



State of Connecticut  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Commission on Children

Substitute House Bill No. 5657

Substitute House Bill No. 5657

PUBLIC ACT NO. 98-243

AN ACT CONCERNING EARLY READING SUCCESS.

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

Section 1. (NEW) On or before September 1, 1999, each local and regional board of education shall develop and implement a three-year plan to improve the reading skills of students in grades kindergarten to three, inclusive. The plan shall be designed to allow all students to attain reading competency. The plan shall include: (1) The specific instructional methods, strategies and activities that will be used to teach reading; (2) a process for assessing and assisting students who are at risk of failing to learn to read by the end of first grade; (3) periodic evaluations of the reading level of students; (4) additional time for remedial instruction for students who fail to make progress in their reading development or are reading below grade level; (5) in-service training programs on the teaching of reading for elementary school teachers; (6) a process for involving parents in addressing the reading problems of their children, including a requirement to provide information to parents on strategies that can be used at home to improve the child's language development prereading or reading skills and referrals to family literacy programs, as appropriate, that incorporate adult basic education and provide for the promotion of literacy through access to public library services; (7) ongoing data collection and monitoring of program effectiveness; and (8) the establishment of school and public library

partnerships to improve prereading and reading skills.

Sec. 2. Section 23 of public act 97-290 is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof:

(a) THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL AND REGIONAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLANS REQUIRED PURSUANT TO SECTION 1 OF THIS ACT. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADVISE LOCAL AND REGIONAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION ON: (1) METHODS AND STRATEGIES FOR ASSESSING STUDENTS WHO ARE AT RISK OF FAILING TO LEARN TO READ BY THE END OF FIRST GRADE; AND (2) THE DEVELOPMENT OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAMS ON THE TEACHING OF THE READING AND ASSESSMENT OF READING COMPETENCY FOR TEACHERS IN GRADES KINDERGARTEN TO THREE, INCLUSIVE.

[(a)] (b) The State Board of Education shall establish a standard of reading competency for use by local and regional boards of education to measure reading competency for students in grades one to three, inclusive. The standard may be a requirement for a certain score on a standardized test.

[(b) The Commissioner of Education shall report, in accordance with section 11-4a of the general statutes, on such standard to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, by February 1, 1998.]

Sec. 3. (NEW) As used in sections 3 to 6, inclusive, and sections 8 and 9 of this act:

(1) "Priority school district" means a school district described in section 10-266p of the general statutes, as amended; and

(2) "Priority school" means a school in which forty per cent or more of the lunches served are served to students who are eligible for free or reduced price lunches pursuant to federal law and regulations, excluding such a school located in a priority school district.

Sec. 4. (NEW) (a) The Commissioner of Education shall establish, within available appropriations, an early reading success grant program to assist local and regional boards of education for priority school districts and school districts in which priority elementary schools are

located in: (1) Establishing full-day kindergarten programs; (2) reducing class size in grades kindergarten to three, inclusive, to not more than eighteen students; and (3) establishing intensive early intervention reading programs, including after-school and summer programs, for students identified as being at risk of failing to learn to read by the end of first grade and students in grades one to three, inclusive, who are reading below grade level. Eligibility for grants pursuant to this section shall be determined for a five-year period based on a school district's designation as a priority school district or as a school district in which a priority elementary school is located for the initial year of application. In order to receive a grant, an eligible board of education shall submit a plan for the expenditure of grant funds, in accordance with this section, to the Department of Education, at such time and in such manner as the commissioner prescribes. An eligible school district may receive a grant for one or more purposes pursuant to subdivisions (1) to (3), inclusive, of this subsection, provided at least fifty per cent of any grant funds received by such school district are used for programs pursuant to subdivision (3) of this subsection. If the commissioner determines the school district is addressing the issue of early reading intervention sufficiently, the commissioner may allow the school district to set aside a smaller percentage of the funds received pursuant to this section for such programs.

(b) (1) In the case of proposals for full-day kindergarten programs, the plan shall include: (A) Information on the number of full-day kindergarten classes that will be offered initially and the number of children to be enrolled in such classes; (B) how the board anticipates expanding the number of full-day kindergarten programs in future school years; (C) the number of additional teachers needed and any additional equipment needed for purposes of such programs; (D) a description of any proposed school building project that is related to the need for additional space for full-day kindergarten programs, including an analysis of the different options available to

meet such need, such as relocatable classrooms, the division of existing classrooms, an addition to a building or new construction; (E) information on the curriculum for the full-day kindergarten program pursuant to subdivision (2) of this subsection; (F) information on coordination between the full-day kindergarten program and school readiness programs for the purpose of providing before and after school child care for children attending the full-day kindergarten program; and (G) any additional information the commissioner deems relevant.

