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## OLR Bill Analysis

### sSB 5

## **AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL RESOURCES.**

### TABLE OF CONTENTS:

#### SUMMARY

##### § 1 — EXCESS COST GRANT

*Requires the state, starting with FY 25, to fully reimburse school districts for any costs for special education in excess of four and a half times their net current expenditures per pupil; repeals the existing language creating a tiered reimbursement structure used when grant amounts exceed the appropriation; decouples two other special education grants from the tiered reimbursement approach*

##### § 2 — ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

*Requires SDE to select and utilize an existing AI tool for educators and students to use in the classroom; requires the tool to be made available to school boards by July 1, 2026*

##### § 3 — AI TRAINING

*Requires SDE, in consultation with the Connecticut Commission for Education Technology, to develop a professional learning program for educators and students on proper classroom use of AI*

##### § 4 — SCHOOL MAPPING DATA GRANT

*Creates a new DESPP-administered school mapping data grant for local school districts beginning in FY 25; allows school boards to apply for a grant provided school mapping data will be provided to the school board and appropriate public safety agencies at no cost beyond the initial cost of producing the data; requires DESPP to develop eligibility criteria, application forms, and deadlines by October 1, 2024*

##### § 5 — SOCIAL MEDIA CURRICULUM PILOT PROGRAM

*Requires SDE, in collaboration with RESCs, to implement a pilot curriculum program in 50 schools that explores the impact of social media to positively impact student relationships and school climate*

##### § 6 — INCLUDING MEDICAID CHILDREN IN CARE 4 KIDS

*Expands eligibility for the Care 4 Kids program to include parents or guardians of children who are enrolled in Medicaid and adds them to the priority intake and eligibility list*

##### § 7 — SUBMITTING SCHOOL HVAC MAINTENANCE RECORDS TO DAS

*Requires each school board to submit its HVAC systems maintenance records to DAS any time records have been updated*

## BACKGROUND

### **SUMMARY**

This bill makes various changes to education law. Among other things, it does the following:

1. requires the state, starting with FY 25, to fully reimburse school districts for any special education costs more than four and a half times their net current expenditures per pupil (§ 1);
2. requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to select and utilize an existing artificial intelligence (AI) tool for educators and students to use in the classroom and make it available to school boards by July 1, 2026 (§ 2);
3. requires SDE, in consultation with the Connecticut Commission for Education Technology, to develop a professional learning program for educators and students on proper classroom use of AI (§ 3);
4. creates a new Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP)-administered school mapping data grant for local school districts beginning in FY 25 and requires DESPP to develop eligibility criteria, application forms, and deadlines by October 1, 2024 (§ 4);
5. requires SDE, in collaboration with regional education service centers (RESC), to implement a pilot curriculum program in 50 schools that explores the impact of social media to positively impact student relationships and school climate (§ 5);
6. expands eligibility for the Care 4 Kids program to include parents or guardians of children who are enrolled in Medicaid and adds them to the priority intake and eligibility list (§ 6); and
7. requires each school board to submit records for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system maintenance to

the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) any time records have been updated (§ 7).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024, except the section on school mapping data grants is upon passage.

## **§ 1 — EXCESS COST GRANT**

*Requires the state, starting with FY 25, to fully reimburse school districts for any costs for special education in excess of four and a half times their net current expenditures per pupil; repeals the existing language creating a tiered reimbursement structure used when grant amounts exceed the appropriation; decouples two other special education grants from the tiered reimbursement approach*

This bill requires the state, starting with FY 25, to fully reimburse school districts for any special education costs in excess of four and a half times their net current expenditures per pupil. The bill eliminates the current tiered reimbursement structure that is used to distribute the excess cost grants in any year when the total amount of the grant payable to school districts exceeds the amount of the state appropriation for the grant. It also eliminates language limiting the grants to within available appropriations.

The bill repeals the language that creates a related method of distributing funds that remain after the tiered approach is used.

It also decouples from these distribution methods two smaller special education grants: (1) excess special education costs for state agency-placed students under a temporary custody order (CGS § 10-76d(e)(2)) and (2) excess regular education costs for state-placed children educated at private residential facilities (CGS § 10-253(b)(3)).

