

# OFFICE OF FISCAL ANALYSIS

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sSB-6

## AN ACT CONCERNING RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS FOR INFANTS, TODDLERS AND DISCONNECTED YOUTHS.

### **OFA Fiscal Note**

#### **State Impact:**

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Treasurer, Debt Serv.	GF - See Below	See Below	See Below
Office of Early Childhood	GF - Cost	At least \$2.2 million	At least \$2 million
Education, Dept.	GF - Potential Cost	See Below	See Below

Note: GF=General Fund

#### **Municipal Impact:**

Municipalities	Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Various Municipalities	Cost	See Below	See Below

#### **Explanation**

**Section 1** results in a potential cost in FY 26 and FY 27 to the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) to the extent that the agency will need to hire new staff positions to administer the Child and Adult Care Food Program, which is currently administered by the State Department of Education (SDE). Based on an analysis of expenditures in CORE CT, it is estimated that SDE manages \$20 million annually in federal funding for program services. Additionally, SDE currently has four positions, with salary costs of \$482,700 associated with this program.<sup>1</sup> Two of these positions, with costs of \$302,000, are funded via the General Fund and

<sup>1</sup> It is unclear if these positions have responsibilities with SDE outside of administering the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

the other two (\$180,700) are federally funded.

Beginning in FY 26, OEC will incur costs if SDE staff and resources are not transferred to OEC to administer and operate the program.

**Section 4** requires SDE to develop guidance relating to the administration of kindergarten preparatory academies by July 1, 2026 (FY 27). While SDE can complete the guidance with existing resources, the costs of implementing the guidance may be significant to SDE and local and regional boards of education.

The guidance produced by SDE will include whether students enrolled in a kindergarten preparatory academy may count as resident students in the ECS formula. If SDE guidance determines that such students will be included in the ECS formula, the subsequent increase in a town's resident student count (for towns that offer a kindergarten academy) may lead to increased ECS costs for SDE and a corresponding revenue gain to local and regional boards of education. Towns' projected FY 26 ECS grants under current law range from \$115 to \$12,294 per student. The cost to SDE and revenue gain to boards of education associated with increased ECS resident students would occur as enrollment increases (as early as FY 27). The extent of these impacts for a town would be dependent on the number of kindergarten academy students and the town's other ECS formula factors. Towns with lower wealth and higher-need student populations would experience a larger revenue gain.

Other components of the guidance prescribed by the bill (e.g., the student-teacher ratio) may impact the cost to a local or regional Board of Education of providing a kindergarten academy. It is estimated that running a PreK program, which would likely be comparable to a kindergarten academy, currently costs a board of education \$3,000 to \$22,000 per student.

**Section 5** expands eligible uses of funding under the Smart Start capital grant, which is funded through General Obligation (GO) bond funds. Future General Fund debt service costs may be incurred or

incurred sooner due to the program's expansion to the degree that it causes authorized GO bond funds to be expended or to be expended more quickly than they otherwise would have been.

As of March 1, 2025, there is an unallocated bond balance of \$45 million for the Smart Start capital grant. The bill does not change GO bond authorizations.

To the extent school districts pursue and are awarded grants under the program expansion, there would be a potential increase in revenue to such districts.

Section 5 also results in a cost to OEC related to 1) increasing operating expense grants from \$5,000 to \$7,000 per child served by the grant, or 2) from \$75,000 to \$105,000 per preschool classroom for a period of five years. The total cost is dependent on the number of grants issued.

**Sections 6 and 7** require municipal youth camps to obtain a license from OEC and extends various licensure requirements including immunizations, medication administration inspections, and criminal background checks to the municipal youth camps. This results in a cost to various municipalities beginning in FY 26 for the license fee and resources to meet the other licensure requirements.<sup>2</sup> Municipalities that do not have municipal youth camps will have no fiscal impact.

OEC would also incur total costs of at least \$1.8 million in FY 26 and FY 27 to create a unit to license municipal youth camps. These costs are driven primarily by new staffing, of which approximately \$1.2 million is for salaries and \$300,000 is for associated fringe benefits. At least \$300,000 is also needed for additional operational costs, including car rentals, fuel, and IT support.

The new full-time positions include at least: 1) one Social Services Program Manager (\$116,635 base salary and \$47,482 in associated fringe

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<sup>2</sup> License fees are \$815 for for-profit camps and \$315 for nonprofit camps. These must be renewed annually.

benefits), 2) two Child Care Licensing Supervisors (\$103,295 base salary and \$42,051 in associated fringe benefits), 3) two Environmental Sanitarian 1s (\$72,552 base salary with \$29,536 in associated fringe benefits), 4) two Processing Technicians (\$63,748 base salary with \$25,952 in associated fringe benefits), and 5) one Secretary 2 (\$63,748 base salary with \$25,952 in associated fringe benefits).

The new part-time positions include at least: 1) two 24-week Environmental Sanitarian 1s, 2) 20 8-week Environmental Sanitarian 1s, and 3) two 8-week Processing Technicians.

**Section 10** results in a cost in FY 26 and FY 27 to OEC of approximately \$208,788 to hire one Associate Research Analyst to collect data and conduct a quarterly review to determine how many children referred to the Birth-to-Three were deemed ineligible, and the reasons for their ineligibility. For reference, the average starting salary is \$148,382 with associated fringe benefits of \$60,406.

**Section 12** results in a cost in FY 26 to OEC of at least \$200,000 to hire a consultant to design, develop, and conduct a study of the Sparkler app metrics outlined in this section.

**Sections 2-3, 8-9, and 11** make technical, clarifying, or conforming changes that do not result in a fiscal impact.

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

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to any bonds issued and future grant awards.