(2) A full-day kindergarten program that receives funding pursuant to this subsection shall: (A) Include language development and appropriate reading readiness experiences; (B) provide for the assessment of a student's progress; (C) include a professional development component in the teaching of reading and reading readiness and assessment of reading competency for kindergarten teachers; and (D) provide for parental involvement.

(c) (1) In the case of proposals for the reduction of class size in grades kindergarten to three, inclusive, to not more than eighteen students the plan shall include: (A) A time frame for achieving such reduction in class size; (B) information on the class size in such grades at each school at the time of application for the grant and the number of classes to be reduced in size with grant funds; (C) the number of additional teachers needed and any additional equipment needed; (D) a description of any proposed school building project related to the need for additional space for smaller classes, including an analysis of the different options available to meet such need such as relocatable classrooms, the division of existing classrooms, an addition to a building or new construction; (E) an estimate of the costs associated with implementation of the plan; and (F) any additional information the commissioner deems relevant.

(2) If a school district accepts funds pursuant to this subsection, such school district shall limit the class size of classes in which core curriculum is taught in grades kindergarten to three, inclusive, in accordance with its plan

to eighteen or less students, provided students who enroll after October first in any school year are not included for purposes of such count.

(d) In the case of proposals for intensive early intervention reading programs including after-school and summer programs, the plan shall: (1) Provide for a period of time each day of individualized or small group instruction for each student; (2) provide for monitoring of students and follow-up in subsequent grades, documentation of continuous classroom observation of student's reading behaviors and establishment of performance indicators aligned with the state-wide mastery examinations under chapter 163c of the general statutes and other methodologies for assessing reading competencies established by the department pursuant to section 23 of public act 97-290, as amended by this act; (3) include a professional development component for teachers in grades kindergarten to three, inclusive, that emphasizes the teaching of reading and reading readiness and assessment of reading competency; (4) provide for parental involvement and ensure that parents have access to information on strategies that may be used at home to improve prereading or reading skills; (5) provide for data collection and program evaluation; and (6) any additional information the commissioner deems relevant.

(e) (1) The pilot programs established pursuant to section 22 of this act shall be funded from the amount appropriated for purposes of this section. The department shall use ninety per cent of the remaining funds appropriated for purposes of this section for grants to priority school districts. Priority school districts shall receive grants based on their proportional share of the sum of the products obtained by multiplying the number of enrolled kindergarten students in each priority school district for the year prior to the year the grant is to be paid, by the ratio of the average percentage of free and reduced price meals for all severe need schools in such district to the minimum percentage requirement for severe need school eligibility. (2) The department shall use nine per cent of such remaining funds for competitive grants to school districts in which a priority elementary school is located. In awarding

grants to school districts in which priority elementary schools are located, the department shall consider the town wealth, as defined in subdivision (26) of section 10-262f of the general statutes, as amended, of the town in which the school district is located, or in the case of regional school districts, the towns which comprise the regional school district. Grants received by school districts in which priority elementary schools are located shall not exceed one hundred thousand dollars and shall be used for the appropriate purpose at the priority elementary school. (3) The department may retain up to one per cent of such remaining funds for coordination, program evaluation and administration.

(f) No funds received pursuant to this section shall be used to supplant federal, state or local funding to the local or regional boards of education for programs for grades kindergarten to three, inclusive.

(g) Expenditure reports shall be filed with the department as requested by the commissioner. School districts shall refund (1) any unexpended amounts at the close of the program for which the grant is awarded, and (2) any amounts not expended in accordance with the approved grant application.

Sec. 5. (NEW) (a) Each local and regional board of education for a priority school district shall offer a summer reading program, as described in subsection (d) of section 4 of this act, to children enrolled in kindergarten in the schools under its jurisdiction who are determined by their teacher to need additional reading and reading readiness instruction.

(b) For each school year commencing on or after July 1, 1999, each local and regional board of education for a priority school district shall require the schools under its jurisdiction to evaluate the reading level of students enrolled in grades one to three, inclusive, in the middle of the school year and at the end of the school year. If a student is determined to be reading below grade level based on: (1) The middle of the year evaluation, the school shall notify the parents or guardian of the student of such result; and (2) the end of the year evaluation, the school shall develop a personal reading plan for such student.

The personal reading plan shall include measures to improve the student's reading level, such as tutoring, a transitional class, or a summer reading program as described in subsection (d) of section 4 of this act. Promotion of such student from grade to grade shall be based on documented progress in achieving the goals of the personal reading plan or demonstrated reading proficiency commensurate with grade level. If a decision is made to promote a student who is reading below grade level from third to fourth grade, the school principal shall provide written justification for such promotion to the superintendent of schools. Information on the number of such promotions shall be included in the strategic school profile report pursuant to subsection (c) of section 10-220 of the general statutes, as amended. A personal reading plan shall be maintained for a student who is reading below grade level until he is reading at grade level.

