in a public school.

211 Sec. 10. (*Effective July 1, 2023*) (a) For the fiscal years ending June 30,  
 212 2024, to June 30, 2026, inclusive, the Department of Education shall  
 213 administer a wholesome school meals pilot program that awards a grant  
 214 to an alliance district, as defined in section 10-262u of the general  
 215 statutes, as amended by this act, for the purpose of embedding a  
 216 professional chef in such alliance district to assist school meal programs  
 217 in building the capacity of food service staff, improving school meal  
 218 quality, increasing diner satisfaction, streamlining operations and  
 219 establishing a financially viable school meal program. The department  
 220 shall partner with an organization that specializes in the placement of  
 221 chefs for the purposes described in this subsection.

222 (b) Not later than October 1, 2023, a local or regional board of  
 223 education for a town designated as an alliance district may apply to the  
 224 department, in a form and manner prescribed by the department, for a  
 225 grant under this section.

226 (c) The department shall review each application submitted under  
 227 subsection (b) of this section and award five grants under this section.  
 228 Each grant recipient shall receive an annual grant of one hundred fifty  
 229 thousand dollars in each year of the pilot program. Such grant shall be  
 230 expended for the purposes described in subsection (a) of this section.

231 (d) Not later than January 1, 2027, the department shall submit a  
 232 report on the wholesome school meals pilot program to the joint  
 233 standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
 234 matters relating to education and appropriations, in accordance with the  
 235 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	10-227
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	10-10c
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	New section
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	New section
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	10-145a(i)



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Sec. 7	July 1, 2023	10-262u(a) to (c)
Sec. 8	July 1, 2023	New section
Sec. 9	July 1, 2023	New section
Sec. 10	July 1, 2023	New section

**Statement of Legislative Commissioners:**

In Section 1(a), "school district" was changed to "local or regional board of education", for consistency; in Section 8(b), "of a new public-private partnership" was added, for clarity; in Section 9, "per portion" was added, for clarity.

**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.

**OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:**

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 24 \$	FY 25 \$
Education, Dept.	GF - Cost	See Below	See Below

Note: GF=General Fund

**Municipal Impact:**

Municipalities	Effect	FY 24 \$	FY 25 \$
Local and Regional School Districts	STATE MANDATE <sup>1</sup> - Cost	Potential	Potential
Local and Regional School Districts	Revenue Gain	Potential	Potential

**Explanation**

The bill results in costs to the State Department of Education (SDE) by implementing several new initiatives. The bill also results in potential costs and potential revenue gain to local and regional school districts by making changes to the Alliance District program. These changes are described below.

**Sections 1 to 3** result in potential one-time costs to local and regional school districts. The bill requires SDE to develop and local and regional school districts to use a modified uniform chart of accounts when reporting financial information.

To the extent that the modified uniform chart of accounts requires

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<sup>1</sup> State mandate is defined in Sec. 2-32b(2) of the Connecticut General Statutes, "state mandate" means any state initiated constitutional, statutory or executive action that requires a local government to establish, expand or modify its activities in such a way as to necessitate additional expenditures from local revenues.

changes in the financial software used by SDE and local and regional districts for tracking and reporting such information, both SDE and districts could incur one-time costs associated with updating their software. If the modified chart of accounts requires a substantial redevelopment of a district's financial system, the costs incurred by the bill could be significant.

**Sections 4 and 5** require the State Department of Education to conduct trainings for newly elected members of local and regional boards of education, and requires the newly elected members to attend such training.

Depending on how many newly elected officials receive this training, SDE may incur annual costs anticipated to be less than \$20,000 beginning in FY 24 associated with hiring a consultant to conduct the training.

**Section 6** makes a technical change and has no fiscal impact.

**Section 7** removes the cap, beginning in FY 24, on the number of Alliance Districts and allows SDE to designate additional Alliance Districts at its discretion. This section also removes the five-year limit on the current Alliance District designations, ensuring that current Alliance Districts retain the designation in future years. The impact of these changes depends on: (1) whether SDE selects additional Alliance Districts and if so, how many; (2) whether those towns are considered overfunded by the ECS formula; and (3) the affected towns' levels of property wealth.

