

OFFICE OF FISCAL ANALYSIS

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

sHB-6883

AN ACT CONCERNING STUDENTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 24 \$	FY 25 \$
Department of Developmental Services	GF - Cost	Up to \$26.5 million	Up to \$26.8 million
Education, Dept.	GF - Cost	See Below	See Below
Aging and Disability Services, Dept.	GF - Cost	Up to \$7.7 million	Up to \$7.7 million
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits ¹	GF - Cost	Up to \$4.3 million	Up to \$4.5 million

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 24 \$	FY 25 \$
Local and Regional School Districts	STATE MANDATE ² - Cost	Potential	Potential

Explanation

The bill results in costs annually beginning in FY 24 to the State Department of Education (SDE), Department of Developmental Services (DDS), Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) and local

¹The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 42.82% of payroll in FY 24.

² 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.

and regional school districts. It makes several changes regarding the provision of services to special education students that are aging out of the public school system. The impacts associated with these changes are described below.

Sections 1 and 2 result in an annual costs of approximately \$307,000 beginning in FY 24 for SDE to hire at least two staff members for the new Office of Transition Services (OTS), as required by the bill. It is anticipated that SDE will need to hire an Associate Education Consultant and an Education Manager for total annual costs of \$215,000 in salaries and \$92,000 in fringe benefits.

Section 3 requires SDE to develop, and regional educational service centers (RESCs) to provide, a training program for transition coordinators and staff employed by local and regional school districts. It is anticipated that the staff hired for OTS, as required by the bill, would develop the training.

Depending on the extent of the training that SDE prescribes, the RESCs may incur costs to provide it to local and regional school districts at no cost to the districts. Any cost is anticipated to be minimal, associated with the purchase of any materials.

Section 4 requires each local and regional board of education to appoint a transition coordinator and requires the coordinator to provide transition resources to parents of students receiving special education services. This has no fiscal impact, as the bill allows for such person to be an existing employee.

Sections 5 through 9 extend the obligation of local and regional school districts to provide special education services to students that are age 22. This conforms statute to existing judicial directive.

Section 10 makes a technical change and has no fiscal impact.

Section 11 requires SDE to establish a competitive grant program to assist local and regional school districts and RESCs in developing and providing transition services. The bill does not specify any provisions of

the grant award or provide funding.

Section 12 requires the State Education Resource Center to study each transition program provided by a local and regional school district and RESC and produce a report by January 1, 2024. SERC could incur costs of up to \$300,000 to hire a consultant to conduct the study.

Section 13 and 14 result in costs annually beginning in FY 24 to local and regional school districts to (1) provide a translator for a planning and placement team meeting if needed, and (2) provide translated materials, if needed. Translation services typically cost between \$125-\$175 per hour, with a two-hour minimum. As an illustration, the Hartford school district typically has over 1,000 planning and placement team meetings per year. If 25%³ of those meetings required a translator, at the required two-hour minimum, the cost to the district would vary from \$62,500 to \$87,500 annually.

Section 15 requires the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to assist any student whose planning and placement team finds them potentially eligible for DDS services to find and maintain summer employment resulting in a potential cost of up to \$19.3 million in FY 24 and \$19.4 million in FY 25. There are approximately 1,820 students currently eligible for DDS services who are age 16 to 21. It is not known how many eligible and potentially eligible students will participate in the new DDS summer employment services required by the bill. If all eligible students participate, DDS will need to hire nine transition advisor positions (\$83,000 average salary in FY 24) at a cost of \$747,000 in FY 24 and \$765,000 in FY 25, plus State Comptroller fringe benefit costs of \$319,865 in FY 24 and \$327,573 in FY 25 to staff the program. Additionally, there could be a per student cost of approximately \$10,200 for program supports and transportation. To the extent that DDS provides these services to the 1,820 eligible students participate, there would be additional costs of \$18.6 million in FY 24 and FY 25.

³ This is the percentage of Hartford's October 1, 2022 ECS student count classified as English Learners.

Section 16 requires DDS and the Bureau of Rehabilitative Services (BRS) in the Department of Aging and Disability Services to employ sufficient staff to give students that may be eligible for agency services case management and benefit counseling.

DDS has identified 3,540 individuals under the age of 22 who are eligible for DDS services. Currently, about 250 of those have an assigned case manager resulting in an additional 3,290 individuals requiring DDS case management under the bill. DDS will need to hire up to 72 Case Managers and 7 Case Management Supervisors at a cost of \$7.2 million in FY 24 and \$7.4 million in FY 25, plus State Comptroller fringe benefit costs of \$3.1 million in FY 24 and \$3.2 million in FY 25 to provide the additional case management.

BRS currently has capacity to support 2,750 students with benefit counseling. Based on the projected number of students (5,500 to 6,000) which BRS anticipates engaging with as a result of the bill, the Bureau could need to double its current capacity. BRS will need to hire up to 22 Vocational Rehabilitation counselors and 3 Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisors at a cost of \$1.6 million in FY 24 and \$ 1.7 million in FY 25, plus fringe benefit costs of \$726,000 in FY 24 and \$744,000 in FY 25. Additionally, there could be a per student cost of approximately \$2,535 for program supports. To the extent that BRS provides these supports to 2,750 additional students, there would be additional costs of approximately \$7 million in FY 24 and FY 25.

Section 17 requires the Auditors of Public Accounts to study the level of cooperation between state agencies that provide transition services resulting in no fiscal impact because the agency has the expertise to meet the requirements of the bill.

Sections 18 and 19 result in annual costs of approximately \$307,000 annually beginning in FY 24 for SDE to hire at least two staff members for the Office of Mediation Services. It is anticipated that SDE will need to hire an Associate Education Consultant and an Education Manager for a total annual cost of \$215,000 in salaries and \$92,000 in fringe benefits.

Section 20 makes procedural changes to the hearing and mediation processes and requires SDE to publish information about mediation on its Web site. This results in no fiscal impact as it is anticipated SDE has the resources to fulfill this requirement.

Section 21 requires SDE to annually conduct audits beginning in FY 24 of special education programs in randomly selected school districts. This has no fiscal impact, as it is anticipated that SDE has the resources to complete the requirement.

Section 22 expands training that must be offered by local and regional school districts to its educator staff to include laws regarding PPTs and Section 504 plans. This has no fiscal impact as it is anticipated that districts can complete this requirement with existing resources.

The Out Years

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