Sec. 6. Section 10-285a of the general statutes, as amended by section 22 of public act 97-259 and section 19 of public act 97-290, is amended by adding subsection (h) as follows:

(NEW) (h) Subject to the provisions of section 7 of this act, if an elementary school building project for a school in a priority school district or for a priority school is necessary in order to offer a full-day kindergarten program or to reduce class size pursuant to section 4 of this act, the percentage determined pursuant to this section shall be increased by five percentage points for the portion of the building used primarily for such full-day kindergarten program or such reduced size classes.

Sec. 7. (NEW) In order to be eligible for the percentage increase pursuant to subsection (h) of section 10-285a of the general statutes, as amended by section 6 of this act: (1) The project shall be (A) included in a plan developed pursuant to section 4 of this act, and (B) for a particular full-day kindergarten class or reduced-sized class funded pursuant to section 4 of this act; (2) the local or regional board of education shall present evidence to the Department of Education that the project is the best option for solving the need for additional space and is cost-efficient; and

(3) the project shall meet the requirements established in chapter 173 of the general statutes.

Sec. 8. (NEW) (a) The Commissioner of Education shall establish, within available bond authorizations, a grant program to assist priority school districts in paying for general improvements to school buildings. For purposes of this section "General improvements to school buildings" means work that (1) is generally not eligible for reimbursement pursuant to chapter 173 of the general statutes, and (2) is to (A) replace windows, doors, boilers and other heating and ventilation system components, internal communications systems, lockers, and ceilings including the installation of new drop ceilings, (B) upgrade restrooms including the replacement of fixtures, (C) upgrade and replace lighting, or (D) install security equipment including fencing, provided "general improvements to school buildings" may include work not specified in this subdivision if the school district provides justification for such work acceptable to the Commissioner of Education, but shall not include routine maintenance such as painting, cleaning, equipment repair or other minor repairs or work done at the administrative facilities of a board of education.

(b) Eligibility for grants pursuant to this section shall be determined for a five-year period based on a school district's designation in the initial year of application as a priority school district. Grant awards shall be made annually contingent upon the filing of an application and a satisfactory annual evaluation. School districts shall apply for grants pursuant to this section at such time and in such manner as the commissioner prescribes.

(c) No funds received by a school district pursuant to this section shall be used to supplant federal, state or local funding received by such town for improvements to school buildings.

(d) Expenditure reports shall be filed with the Department of Education as requested by the commissioner. School districts shall refund (1) any unexpended amounts at the close of the project for which the grants are awarded and (2) any

amounts not expended in accordance with the approved grant application.

(e) General improvements for which grants are awarded in any year shall be completed by the end of the succeeding fiscal year.

Sec. 9. (NEW) (a) The Commissioner of Education shall establish, within available appropriations, a grant program for priority school districts to purchase library books to promote better reading skills. For purposes of this section "library books" means books that are in school libraries and media centers for student use and are either for reference purposes or to be circulated.

(b) Eligibility for grants pursuant to this section shall be determined for a five-year period based on a school district's designation in the initial year of application as a priority school district.

(c) School districts shall apply for grants pursuant to this section at such times and in such manner as the commissioner prescribes.

(d) The Department of Education may retain up to one per cent of the amount of funds appropriated for purposes of this section for coordination, program evaluation and administration.

(e) No funds received by a school district pursuant to this section shall be used to supplant federal, state or local funding received by such town for the purchase of library books.

Sec. 10. Subsection (b) of section 4 of public act 97-259 is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof:

(b) The local school readiness council shall:  
(1) Make recommendations to the chief elected official and the superintendent of schools on issues relating to school readiness, including any applications for grants pursuant to sections 2 and 7 of [this act] PUBLIC ACT 97-259 and section 17b-749a of the general statutes, as amended by section 5 of [this act] PUBLIC ACT 97-259; (2) foster partnerships among providers of school readiness programs; (3) assist in the identification of the need for school readiness programs and the number of children not being served by such a program; (4) identify existing

and prospective resources and services available to children and families; (5) facilitate the coordination of the delivery of services to children and families, including (A) referral procedures, AND (B) BEFORE AND AFTER-SCHOOL CHILD CARE FOR CHILDREN ATTENDING KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS; (6) exchange information with other councils, the community and organizations serving the needs of children and families; (7) make recommendations to school officials concerning transition from school readiness programs to kindergarten; and (8) encourage public participation.