Alliance Districts are held harmless from any reductions in their Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grants that they may otherwise receive formulaically due to overfunding.<sup>2</sup> They also receive the highest level of

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<sup>2</sup> Eleven of the 36 Alliance Districts are currently affected by the hold harmless provision. In addition to this benefit, Alliance Districts also: (1) receive the ECS funding level that is the highest of the prior year, FY 17, or the formulaic amount, and (2) along with Priority School Districts, receive a minimum state aid percentage of 10% under the ECS formula (compared to 1% for all other towns).

reimbursement for certain tax-exempt property through the Tiered PILOT grant, regardless of property wealth. Designation as an Alliance District additionally causes a portion of a town's ECS entitlement to be contingent on SDE approval of a plan regarding how the district will spend the portion.

If SDE selects additional Alliance Districts that are considered overfunded under ECS, or that do not have low levels of property wealth, then the positive impacts to the towns may be significant. Impacts would begin in FY 24 or whenever additional districts are designated. Due to the scope of the ECS and Tiered PILOT grants, any impacts on the formulaic appropriations are expected to be minimal.

The bill also requires Alliance Districts to establish a Family Resource Center (FRC) in each elementary school. The cost, and funding sources, of FRCs varies by district. In Hartford, the cost is approximately \$500,000 in FY 23, and that cost is entirely covered by SDE's Family Resource Center grant to the City.<sup>3</sup> In Bristol, the cost is partially covered by a \$200,000 FRC grant, and partially covered by Title I funding and private contributions.

The bill requires Alliance District funds (a portion of the ECS entitlement) to be used for FRCs, which reduces the amount available for academic interventions. Depending on the cost of the FRCs, the amount of other funding a district is able to obtain for its FRCs, and the amount of Alliance District funding a district receives, Alliance District funding may not cover the cost of the FRCs.

**Section 8** results in an indeterminate annual cost to SDE to provide grants beginning in FY 24 to two districts designated as Alliance Districts that choose to provide or enhance a pathways to technology early college high school program. The bill does not provide funding for these grants, or specify any grant amounts.

**Section 9** requires name brand food sold in schools to have the same

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<sup>3</sup> \$5.8 million was appropriated to SDE for Family Resource Centers that schools currently operate across the state in FY 23.

nutritional value as similar name brand food sold outside of schools. This has no fiscal impact, as it is not anticipated to increase the cost of operating any school meals program.

**Section 10** results in costs to SDE estimated to be \$1 million per year from FY 24 to FY 26. The bill establishes a wholesome school meals pilot program for Alliance Districts and requires SDE to provide annual grants of \$150,000 for each of three years (FY 24 through FY 26) to five Alliance Districts for participation in the program. The grants result in an annual cost of \$750,000. There is an additional cost of \$250,000 per year to partner with an organization that can assist with program operations (\$50,000 per participant). As it is anticipated that SDE will partner with an organization that can assist with program operations, it is expected that the department will not require additional personnel to administer the program.

### ***The Out Years***

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

## OLR Bill Analysis

### sSB 1

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSPARENCY IN EDUCATION.***

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##### [§§ 1-3 — REVIEW OF CHART OF ACCOUNTS](#)

Requires SDE, starting by January 1, 2024, to annually review of each school district’s chart of accounts for the previous fiscal year; requires SDE to prepare a report for each school board using the chart of accounts that includes information in certain categories; requires SDE to submit the chart of accounts to the Education and Appropriations committees by July 1, 2023

##### [§§ 4 & 5 — NEW BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER REQUIRED TRAINING](#)

Requires SDE to provide, and newly elected school board members to take, training on the responsibilities and obligations of being a school board member

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Prohibits the sale of food in school if the name or brand on the packaging is similar to that of a product sold outside of school but the nutritional value is different

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**§ 10 — WHOLESOME SCHOOL MEALS PILOT PROGRAM**

