General Assembly **Substitute Bill No. 7076**

January Session, 2025

HB07076ED 032525

AN ACT PROVIDING EDUCATION MANDATE RELIEF.

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

Section 1. Section 10-15c of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

(a) The public schools shall be open to all children five years of age and over who reach age five on or before the first day of September of any school year, and each such child shall have, and shall be so advised by the appropriate school authorities, an equal opportunity to participate in the activities, programs and courses of study offered in such public schools, at such time as the child becomes eligible to participate in such activities, programs and courses of study, without discrimination on account of race, as defined in section 46a-51, color, sex, gender identity or expression, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability; provided a child who has not reached the age of five on or before the first day of September of the school year may be admitted <u>if the local or regional board of education adopts an early admission policy that permits such child to be admitted</u> (1) upon a written request by the parent or guardian of such child to the principal of the school in which such child would be enrolled, and (2) following an assessment of such child, conducted by such principal and an appropriate certified staff member of the school, to ensure that

admitting such child is developmentally appropriate.

(b) Nothing in subsection (a) of this section shall be deemed to amend other provisions of the general statutes with respect to curricula, facilities or extracurricular activities.

Sec. 2. Subdivision (2) of section 10-76a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

(2) "Child" means any person twenty-two years of age or younger. **[**or, for children requiring special education, until such child is graduated from high school or at the end of the school year during which such child reaches age twenty-two, whichever occurs first.**]**

Sec. 3. Subparagraph (C) of subdivision (9) of subsection (a) of section 10-76d of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

(C) Not later than the planning and placement team meeting that occurs approximately two years prior to a child's anticipated graduation from high school or the end of the school year in which a child will reach **[**twenty-two**]** twenty-one years of age, whichever is expected to occur first based on such child's individualized education program, the planning and placement team shall (i) upon the approval of the parent or guardian of such child, or a surrogate parent of such child appointed pursuant to section 10-94g or such child if such child is an emancipated minor or eighteen years of age or older, (I) notify any state agency that provides a program for adults for which such child may be eligible about the potential eligibility of such child, (II) invite a representative from each such agency to attend the planning and placement team meeting for the purpose of establishing contact with and counseling the parent, guardian, surrogate parent or child on the process for the anticipated transfer of services upon such child graduating from high school or upon **[**the end of the school year in which**]** such child **[**reaches**]** reaching twenty-two years of age, whichever is sooner, and (III) permit and facilitate contact and coordination between each such agency and

such parent, guardian, surrogate parent or child for the purpose of easing the process for the transfer of services, (ii) provide such parent, guardian, surrogate parent or child a listing of each program for adults for which such child may be eligible that includes, but is not limited to, (I) a plain language description of such program, (II) eligibility requirements for such program, and (III) deadlines and instructions for applications to such programs, and (iii) assist such parent, guardian, surrogate parent or child in completing an application to any such programs.

Sec. 4. Subsection (b) of section 10-76d of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

(b) In accordance with the regulations of the State Board of Education, each local and regional board of education shall: (1) Provide special education for school-age children requiring special education who are described in subparagraph (A) of subdivision (5) of section 10-76a. The obligation of the school district under this subsection shall terminate when such child is graduated from high school or **[**at the end of the school year during which**]** upon such child **[**reaches**]** reaching age twenty-two, whichever occurs first; and (2) provide special education for children requiring special education who are described in subparagraph (A) or (C) of subdivision (5) of section 10-76a. The State Board of Education shall define the criteria by which each local or regional board of education shall determine whether a given child is eligible for special education pursuant to this subdivision, and such determination shall be made by the board of education when requested by a parent or guardian, or upon referral by a physician, clinic or social worker, provided the parent or guardian so permits. To meet its obligations under this subdivision, each local or regional board of education may, with the approval of the State Board of Education, make agreements with any private school, agency or institution to provide the necessary preschool special education program, provided such private facility has an existing program which adequately meets the special education needs, according to standards established by the State Board

of Education, of the preschool children for whom such local or regional board of education is required to provide such an education and provided such district does not have such an existing program in its public schools. Such private school, agency or institution may be a facility which has not been approved by the Commissioner of Education for special education, provided such private facility is approved by the commissioner as an independent school or licensed by the Office of Early Childhood as a child care center, group child care home or family child care home, as described in section 19a-77, or be both approved and licensed. The State Board of Education shall adopt or update regulations, in accordance with chapter 54, to implement the provisions of this subsection.

Sec. 5. Subsection (b) of section 10-76*ll* of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

(b) On or before July 1, 2015, the State Board of Education shall draft a written bill of rights for parents of children receiving special education services to guarantee that the rights of such parents and children are adequately safeguarded and protected during the provision of special education and related services until such children have graduated from high school or **[**at the end of the school year during which**]** upon such children **[**reach**]** reaching age twenty-two, whichever occurs first, under this chapter. Such bill of rights shall inform parents of: (1) The right to request consideration of the provision of transition services for a child receiving special education services who is eighteen years of age until such child has graduated from high school or **[**at the end of the school year during which**]** upon such child **[**reaches**]** reaching age twenty-two, whichever occurs first, (2) the right to receive transition resources and materials from the department and the local or regional board of education responsible for such child, (3) the requirement that the local or regional board of education responsible for such child shall create a student success plan for each student enrolled in a public school, beginning in grade six, pursuant to subsection (k) of section 10-221a, **[**and**]** (4) the right of such child to receive realistic and specific

postgraduation goals as part of such child's individualized education program, and (5) the right to an opportunity to establish contact with and receive information about and assistance with applying for programs provided by any state agency that provides services in attaining the postgraduation goals in a child's individualized education program, pursuant to subparagraph (C) of subdivision (9) of subsection (a) of section 10-76d, as amended by this act.