Sec. 11. Subsection (a) of section 3 of public act 97-259 is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof:

(a) Each school readiness program shall include: (1) A plan for collaboration with other community programs and services, INCLUDING PUBLIC LIBRARIES, and for coordination of resources in order to facilitate full-day and year-round child care and education programs for children of working parents and parents in education or training programs; (2) parent involvement, parenting education and outreach; (3) referrals for health services, including referrals for appropriate immunizations and screenings; (4) nutrition services; (5) referrals to family literacy programs that incorporate adult basic education and provide for the promotion of literacy through access to public library services; (6) admission policies that promote enrolment of children from different racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds and from other communities; (7) a plan of transition for participating children from the school readiness program to kindergarten AND PROVIDE FOR THE TRANSFER OF RECORDS FROM THE PROGRAM TO THE KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM; (8) a plan for professional development for staff; (9) a sliding fee scale for families participating in the program pursuant to section 8 of [this act] PUBLIC ACT 97-259; and (10) an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the program.

Sec. 12. Section 10-15 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof:

Public schools including kindergartens shall

be maintained in each town for at least one hundred eighty days of actual school sessions during each year. When public school sessions are cancelled for reasons of inclement weather or otherwise, the rescheduled sessions shall not be held on Saturday or Sunday. The State Board of Education (1) may authorize the shortening of any school year for a school district, a school or a portion of a school on account of an unavoidable emergency, and (2) may authorize implementation of scheduling of school sessions to permit full year use of facilities which may not offer each child one hundred eighty days of school sessions within a given school year, but which assures an opportunity for each child to average a minimum of one hundred eighty days of school sessions per year during thirteen years of educational opportunity in the elementary and secondary schools. Notwithstanding the provisions of this section and section 10-16, AS AMENDED BY THIS ACT, the State Board of Education may, upon application by a local or regional board of education, approve for any single school year, in whole or in part, a plan to implement alternative scheduling of school sessions which assures at least four hundred fifty hours of actual school work for nursery schools and HALF-DAY kindergartens and at least nine hundred hours of actual school work for FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN AND grades one to twelve, inclusive.

Sec. 13. Section 10-16 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof:

Each school district shall provide in each school year no less than one hundred and eighty days of actual school sessions for grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, nine hundred hours of actual school work for FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN AND grades one to twelve, inclusive, and four hundred and fifty hours of HALF-DAY kindergarten, provided school districts shall not count more than seven hours of actual school work in any school day towards the total required for the school year. If weather conditions result in an early dismissal or a delayed opening of school, a school district which maintains separate morning and afternoon HALF-DAY kindergarten sessions may provide either a morning or afternoon HALF-DAY

kindergarten session on such day.

Sec. 14. Subsection (a) of section 10-145d of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof:

(a) The State Board of Education shall, pursuant to chapter 54, adopt such regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of sections 10-144o, 10-145a to 10-145d, inclusive, AS AMENDED BY THIS ACT, 10-145f and 10-146b. Such regulations shall provide for (1) the establishment of an appeal panel to review any decision to deny the issuance of a certificate authorized under said section 10-145b; (2) the establishment of requirements for subject area endorsements; (3) the extension of the time to complete requirements for certificates under said section 10-145b; (4) the establishment of requirements for administrator and supervisor certificates; (5) the composition of, and the procedures to be utilized by, the assessment teams in implementing the beginning educator program; (6) procedures and criteria for issuing certificates to persons whose certificates have lapsed or persons with non-public-school or out-of-state teaching experience; (7) the criteria for defining a major course of study; [and] (8) a requirement that on and after July 1, 1993, in order to be eligible to obtain an initial educator certificate with an elementary endorsement, each person [shall] be required to complete a survey course in United States history comprised of not fewer than three semester hours; AND (9) A REQUIREMENT THAT ON AND AFTER JULY 1, 2003, IN ORDER TO BE ELIGIBLE TO OBTAIN AN INITIAL EDUCATOR CERTIFICATE WITH AN EARLY CHILDHOOD NURSERY THROUGH GRADE THREE OR AN ELEMENTARY ENDORSEMENT, EACH PERSON BE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE A COMPREHENSIVE READING INSTRUCTION COURSE COMPRISED OF NOT LESS THAN SIX SEMESTER HOURS. Such regulations may provide for exceptions to accommodate specific certification endorsement areas.

