

Public Health Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5168 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE SECURE TRANSMISSION OF MINOR PATIENT
Title: SAFETY PLANS TO SCHOOLS BY HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.

Vote Date: 3/2/2026

Vote Action: JFS

PH Date: 2/18/2026

File No.: 37

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Public Health Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

To facilitate and support the transition of a minor student from a facility where they received behavioral healthcare treatment back to their school environment, this bill requires a health care provider who prepares a safety plan for a minor who received at least 12 days of inpatient behavioral healthcare treatment, to review the plan with the minor, if appropriate, and to obtain consent from the parent or legal representative of the minor to share the plan with the minor's school. The safety plan would outline coping strategies, activities, and support networks that the student could access to avoid or manage a potential health crisis. The requirement is effective April 1, 2026.

In addition, the plan can be sent by the provider only under the following conditions:

- The provider gets written consent from the minor's parent or legal guardian.
- The information is sent using a secure messaging system in a way that complies with HIPPA.
- School and school districts sign up for an organizational account on a secure system and designate at least one employee to access the account.
- Each school's secure messaging address is given to the commissioner of the State Department of Education (SDE).
- Local boards of education provide guidance to new designated employees on using the secure messaging system.
- Finally, the statewide health information exchange or "Connie", within available appropriations, gives each school or district a secure messaging system organizational account that designated employees may access to receive the safety plans.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

Regarding new designated employees who will be using the secure messaging system, the bill requires local and regional boards of education to provide guidance instead of annual professional development.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA):

CHA supports the goal of this bill which is to improve communication between a facility that provided a minor with inpatient behavioral healthcare treatment and the minor's return to school. If the committee advances this bill, CHA urges that there be no changes from the bill negotiated last year.

Ann Hogan, Senior Government Relations Officer, Yale New Haven Health (YNH):

Yale supports this bill and the language considered last year which requires children's behavioral health providers, after obtaining consent, to prepare a safety plan to be shared with the child's school system once the child returns to school. YNH participated in multiple meetings with stakeholders and the bill's proponent to assure the proposal protected patient privacy and supports federal and state law including Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA). YNH urges the committee to advance the bill with no changes.

Connie Grant, Associate Chief Nursing Officer and Senior Director of Clinical Services, CT Children's Hospital:

Connecticut Children's supports the intent of the bill and suggests that as the committee continues to work on this legislation, the committee consider operational factors related to implementation. School districts vary in staffing and not all schools have a designated professional available to receive and manage safety plans. Connecticut Children's supports continued discussion to consider clinical workflows, privacy protections, family choice and school capacity when advancing this bill.

Fran Rabinowitz, Executive Director, CT Association of Public-School Superintendents (CAPSS):

CAPSS supports this bill which balances student safety with privacy protections, requires informed consent, complies with HIPPA, limits access to designated and trained school professionals and avoids imposing new mandates regarding care standards and disclosure.

David Cusick, Director of Health Services for Magnet Schools and Student Service Programs, Capitol Region Education Council (CREC):

CREC supports this bill and believes it is critical to create a consistent process for receiving discharge information which would strengthen communication between healthcare providers, families and schools. Such plans may also reduce the likelihood of rehospitalization when appropriate supports are in place once the student returns to the school environment.

CT Association of Boards of Education (CABE):

CABE supports the intent of the bill but has two concerns it would urge the committee to consider. In Section 3, CABE believes the term “professional development” is broad and generally refers to more extensive training. CABE urges more clarity on the scope of this requirement. In Section 4, CABE is concerned with the phrase “within available appropriations” as a potentially unfunded mandate as costs and resources are not specified.

Desiree Coleman, School Nurse:

As a school nurse who works directly with students managing both physical and mental health challenges every day, Ms. Coleman is in strong support of this bill. Having access to coping strategies, triggers and recommended interventions, allows a more effective response to early warning signs that could provide consistent support and potentially prevent a mental health crisis. These plans help to improve student safety as well as school attendance. This bill creates a structured and secure process to proactively support our students.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Fran DiFiore and Patricia Phelan, Co-Presidents, CT Federation of School Administrators (CFSA):

Although not in opposition to the substance of this legislation, at this time CFSA does not support this bill because they believe that the state needs a uniform, collaborative, and cost-effective process that would allow local boards of education to implement these state mandates successfully and effectively. As a member of the Education Mandate Review Advisory Council, CFSA is excited and encouraged about conversations the Council has been having with the chairs of the Education Committee to address these challenges.

Reported by: Kathleen Panazza

Date: March 3, 2026