### ***Tiered Reimbursement Grants***

Under current law, when the state's fiscal year appropriation for the special education excess cost grant is less than the amount needed to completely fund the payable grants according to the calculation, the law triggers a reduced tiered reimbursement method. This formula groups towns in three tiers depending upon their respective adjusted equalized net grand list per capita (AENGLPC). The formula calculates reduced grants for local boards of education using the three tiers as follows: boards from towns in the groups that have (1) the lowest AENGLPC

receive 91% of their full excess cost grant, (2) a midrange AENGLPC receive 88%, and (3) the highest AENGLPC receive 85%.

The bill repeals this method and the corresponding language that addresses any remaining funds after the tiered method is implemented.

## **§ 2 — ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)**

*Requires SDE to select and utilize an existing AI tool for educators and students to use in the classroom; requires the tool to be made available to school boards by July 1, 2026*

The bill requires SDE, for FY 25, to select and utilize an existing AI tool for educators and students that can be used for classroom instruction and student learning. The tool must comply with laws governing the use of AI, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), the Connecticut student data privacy law (see BACKGROUND), and other laws protecting student data and privacy.

SDE must make the tool available for local or regional boards of education by July 1, 2026 (it's unclear whether this means at no cost to the school boards).

Under the bill, AI means any technology, including, but not limited to, machine learning that uses data to train an algorithm or predictive model to help a computer system or service autonomously perform any task, including visual perception, language processing, or speech recognition, that is normally associated with human intelligence or perception.

## **§ 3 — AI TRAINING**

*Requires SDE, in consultation with the Connecticut Commission for Education Technology, to develop a professional learning program for educators and students on proper classroom use of AI*

The bill requires SDE, in consultation with the Connecticut Commission for Education Technology, to develop a professional learning program for educators and students on proper and safe classroom instruction using AI. The learning program, which must be developed by January 1, 2025, must include, at a minimum, (1) how AI can benefit (a) educators in lesson planning and development and classroom instruction and (b) students in learning, academic

achievement, and workforce development, and (2) the laws governing AI use and the protection of student data and privacy, including, at a minimum, FERPA and Connecticut student data privacy law (see BACKGROUND).

#### **§ 4 — SCHOOL MAPPING DATA GRANT**

*Creates a new DESPP-administered school mapping data grant for local school districts beginning in FY 25; allows school boards to apply for a grant provided school mapping data will be provided to the school board and appropriate public safety agencies at no cost beyond the initial cost of producing the data; requires DESPP to develop eligibility criteria, application forms, and deadlines by October 1, 2024*

The bill creates a new school mapping data grant for local school districts that DESPP will administer beginning in FY 25, within available appropriations. Under the bill, a school board may apply for a grant for services to provide school mapping data for one or more schools under the board's jurisdiction, provided school mapping data will be provided to the school board and appropriate public safety agencies at no cost beyond the initial cost of producing the mapping data, and permanently available to the board and public safety agencies.

Additionally, the bill requires the mapping service to provide data that:

1. is compatible with software platforms of local, state, and federal public safety agencies that provide emergency services to the specific school or schools seeking the grant without requiring the agencies to (a) buy additional software or (b) pay a fee to view or access the data;
2. is compatible with the school or schools' security software platform for which the data is provided without requiring the law enforcement agencies or school board to (a) buy additional software or (b) pay a fee to view or access the data;
3. is in a printable format and, if requested, in a digital file format that can be integrated into interactive mobile platforms in use;
4. is verified for accuracy by the entity producing the data by conducting a walk-through of the school buildings and grounds

- being mapped;
5. is oriented true north and is overlaid with gridded “x” and “y” coordinates;
  6. includes accurate floor plans overlaid on current, verified aerial imagery of the school campus;
  7. contains site-specific labels that match the (a) structure of school buildings, including room labels, hallway names, door and stairwell numbers, and the locations of hazards, utility locations, automated external defibrillators, and trauma kits, and (b) school grounds, including parking areas, athletic fields, surrounding roads, and neighboring properties;
  8. is provided to the school board and the appropriate public safety agencies at no cost beyond the initial cost of producing the mapping data; and
  9. cannot be modified or updated independently without corresponding updates to school mapping data within software platforms used by local, state, and federal public safety agencies that provide emergency services to the specific school.