Sec. 15. Subsection (1) of section 10-145b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof:

(1) (1) For certified employees of local and regional boards of education, except as provided

in this subdivision, each professional educator certificate shall be valid for five years and continued every five years thereafter upon the successful completion of professional development activities which shall consist of not less than ninety hours of continuing education, as determined by the local or regional board of education in accordance with this section, during each successive five-year period. (A) SUCH CONTINUING EDUCATION COMPLETED BY CERTIFIED EMPLOYEES WITH AN EARLY CHILDHOOD NURSERY THROUGH GRADE THREE OR AN ELEMENTARY ENDORSEMENT WHO HOLD A POSITION REQUIRING SUCH AN ENDORSEMENT SHALL INCLUDE AT LEAST FIFTEEN HOURS OF TRAINING IN THE TEACHING OF READING AND READING READINESS AND ASSESSMENT OF READING PERFORMANCE, INCLUDING METHODS OF TEACHING LANGUAGE SKILLS NECESSARY FOR READING, READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS, PHONICS AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DURING EACH FIVE-YEAR PERIOD. (B) Such continuing education completed by [(A)] (i) the superintendent of schools, and [(B)] (ii) employees employed in positions requiring an intermediate administrator or supervisory certificate, or the equivalent thereof, and whose administrative or supervisory duties equal at least fifty per cent of the assigned time of such employee, shall include at least fifteen hours of training in the evaluation of teachers pursuant to section 10-151b during each five-year period. During each five-year period in which a professional educator certificate is valid, a holder of such certificate who has not completed the ninety hours of continuing education required pursuant to this subdivision, and who has not been employed while holding such certificate by a local or regional board of education for all or part of the five-year period, shall, upon application, be reissued such certificate for five years minus any period of time such holder was employed while holding such certificate by a local or regional board of education, provided there shall be only one such reissuance during each five-year period in which such certificate is valid. A certified employee of a local or regional board of education who is a member of the General Assembly and who has not completed the ninety hours of continuing

education required pursuant to this subdivision for continuation of his certificate, upon application, shall be reissued a professional educator certificate for a period of time equal to six months for each year he served in the General Assembly during the previous five years. Continuing education hours completed during the previous five years shall be applied toward such ninety-hour requirement which shall be completed during the reissuance period in order for such employee to be eligible to have his certificate continued. The cost of the professional development activities required under this subsection for certified employees of local or regional boards of education shall be shared by the state and local or regional boards of education, except for those activities identified by the State Board of Education as the responsibility of the certificate holder. Each local and regional board of education shall make available, annually, at no cost to its certified employees not fewer than eighteen hours of professional development activities for continuing education credit. Such activities may be made available by a board of education directly, through a regional educational service center or cooperative arrangement with another board of education or through arrangements with any continuing education provider approved by the State Board of Education. Local and regional boards of education shall grant continuing education credit for professional development activities which the certified employees of the board of education are required to attend, professional development activities offered in accordance with the plan developed pursuant to subsection (b) of section 10-220a, or professional development activities which the board may approve for any individual certified employee. Each board of education shall determine the specific professional development activities to be made available with the advice and assistance of the teachers employed by such board, including representatives of the exclusive bargaining unit for such teachers pursuant to section 10-153b. The time and location for the provision of such activities shall be in accordance with either an

agreement between the board of education and the exclusive bargaining unit pursuant to said section 10-153b or, in the absence of such agreement or to the extent such agreement does not provide for the time and location of all such activities, in accordance with a determination by the board of education.

(2) Each local and regional board of education shall attest to the state Department of Education, in such form and at such time as the commissioner shall prescribe, that professional development activities for which continuing education credit is granted by the board: (A) Are planned in response to identified needs, (B) are provided by qualified instructional personnel, as appropriate, (C) have the requirements for participation in the activity shared with participants before the commencement of the activity, (D) are evaluated in terms of its effectiveness and its contribution to the attainment of school or district-wide goals, and (E) are documented in accordance with procedures established by the State Board of Education. At the end of each five-year period each professional educator shall attest to the state Department of Education, in such form and at such time as the commissioner shall prescribe, that the professional educator has successfully completed ninety hours of continuing education.

(3) In the event that the state Department of Education notifies the local or regional board of education that the provisions of subdivision (2) of this subsection have not been met and that specific corrective action is necessary, the local or regional board of education shall take such corrective action immediately. The department shall not invalidate continuing education credit awarded prior to such notice.

Sec. 16. Section 10-184 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof:

All parents and those who have the care of children shall bring them up in some lawful and honest employment and instruct them or cause them to be instructed in reading, writing, spelling, English grammar, geography, arithmetic and United States history and in citizenship, including a study of the town, state and federal governments.

[Each] SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION AND SECTION 10-15c, AS AMENDED, EACH parent or other person having control of a child [seven years of age and over and under sixteen years of] age FIVE TO SIXTEEN, INCLUSIVE, shall cause such child to attend a public [day] school regularly during the hours and terms the public school in the district [wherein] IN WHICH such child resides is in session, [or while the school is in session in which provision for the instruction of such child is made according to law,] unless the parent or person having control of such child is able to show that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the public schools. THE PARENT OR PERSON HAVING CONTROL OF A CHILD FIVE YEARS OF AGE SHALL HAVE THE OPTION OF NOT SENDING THE CHILD TO SCHOOL UNTIL THE CHILD IS SIX YEARS OF AGE AND THE PARENT OR PERSON HAVING CONTROL OF A CHILD SIX YEARS OF AGE SHALL HAVE THE OPTION OF NOT SENDING THE CHILD TO SCHOOL UNTIL THE CHILD IS SEVEN YEARS OF AGE. THE PARENT OR PERSON SHALL EXERCISE SUCH OPTION BY PERSONALLY APPEARING AT THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OFFICE AND SIGNING AN OPTION FORM. THE SCHOOL DISTRICT SHALL PROVIDE THE PARENT OR PERSON WITH INFORMATION ON THE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM.