Requires SDE to administer a wholesome school meals pilot program to award five grants to alliance districts to embed a professional chef in the district to assist school meal programs

**BACKGROUND****§§ 1-3 — REVIEW OF CHART OF ACCOUNTS**

*Requires SDE, starting by January 1, 2024, to annually review of each school district's chart of accounts for the previous fiscal year; requires SDE to prepare a report for each school board using the chart of accounts that includes information in certain categories; requires SDE to submit the chart of accounts to the Education and Appropriations committees by July 1, 2023*

The bill requires the State Department of Education (SDE), starting by January 1, 2024, to annually review each local or regional board of education's (i.e., "school board") chart of accounts for the previous fiscal year, which current law generally requires each school board to file with SDE (see below). Following the review, SDE must prepare for each school board a report that includes the school district's financial information for the following categories:

1. expense function (e.g., instruction, support services, operation and maintenance, transportation, etc.);
2. expense object (e.g., salaries, benefits, purchased services, supplies, etc.);
3. education type;
4. pre-k flag (presumably, the pre-k code used by SDE's Education Financial System);
5. allocation; and
6. funding source.

Within each category, the financial information must be disaggregated by each SDE education financial system code.

The bill requires the report and the chart of accounts for each school

board to be made available on the SDE website.

By law, SDE must develop and implement a uniform system of accounting for school revenues and expenditures that includes a chart of accounts for use at the school and school district level. The chart of accounts generally must include all amounts and sources of revenue and cash or real property donations, that in aggregate total \$500 or more, that a board of education, regional education service center (RESC), charter school, or charter management organization receives.

Current law also requires school boards, RESCs, and state charter schools to implement this uniform system by filing annual financial reports. The bill sets a new deadline by requiring that the first annual financial reports apply to FY 24, essentially waiving the requirement for FY 23 reports. It also makes a corresponding change requiring SDE to submit the chart of accounts to the Education and Appropriations committees by July 1, 2023.

The bill changes references in the related law to specify that the receipts, expenditures, and statistics are submitted by filing the chart of accounts. And as under current law, the bill allows any revisions of the information to be submitted by December 31, but it also specifies that this must be done using the chart of accounts. The bill also eliminates a provision that the education commissioner can waive the penalty (between \$1,000 and \$10,000) for good cause.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except the provision on SDE's annual review of each school board's chart of accounts and reports for each school district is effective July 1, 2023.

#### **§§ 4 & 5 — NEW BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER REQUIRED TRAINING**

*Requires SDE to provide, and newly elected school board members to take, training on the responsibilities and obligations of being a school board member*

The bill requires SDE to develop a training program that at least includes the role and responsibilities of a school board member, the duties and obligations of a board of education, and school district



budgeting and education finance. SDE must begin offering the annual training by July 1, 2023, and first-time elected school board members must complete the training at a time and in a way SDE determines, but within one year after assuming office.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

## § 6 — FIELD EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENT TEACHERS

*Removes a requirement that student teacher field experience be divided between different groups of school districts categorized by DRG status*

By law, teacher preparation programs must require students in their programs to perform clinical experience, field experience, or student teaching during four semesters of the program. Current law requires this experience to be performed in two separate categories of school districts. The categories are determined by District Reference Groups (DRGs), which is a method of sorting school districts by lettered groups “A” through “I,” with “A” being the group of school districts that is the top performing academically and “I” being the lowest.

The bill eliminates the requirement that the clinical, field, or student teaching experience occur in two categories: one from the DRGs in the category that includes from “A” to “E” and one from the DRGs “F” to “I.”

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

## § 7 — ALLIANCE DISTRICTS

*Modifies the alliance district program by, among other things, removing the limit on new districts and specifically allowing alliance funds to be used on new family resource centers*

Under current law, the education commissioner has designated 36 alliance districts for five years, beginning with FY 23. The designation applies to (1) the 33 school districts with the lowest accountability index (AI) scores and (2) three districts that were designated in previous years but may not now be among the 33 with the lowest scores (see *Background*).

The bill removes a limit on the number of alliance districts by allowing the education commissioner to designate additional school

districts as alliance districts without a limit. The bill also removes the five-year term on the designation.

