

OFFICE OF FISCAL ANALYSIS

Legislative Office Building, Room 5200
Hartford, CT 06106 ◊ (860) 240-0200
<http://www.cga.ct.gov/ofa>

HB-6762

AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOLS.

As Amended by House "A" (LCO 9075)

House Calendar No.: 330

Senate Calendar No.: 591

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

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

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 24 \$	FY 25 \$
Local and Regional School Districts	Cost	See Below	See Below

Explanation

The bill makes a variety of changes to education statutes and results in the fiscal impacts described below by section.

Section 1 results in a cost to the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) in FY 25 of \$15.5 million to increase the full-time School Readiness per child cost up to \$10,500 and supports approximately 9,830 seats.

Section 2 results in a potential cost to OEC to the extent that the Commissioner waives Care4Kids eligibility requirements for certain at-risk populations who may not otherwise qualify. For reference, the average monthly per child cost under Care4Kids is approximately \$788.

Section 3 addresses the administration of epinephrine by child care providers, which results in no fiscal impact.

Primary Analyst: DD
Contributing Analyst(s):

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Section 4 makes technical changes, which results in no fiscal impact.

Section 5 results in a cost in FY 24 and FY 25 to the State Department of Education to (1) perform a one-time audit of the administration of certain assessments and exam preparation time, and (2) issue recommendations regarding time limits on the assessments. It is anticipated that SDE will need to hire a consultant to perform the audit and to develop the plan, which can result in significant costs depending on the scope of the audit and the plan.

To the extent that SDE is able to obtain Federal funding to conduct the audit, such costs would be at least partially offset. The extent to which costs are offset would depend on the amount of Federal funding SDE is able to obtain.

Section 6 establishes a Connecticut Civics Education and Media Literacy Task Force to study strategies to improve civic engagement and instruction on civics. This results in no fiscal impact to the state because the task force has the expertise to meet the requirements of the bill.

Section 7 results in a potential minimal cost to local and regional school districts beginning in FY 26. The section expands the required program of study for public schools by specifying that social studies must include civics and media literacy.

Social studies is a required part of the public school program of study under current law. To the extent that a district's social studies curriculum does not currently include civics and media literacy, there is a potential cost associated with purchasing materials to cover the topic, if free materials are unavailable. Any cost will vary based on the number of materials that must be purchased.

Section 8 has no fiscal impact. It requires the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System and the Office of Workforce Strategy to study and report on various technical career related issues. It is anticipated that both agencies have the staff and expertise necessary to complete the requirement.

Section 9 exempts federal COVID-related education funding from use in the calculation of the Excess Cost grant. This would result in a cost to SDE if the Excess Cost grant is fully funded beginning in FY 24. The grant has not been fully funded since FY 09.

The impact to districts will vary significantly based on the per-pupil level of federal COVID-related education funding each district received. Districts with relatively high levels of federal COVID-related education funding will have a larger positive impact on their Excess Cost reimbursements (all other factors held constant). Other districts may receive less than they would have, without this provision.

Sections 10 and 11 make technical and clarifying changes which have no fiscal impact.

Section 12 allows dual instruction when it is deemed necessary by a student's individualized education plan (IEP) or Section 504 plan, or as part of an intradistrict or interdistrict cooperative learning program, beginning in FY 24. There is a cost, anticipated to be minimal, associated with any equipment a district would need to purchase to facilitate dual instruction (i.e., extra computers or monitors).

Section 13 expands the requirements of an existing task force studying special education funding in the state. This has no fiscal impact as it is not anticipated to increase the cost of completing the study.

Section 14 prohibits charter school student applications from inquiring about such students' need for or receipt of special education. This has no fiscal impact, as the provision is not anticipated to impact the level of grant funding for charter schools.

Section 15 requires SDE to make available on its Web site information regarding certain complaint investigations. This has no fiscal impact as SDE has sufficient resources to post information online.

Section 16 prohibits local and regional school districts from disciplining employees who make recommendations concerning the provision of services to students with Section 504 plans. This has no

fiscal impact.

Sections 17 and 18 result in a minimal cost beginning in FY 25 and potential costs annually to local and regional boards of education by requiring the State Board of Education (SBE) to create an English learners bill of rights, specifying several of the rights that SBE must include in the document, and requiring annual distribution of the bill of rights.

Costs to districts will vary based on the final document created by SBE and the degree to which districts are required to establish new services or expand services they currently provide.

Districts are currently required by Federal and state law to meet many of the rights specified in the amendment. For example, under Federal law, translation services must be provided by school districts upon parent request. To the extent that the bill requires school districts to provide translation services regardless of whether a parent requested them, there would be a cost.

Translation services typically cost between \$125 and \$175 per hour with a two-hour minimum. Costs to districts will vary based on number of instances translation services are provided without parent request, and whether translators, Internet websites, or other types of translation services are used. As the bill does not specify a date by which the bill of rights must be completed, any such costs could begin in FY 24 or FY 25.

The amendment requires districts to begin annually providing copies of the bill of rights to eligible students and their parents in FY 25, which will result in annual minimal printing costs to districts.

Sections 19 to 36 make technical and conforming changes that have no fiscal impact.

House "A" strikes the underlying bill and results in the above identified fiscal impact.

The Out Years

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

The preceding Fiscal Impact statement is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for the purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does 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.