Sec. 17. Subsection (a) of section 10-198a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof:

(a) For purposes of this section, "truant" means a child age [seven] FIVE to sixteen, inclusive, who is enrolled in a public or private school and has four unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten unexcused absences from school in any school year.

Sec. 18. Section 10-200 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof:

Each city and town may adopt ordinances concerning habitual truants from school and children between the ages of [seven] FIVE and sixteen years wandering about its streets or public places, having no lawful occupation and not attending school; and may make such ordinances respecting such children as shall conduce to their welfare and to public order, imposing penalties,

not exceeding twenty dollars, for any one breach thereof. The police in any town, city or borough and bailiffs, constables, sheriffs and deputy sheriffs in their respective precincts shall arrest all such children found anywhere beyond the proper control of their parents or guardians, during the usual school hours of the school terms, and may stop any child under sixteen years of age during such hours and ascertain whether such child is a truant from school, and, if such child is, shall send such child to school. For purposes of this section, "habitual truant" means a child age [seven] FIVE to sixteen, inclusive, enrolled in a public or private school who has twenty unexcused absences within a school year.

Sec. 19. Subsection (a) of section 10-220 of the general statutes, as amended by section 21 of public act 97-290, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof:

(a) Each local or regional board of education shall maintain good public elementary and secondary schools, implement the educational interests of the state as defined in section 10-4a, AS AMENDED, and provide such other educational activities as in its judgment will best serve the interests of the school district; provided any board of education may secure such opportunities in another school district in accordance with provisions of the general statutes and shall give all the children of the school district as nearly equal advantages as may be practicable; shall provide an appropriate learning environment for its students which includes (1) adequate instructional books, supplies, materials, equipment, staffing, facilities and technology, (2) equitable allocation of resources among its schools, and (3) a safe school setting; shall have charge of the schools of its respective school district; shall make a continuing study of the need for school facilities and of a long-term school building program and from time to time make recommendations based on such study to the town; shall report annually to the Commissioner of Education on the condition of its facilities and the action taken to implement its long-term school building program, which report the commissioner shall use to prepare an annual report that he

shall submit in accordance with section 11-4a to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of education; shall advise the Commissioner of Education of the relationship between any individual school building project pursuant to chapter 173 and such long-term school building program; shall have the care, maintenance and operation of buildings, lands, apparatus and other property used for school purposes and at all times shall insure all such buildings and all capital equipment contained therein against loss in an amount not less than eighty per cent of replacement cost; shall determine the number, age and qualifications of the pupils to be admitted into each school; shall employ and dismiss the teachers of the schools of such district subject to the provisions of sections 10-151, AS AMENDED, and 10-158a, AS AMENDED; shall designate the schools which shall be attended by the various children within the school district; shall make such provisions as will enable each child of school age, residing in the district to attend some public day school for the period required by law and provide for the transportation of children wherever transportation is reasonable and desirable, and for such purpose may make contracts covering periods of not more than five years; may place in an alternative school program or other suitable educational program a pupil enrolling in school who is nineteen years of age or older and cannot acquire a sufficient number of credits for graduation by age twenty-one; may arrange with the board of education of an adjacent town for the instruction therein of such children as can attend school in such adjacent town more conveniently; shall cause each child [seven years of age and over and under sixteen] AGE FIVE TO SIXTEEN, INCLUSIVE, living in the school district to attend school in accordance with the provisions of section 10-184, AS AMENDED BY SECTION 16 OF THIS ACT, and shall perform all acts required of it by the town or necessary to carry into effect the powers and duties imposed by law.