***Application Forms, Deadlines, and Report to the Legislature***

By October 1, 2024, DESPP must develop program eligibility criteria, application forms, and deadlines and post a description of the grant program that includes the criteria, forms, and deadlines in a conspicuous location on the DESPP website.

By January 1, 2026, and each following year, DESPP must submit a report to the Education and Public Safety committees with information for the preceding calendar year on the number of applications received, the number of grants awarded, and a list of the schools that received school mapping data services pursuant to the grants.

**§ 5 — SOCIAL MEDIA CURRICULUM PILOT PROGRAM**

*Requires SDE, in collaboration with RESCs, to implement a pilot curriculum program in 50 schools that explores the impact of social media to positively impact student relationships and school climate*

The bill requires SDE, in collaboration with RESCs, to implement a pilot program to provide 50 schools in the state with a curriculum for students in grades 6 to 12, inclusive, that explores social media’s impact through various approaches to positively impact student relationships and school climate. The bill requires social media’s impact to be explored through science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

The bill cites existing law, unchanged by the bill, that defines “school climate” as the quality and character of school life that (1) focuses on the quality of the relationships within the school community and (2) is based on patterns of people’s experiences of school life and that reflects the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning, leadership practices, and organizational structures within the school community.

It permits SDE to accept gifts, grants, and donations, including in-kind donations, designated for the implementation of the pilot program under this section.

## **§ 6 — INCLUDING MEDICAID CHILDREN IN CARE 4 KIDS**

*Expands eligibility for the Care 4 Kids program to include parents or guardians of children who are enrolled in Medicaid and adds them to the priority intake and eligibility list*

The bill expands Care 4 Kids program eligibility to parents or guardians of children who are enrolled in Medicaid and adds them to the existing priority intake and eligibility list. Under current law, to be eligible, a family must have a parent or caretaker who is working or attending high school or enrolled or participating in (1) a job training or employment program, (2) a Department of Labor-administered apprenticeship program, (3) an institution of higher education, or (4) one of several other education or career pathways. The bill makes the parents or guardians of a child enrolled in Medicaid eligible without any of the work, job-training, or education requirements.

Under current law, the maximum income level to be eligible for the

Care 4 Kids program is 60% of the state median income (SMI) and income eligibility for Medicaid is 155% of the federal poverty level (FPL). Therefore, on the income criteria, any family that qualified for Medicaid would also be eligible for Care 4 Kids (see BACKGROUND).

Care 4 Kids provides a child care subsidy to eligible parents and caretakers.

## **§ 7 — SUBMITTING SCHOOL HVAC MAINTENANCE RECORDS TO DAS**

*Requires each school board to submit its HVAC systems maintenance records to DAS any time records have been updated*

By law, each school board is required to ensure that its schools' HVAC systems are maintained in accordance with prevailing standards and the boards must maintain records of the HVAC maintenance. The bill requires the boards to update the records and submit them to DAS any time they have been updated after maintenance.

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Student Data Privacy Law***

Connecticut's student data privacy law restricts how website and mobile app operators and consultants who contract with boards of education may process or access student data. It applies to student records and information and student-generated content. Among other things, it requires operators and consultants to use reasonable security practices to safeguard student data and generally prohibits contractors from selling or disclosing student information (CGS §§ 10-234aa- to -234gg).

### ***Selected Annual SMI and FPL Table\****

<b>Family Size</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
100% (FPL)	15,060	20,440	25,820	31,200
150% (FPL)	22,590	30,660	38,730	46,800
200% (FPL)	30,120	40,880	51,640	62,400
50% (SMI)	34,627	45,282	55,937	66,592



250% (FPL)	37,650	51,100	64,550	78,000
60% (SMI)	41,553	54,338	67,124	79,910

\*SMI from CT Department of Social Services, September 2023, and FPL provided for 2024 by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

***Related Bill***

sSB 287, favorably voted out by the Education Committee, makes changes to the school HVAC inspection and evaluation process.

SB 229, favorably voted out by the Public Safety Committee, has the same school mapping grant as section 4.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 43 Nay 1 (03/18/2024)