



General Assembly

***Substitute Bill No. 5537***

*January Session, 2001*

***AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOLS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT.***

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

1 Section 1. Section 10-223b of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof:

3 (a) On or before [October 1, 1999] February 1, 2003, and biennially  
4 thereafter, the State Board of Education shall prepare a list of  
5 elementary and middle schools, by school district, that are in need of  
6 improvement based on student performance and performance trends  
7 on the state-wide mastery examinations pursuant to section 10-14n.  
8 The Department of Education shall notify each local and regional  
9 board of education of the schools in its district that are on the list and,  
10 if more than one school in a school district is on the list, the  
11 department shall advise the local or regional board of education on  
12 which of such schools are most in need of improvement.

13 (b) On or before [January 1, 2000] April 1, 2003, and biennially  
14 thereafter, each local and regional board of education that has a school  
15 on the list, through its superintendent of schools, shall meet with the  
16 Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee, to discuss  
17 the process for improving school performance described in subsection  
18 (c) of this section. The commissioner shall require the local or regional  
19 board of education to undergo such process for such school, except

20 that if more than one school in the school district is on the list, the local  
21 or regional board of education shall prioritize the schools on the list  
22 and develop a timetable for such schools to undergo such process.  
23 Such timetable and list shall be approved by the commissioner.

24 (c) The local or regional board of education shall require the school  
25 to [:(1) Develop] develop an improvement plan [,] and [(2)] take the  
26 steps necessary to become accredited by the New England Association  
27 of Schools and Colleges. The improvement plan shall be submitted to  
28 the Department of Education and the local or regional board of  
29 education. [for its approval and, upon such approval,] The local or  
30 regional board of education shall approve the plan before it is  
31 implemented. Upon such approval, the plan shall be implemented  
32 beginning the following school year. The improvement plan (1) may  
33 provide for site-based management of the school, (2) shall include  
34 criteria for use in measuring progress, and (3) shall be developed in  
35 consultation with the school's principal, teachers and the parents of  
36 students attending the school. The Department of Education shall  
37 provide technical assistance to the school on the development of the  
38 plan and shall provide comments on the plan to the local or regional  
39 board of education prior to the board's approval of the plan. The local  
40 or regional board of education shall provide assistance to the school to  
41 improve its operation under the plan and to obtain accreditation. The  
42 commissioner may require the local or regional board of education to  
43 reallocate federal and state categorical assistance provided to the  
44 school district to implement the plan.

45 (d) The local or regional board of education shall monitor progress  
46 made by the school under the improvement plan. If two years after the  
47 date of approval of the improvement plan, the board of education  
48 finds that the school has not made sufficient progress, the board of  
49 education shall develop a plan for such school that requires the board  
50 to take one or more of the following actions in order to improve  
51 student achievement: (1) Close and reconstitute the school, (2)  
52 restructure the school in terms of the grades included or the programs  
53 offered, or both, (3) provide for site-based management of the school,

54 and (4) allow students in the attendance area of the school to attend  
55 other public schools in the school district. The local or regional board  
56 of education may include in such plan a provision for the transfer of  
57 employees in conjunction with any such action. The local or regional  
58 board of education shall submit its plan to the commissioner for  
59 approval and, upon such approval, shall implement the plan.

60 Sec. 2. Section 10-223c of the general statutes is repealed and the  
61 following is substituted in lieu thereof:

62 (a) [For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2001, the] The Commissioner  
63 of Education shall provide grants, within available appropriations, to  
64 local and regional boards of education that have one or more schools  
65 in need of improvement on the most recent list prepared pursuant to  
66 section 10-223b. Eligible boards of education shall use grant funds for  
67 costs related to the implementation of improvement plans for such  
68 schools, partnership programs between such schools and public  
69 libraries in the school district and actions necessary for such schools to  
70 become accredited by the New England Association of Schools and  
71 Colleges. An eligible board of education shall submit a plan for the  
72 expenditure of grant funds, in accordance with subsection (b) of this  
73 section, to the Department of Education, at such time and in such  
74 manner as the commissioner prescribes.

75 (b) The plan for the expenditure of grant funds shall be approved by  
76 the department, after consultation with the State Librarian for  
77 purposes of the partnership programs, and shall include: (1) Methods  
78 and school-based programs identified pursuant to section 10-223d that  
79 address the specific subject areas, by grade level, in which students  
80 attending the school were most deficient on the state-wide mastery  
81 examinations pursuant to section 10-14n, [and] (2) actions that are  
82 necessary for the school to be accredited, and (3) partnership programs  
83 with public libraries in the school district that are designed to improve  
84 family literacy and parent involvement. The plan may include a  
85 quality after school program.

86 (c) A quality after school program shall include: (1) Criteria for  
87 student participation in the program; (2) leisure activities that facilitate  
88 social and cognitive development; (3) safe indoor and outdoor  
89 environments; (4) trained staff skilled in child development; (5) specific  
90 strategies and interventions for children with demonstrated academic  
91 weaknesses to improve academic performance and reduce social  
92 promotion; (6) family involvement and an assessment of  
93 transportation needs for families to utilize the program; and (7)  
94 program evaluation.

95 (d) Each board of education receiving a grant pursuant to this  
96 section shall set aside an amount equal to at least ten per cent of the  
97 grant for partnership programs with public libraries in the school  
98 district.

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

102 (f) No funds received pursuant to this section shall be used to  
103 supplant federal, state or local funding to the local or regional board of  
104 education for such schools.

105 (g) Expenditure reports shall be filed with the Department of  
106 Education as requested by the commissioner. School districts shall  
107 refund (1) any unexpended amounts at the close of the program for  
108 which the grant was awarded, and (2) any amounts not expended in  
109 accordance with the approved grant application.

110 (h) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2001, the Hartford school  
111 district shall not receive grants pursuant to this section but shall use a  
112 portion of the supplemental aid provided in section 35 of special act  
113 00-13 to implement improvement plans and partnership programs in  
114 accordance with this section.

115 Sec. 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2001.

**ED**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*

**APP**      *Joint Favorable*