Sec. 20. Subsection (a) of section 10-220a of the general statutes, as amended by section 2 of public act 97-45 and section 2 of public act

97-61, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof:

(a) Each local or regional board of education shall provide an in-service training program for its teachers, administrators and pupil personnel who hold the initial educator, provisional educator or professional educator certificate. Such program shall be submitted to the Commissioner of Education and shall provide such teachers, administrators and pupil personnel with information on (1) the nature and the relationship of drugs, as defined in subdivision (17) of section 21a-240, and alcohol to health and personality development, and procedures for discouraging their abuse, (2) health and mental health risk reduction education which includes, but need not be limited to, the prevention of risk-taking behavior by children and the relationship of such behavior to substance abuse, pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV-infection and AIDS, as defined in section 19a-581, violence, child abuse and youth suicide, (3) the growth and development of exceptional children, including handicapped and gifted and talented children and children who may require special education, and methods for identifying, planning for and working effectively with special needs children in a regular classroom, (4) school violence prevention and conflict resolution, (5) cardiopulmonary resuscitation and other emergency life saving procedures, [and] (6) computer and other information technology as applied to student learning and classroom instruction, communications and data management, AND (7) THE TEACHING OF THE LANGUAGE ARTS, READING AND READING READINESS FOR TEACHERS IN GRADES KINDERGARTEN TO THREE, INCLUSIVE. The State Board of Education, within available appropriations and utilizing available materials, shall assist and encourage local and regional boards of education to include: (A) Holocaust education and awareness; (B) the historical events surrounding the Great Famine in Ireland; (C) African-American history; (D) Puerto Rican history; (E) Native American history; (F) personal financial management; and (G) topics approved by the state board upon the request of

local or regional boards of education as part of in-service training programs pursuant to this subsection.

Sec. 21. Subsection (a) of section 10-283 of the general statutes, as amended by section 76 of public act 97-265, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof:

(a) (1) Each town or regional school district shall be eligible to apply for and accept grants for a school building project as provided in this chapter. Any town desiring a grant for a public school building project may, by vote of its legislative body, authorize the board of education of such town to apply to the Commissioner of Education and to accept or reject such grant for the town. Any regional school board may vote to authorize the supervising agent of the regional school district to apply to the Commissioner of Education for and to accept or reject such grant for the district. Applications for such grants under this chapter shall be made by the superintendent of schools of such town or regional school district on the form provided and in the manner prescribed by the Commissioner of Education. Grant applications for school building projects shall be reviewed by the Commissioner of Education on the basis of categories for building projects and standards for school construction established by the State Board of Education in accordance with this section, provided grant applications submitted for purposes of subsection (a) of section 10-65, AS AMENDED, or section 10-76e shall be reviewed annually by the commissioner on the basis of the educational needs of the applicant.

(2) Each school building project shall be assigned to a category on the basis of whether such project is primarily required to: [(1)] (A) Create new facilities or alter existing facilities to provide for mandatory instructional programs pursuant to this chapter, for physical education facilities in compliance with Title IX of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1972 where such programs or such compliance cannot be provided within existing facilities or for the correction of code violations which cannot be reasonably addressed within existing program

space; [(2)] (B) create new facilities or alter existing facilities to enhance mandatory instructional programs pursuant to this chapter or provide comparable facilities among schools to all students at the same grade level or levels within the school district unless such project is otherwise explicitly included in another category pursuant to this section; and [(3)] (C) create new facilities or alter existing facilities to provide supportive services, provided in no event shall such supportive services include swimming pools, auditoriums, outdoor athletic facilities, tennis courts, elementary school playgrounds, site improvement or garages or storage, parking or general recreation areas. All applications submitted prior to the first day of July in any year shall be reviewed promptly by the commissioner and the amount of the grant for which such project is eligible shall be estimated. The commissioner shall annually prepare a listing of all such eligible school building projects listed by category together with the amount of the estimated grants therefor and shall submit the same to the Governor and the General Assembly on or before the fifteenth day of December, except as provided in section 10-283a, with a request for authorization to enter into grant commitments. Each such listing submitted after December 1995 shall include a separate schedule of authorized projects which have changed in scope or cost to a degree determined by the commissioner. The percentage determined pursuant to section 10-285a at the time a school building project on such schedule was originally authorized shall be used for purposes of the grant for such project. The General Assembly shall annually authorize the commissioner to enter into grant commitments on behalf of the state in accordance with the commissioner's categorized listing for such projects as the General Assembly shall determine. The commissioner may not enter into any such grant commitments except pursuant to such legislative authorization. Any regional school district which assumes the responsibility for completion of a public school building project shall be eligible for a grant pursuant to subdivision (5) or (6), as the case may be, of subsection (a) of section

10-286, AS AMENDED, when such project is completed and accepted by such regional school district. [For the purpose of any final grant calculation completed during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1984, and for each fiscal year thereafter, in computing the amount of a state grant for a school building project involving the construction of a new school facility or the purchase or lease of a facility for which a grant application is submitted within five years after any abandonment, sale, lease, demolition or redirection of use of any school facility constructed or renovated with state assistance, the Commissioner of Education shall deduct from the net eligible cost of such school building project any grant amounts paid or due on the abandoned, sold, leased, demolished or redirected facility from the date such facility was abandoned, sold, leased, demolished or redirected. No such deduction shall be made for any grant which was paid or is being paid pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, subsection (a) of section 10-65 or section 10-76e.]