Sec. 6. Section 10-95p of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

(a) There is established a division of postsecondary educational programs within the Technical Education and Career System. The division shall administer any postsecondary educational program that (1) was offered at a technical education and career school during the school year commencing July 1, 2016, or (2) is approved by the Technical Education and Career System board.

(b) Any student admitted for enrollment in a postsecondary educational program administered by the division shall have a high school diploma or its equivalent, or have **[**completed the school year in which such student reaches**]** reached twenty-two years of age if such student was receiving special education and related services and did not graduate from high school.

Sec. 7. Subsection (a) of section 10-253 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

(a) Children placed out by the Commissioner of Children and Families or by other agencies or persons, including offices of a government of a federally recognized Native American tribe, private child-caring or child-placing agencies licensed by the Department of Children and Families, and eligible residents of facilities operated by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services or by the Department of Public Health who are eighteen to twenty-one years of age or, for children requiring special education, when such child is

graduated from high school or **[**at the end of the school year during which**]** upon such child **[**reaches**]** reaching age twenty-two, whichever occurs first, shall be entitled to all free school privileges of the school district where they then reside as a result of such placement, except as provided in subdivision (4) of subsection (e) of section 10-76d. Except as provided in subsection (d) of this section and subdivision (4) of subsection (e) of section 10-76d, payment for such education shall be made by the board of education of the school district under whose jurisdiction such child would otherwise be attending school where such a school district is identified.

Sec. 8. Subdivision (3) of subsection (h) of section 10-253 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

(3) In each district, the liaison shall assist the school district, the Court Support Services Division of the Judicial Branch and any relevant educational service providers in ensuring that:

(A) All persons twenty-two years of age or younger in justice system custody are promptly evaluated for eligibility for special education services to be provided until such child is graduated from high school or **[**at the end of the school year during which**]** upon such child **[**reaches**]** reaching age twenty-two, whichever occurs first, pursuant to section 17a-65 and any other applicable law;

(B) Students in justice system custody and returning to the community from justice system custody are promptly enrolled in school pursuant to this section and section 10-186;

(C) Students in justice system custody and returning to the community from justice system custody receive appropriate credit for school work completed in custody, pursuant to this section or section 10-220h;

(D) All relevant school records for students who enter justice system custody and who return to the community from justice system custody

are promptly transferred to the appropriate school district or educational service provider, pursuant to section 10-220h.

Sec. 9. Section 10-226b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

(a) Whenever the State Board of Education finds that racial imbalance exists in a public school, it shall notify in writing the board of education having jurisdiction over said school that such finding has been made, except the State Board of Education shall not notify a board of education of such finding until July 1, **[**2025**]** 2029.

(b) As used in sections 10-226a to 10-226e, inclusive, "racial imbalance" means a condition wherein the proportion of pupils of racial minorities in all of the grades of a public school of the secondary level or below taken together substantially exceeds or falls substantially short of the proportion of such public school pupils in all of the same grades of the school district in which said school is situated taken together.

Sec. 10. Section 10-226c of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

(a) Any board of education receiving notification of the existence of racial imbalance as specified in section 10-226b, as amended by this act, shall forthwith prepare a plan to correct such imbalance and file a copy of said plan with the State Board of Education, except such board of education shall not be required to prepare and file said plan until July 1, **[**2025**]** 2029. Said plan may be limited to addressing the imbalance existing at any school and need not result in a district-wide plan or district-wide pupil reassignment. A school district may request an extension of time in cases in which the number of students causing said imbalance is fewer than five students at a school.

(b) Any plan submitted by the board of education of any town under sections 10-226a to 10-226e, inclusive, shall include any proposed changes in existing school attendance districts, the location of proposed school building sites as related to the problem, any proposed additions

to existing school buildings and all other means proposed for the correction of said racial imbalance. The plan shall include projections of the expected racial composition of all public schools in the district. The plan may include provision for cooperation with other school districts to assist in the correction of racial imbalance.

Sec. 11. Section 10-226d of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

Upon receipt of any plan required under the provisions of subsection (b) of section 10-226c, the State Board of Education shall review said plan. If it determines that the plan is satisfactory, it shall approve the plan and shall provide to the board of education such assistance and services as may be available. The board of education shall submit annual reports on the implementation of the approved plan, as the State Board of Education may require. The State Board of Education shall not take action on any plan received on or after July 1, 2024, until July 1, **[**2025**]** 2029.

Sec. 12. Section 10-234gg of the general statutes is repealed. (*Effective from passage*)

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	*July 1, 2026*	10-15c
Sec. 2	*July 1, 2026*	10-76a(2)
Sec. 3	*July 1, 2026*	10-76d(a)(9)(C)
Sec. 4	*July 1, 2026*	10-76d(b)
Sec. 5	*July 1, 2026*	10-76ll(b)
Sec. 6	*July 1, 2026*	10-95p
Sec. 7	*July 1, 2026*	10-253(a)
Sec. 8	*July 1, 2026*	10-253(h)(3)
Sec. 9	*July 1, 2025*	10-226b
Sec. 10	*July 1, 2025*	10-226c
Sec. 11	*July 1, 2025*	10-226d
Sec. 12	*from passage*	Repealer section

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Section 6(b), "if such student was receiving special education and related services and did not graduate from high school" was added for clarity.

ED *Joint Favorable Subst.*