The alliance program generally requires the comptroller to withhold from an alliance district town any increase in education cost sharing (ECS) funds that exceeds the amount the town received in 2012 or, for districts designated last year, the amount of the ECS funds over the FY 22 amount. The comptroller transfers the money to the education commissioner to withhold until she approves the district's alliance district application and plan to improve academic performance. The bill makes a conforming change for newly designated alliance districts, requiring the comptroller to withhold any increase in ECS funds received over the amount the town received in the fiscal year prior to the alliance designation.

The bill also expands the items that alliance funding can be spent on to include establishing a family resource center in each elementary school under the school board's jurisdiction. Family resource centers provide child care services, remedial educational and literacy services, families-in-training programs, and support services to parents receiving temporary family assistance or other parents in need.

By law, alliance districts must spend their alliance funds (1) according to the plan submitted with the application; (2) on the minority candidate certification, retention, and residency program; (3) on ECS spending requirements; and (4) for any other items allowed under SDE guidelines.

### ***Background — Accountability Index Scores***

By law, the "accountability index score" for a school district or an individual school is the score resulting from multiple weighted measures that (1) include the mastery test scores (i.e., the performance index score) and high school graduation rates and (2) may include academic growth over time, attendance and chronic absenteeism, postsecondary education and career readiness, enrollment in and graduation from higher education institutions and postsecondary

education programs, civics and arts education, and physical fitness (CGS § 10-223e(a)).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

### **§ 8 — PATHWAYS IN TECHNOLOGY EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM GRANT**

*Requires SDE to create a grant for new or expanded pathways in technology early college high school programs in alliance districts*

The bill requires SDE to create a grant for new or expanded pathways in technology early college high school programs in alliance districts. Under the bill a “pathways in technology early college high school program” is an instructional program in which students in grades nine to 12, inclusive, complete high school and college-level coursework while also engaging in industry-guided workforce development.

Starting with FY 2024, SDE must annually issue a request for proposals to alliance district school boards to (1) enhance an existing pathways in technology early college high school program or (2) establish a new public-private partnership (i.e., a relationship between an alliance district board of education, a community college, and a private entity to create a pathways in technology early college high school program).

The department must review the proposals and award a grant to two school boards for the costs associated with establishing a new public-private partnership or enhancing a pathway in technology early college high school program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

### **§ 9 — LIMITS ON SALE OF CERTAIN FOODS IN SCHOOL**

*Prohibits the sale of food in school if the name or brand on the packaging is similar to that of a product sold outside of school but the nutritional value is different*

The bill prohibits the sale of food in a public school (or to a board of education) if the name or branding on the food packaging offered in the school is the same or similar as on the packaging offered outside of the school in the general market place, but the nutritional value is different.

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EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

## **§ 10 — WHOLESOME SCHOOL MEALS PILOT PROGRAM**

*Requires SDE to administer a wholesome school meals pilot program to award five grants to alliance districts to embed a professional chef in the district to assist school meal programs*

For FYs 24 to 26, the bill requires SDE to administer a wholesome school meals pilot program that awards five grants to embed a professional chef in five alliance districts. The chef must help school meal programs build food service staff capacity, improve meal quality, increase diner satisfaction, streamline operations, and establish a financially viable school meal program.

The bill requires SDE to partner with an organization that specializes in placing chefs for the pilot program's purposes.

Under the bill, an alliance district may apply for the grant by October 1, 2023, on an application the department sets.

### ***Application Review and Grant Awards***

The bill requires SDE to review each application and award five grants. Each grant recipient must receive an annual \$150,000 grant in each year of the pilot. The grant must be spent on the wholesome meals pilot program.

### ***Report to the Legislature***

By January 1, 2027, SDE must report on the school meals pilot program to the Education and Appropriations committees.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Related Bill***

sHB 5003, favorably reported out by the Education Committee, revises the alliance district program by lowering the number designated from 36 to 20 and renames them educational reform districts.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 28 Nay 16 (03/24/2023)