(3) (A) ALL FINAL CALCULATIONS COMPLETED BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS AUTHORIZED ON OR AFTER JULY 1, 1996, SHALL INCLUDE A COMPUTATION OF THE STATE GRANT FOR THE SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT AMORTIZED ON A STRAIGHT LINE BASIS OVER A TWENTY-YEAR PERIOD FOR SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS WITH COSTS EQUAL TO OR GREATER THAN TWO MILLION DOLLARS AND OVER A TEN-YEAR PERIOD FOR SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS WITH COSTS LESS THAN TWO MILLION DOLLARS. ANY TOWN OR REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT WHICH ABANDONS, SELLS, LEASES, DEMOLISHES OR OTHERWISE REDIRECTS THE USE OF SUCH A SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT TO A NONPUBLIC SCHOOL USE DURING SUCH AMORTIZATION PERIOD SHALL REFUND TO THE STATE THE UNAMORTIZED BALANCE OF THE STATE GRANT REMAINING AS OF THE DATE THE ABANDONMENT, SALE, LEASE, DEMOLITION OR REDIRECTION OCCURS. THE AMORTIZATION PERIOD FOR A PROJECT SHALL BEGIN ON THE DATE THE PROJECT WAS ACCEPTED AS COMPLETE BY THE LOCAL OR REGIONAL BOARD OF EDUCATION. A TOWN OR REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT REQUIRED TO MAKE A REFUND TO THE STATE PURSUANT TO THIS SUBDIVISION MAY REQUEST FORGIVENESS OF SUCH REFUND IF THE BUILDING IS REDIRECTED FOR PUBLIC USE. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL

INCLUDE AS AN ADDENDUM TO THE ANNUAL SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PRIORITY LIST ALL THOSE TOWNS REQUESTING FORGIVENESS. GENERAL ASSEMBLY APPROVAL OF THE PRIORITY LIST CONTAINING SUCH REQUEST SHALL CONSTITUTE APPROVAL OF SUCH REQUEST. THIS SUBDIVISION SHALL NOT APPLY TO PROJECTS PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (b) OF THIS SECTION OR PROJECTS SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 10-285c.

(B) ANY MONEYS REFUNDED TO THE STATE PURSUANT TO SUBPARAGRAPH (A) OF THIS SUBDIVISION SHALL BE DEPOSITED IN THE STATE'S TAX-EXEMPT PROCEEDS FUND AND USED WITHIN SIXTY DAYS OF REPAYMENT TO PAY DEBT SERVICE ON, INCLUDING REDEMPTION, DEFEASANCE OR PURCHASE OF, OUTSTANDING BONDS OF THE STATE THE INTEREST ON WHICH IS NOT INCLUDED IN GROSS INCOME PURSUANT TO SECTION 103 OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1986, OR ANY SUBSEQUENT CORRESPONDING INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF THE UNITED STATES, AS FROM TIME TO TIME AMENDED.

Sec. 22. The Commissioner of Education shall establish two pilot early childhood learning programs. The pilot programs shall be established in priority school districts pursuant to section 10-266p of the general statutes, as amended, or transitional school districts. One program shall be in a municipality with a population of fifty to one hundred thousand, inclusive, and one program shall be in a municipality with a population over one hundred thousand. Each pilot program may include a laboratory school and a model day care program that serves sixty children ages three to five. The Department of Education shall issue a request for proposals for the pilot programs. The commissioner shall provide grants in the amount of one hundred thousand dollars each for purposes of such pilot programs. The grants shall be provided from the amount appropriated for purposes of section 4 of this act.

Sec. 23. (NEW) (a) The Commissioner of Education shall conduct, within available appropriations, a longitudinal study that examines the educational progress of children both during and following participation in early reading success grant programs pursuant to section 4 of this act.

(b) The Commissioner of Education shall report, in accordance with section 11-4a of the

general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education on the longitudinal study by January 1, 2001.

Sec. 24. The Commissioner of Higher Education shall study teacher education programs within the institutions of higher education that provide coursework in reading instruction. The commissioner shall evaluate how such programs are addressing the diagnosis of reading difficulties and whether they are teaching effective instructional and assessment methods for reading competency. The commissioner shall determine whether such programs include methods of teaching language skills necessary for reading, reading comprehension skills, phonics and the structure of the English language. On or before July 1, 1999, the commissioner shall report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the general assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education on the results of such study, including any recommendations for revisions to such programs.

Sec. 25. This act shall take effect July 1, 1998.

Approved May 28, 1998

sponsors of HB-5657 REP. THOMAS F CONWAY, 75th Dist.

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