



Senate

File No. 1008

General Assembly

January Session, 2009

(Reprint of File No. 408)

Senate Bill No. 947
As Amended by House Amendment
Schedule "B"

Approved by the Legislative Commissioner
May 28, 2009

**AN ACT CONCERNING HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT FOR APPROVED
ONLINE COURSEWORK AND ISSUES RELATING TO STUDENT
WITHDRAWAL FROM PUBLIC SCHOOLS.**

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

1 Section 1. Section 10-221a of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2009*):

3 (a) For classes graduating from 1988 to 2003, inclusive, no local or
4 regional board of education shall permit any student to graduate from
5 high school or grant a diploma to any student who has not
6 satisfactorily completed a minimum of twenty credits, not fewer than
7 four of which shall be in English, not fewer than three in mathematics,
8 not fewer than three in social studies, not fewer than two in science,
9 not fewer than one in the arts or vocational education and not fewer
10 than one in physical education.

11 (b) Commencing with classes graduating in 2004, and for each
12 graduating class thereafter, no local or regional board of education
13 shall permit any student to graduate from high school or grant a

14 diploma to any student who has not satisfactorily completed a
15 minimum of twenty credits, not fewer than four of which shall be in
16 English, not fewer than three in mathematics, not fewer than three in
17 social studies, including at least a one-half credit course on civics and
18 American government, not fewer than two in science, not fewer than
19 one in the arts or vocational education and not fewer than one in
20 physical education.

21 (c) Any student who presents a certificate from a physician stating
22 that, in the opinion of the physician, participation in physical
23 education is medically contraindicated because of the physical
24 condition of such student, shall be excused from the physical
25 education requirement, provided the credit for physical education may
26 be fulfilled by an elective.

27 (d) Determination of eligible credits shall be at the discretion of the
28 local or regional board of education, provided the primary focus of the
29 curriculum of eligible credits corresponds directly to the subject matter
30 of the specified course requirements. The local or regional board of
31 education may permit a student to graduate during a period of
32 expulsion pursuant to section 10-233d, if the board determines the
33 student has satisfactorily completed the necessary credits pursuant to
34 this section. The requirements of this section shall apply to any student
35 requiring special education pursuant to section 10-76a, except when
36 the planning and placement team for such student determines the
37 requirement not to be appropriate. For purposes of this section, a
38 credit shall consist of not less than the equivalent of a forty-minute
39 class period for each school day of a school year except for a credit or
40 part of a credit toward high school graduation earned (1) at an
41 institution accredited by the Department of Higher Education or
42 regionally accredited, or (2) through online coursework that is in
43 accordance with a policy adopted pursuant to subsection (e) of this
44 section.

45 (e) Only courses taken in grades nine through twelve, inclusive,
46 shall satisfy this graduation requirement, except that a local or regional

47 board of education may grant a student credit (1) toward meeting a
48 specified course requirement upon the successful completion in grade
49 seven or eight of any course, the primary focus of which corresponds
50 directly to the subject matter of a specified course requirement in
51 grades nine to twelve, inclusive; (2) toward meeting the high school
52 graduation requirement upon completion of a world language course
53 offered privately through a nonprofit provider, provided such student
54 achieves a passing grade on an examination prescribed, within
55 available appropriations, by the Commissioner of Education and such
56 credits do not exceed four; (3) toward meeting the high school
57 graduation requirement upon achievement of a passing grade on a
58 subject area proficiency examination identified and approved, within
59 available appropriations, by the Commissioner of Education,
60 regardless of the number of hours the student spent in a public school
61 classroom learning such subject matter; [or] (4) toward meeting the
62 high school graduation requirement upon the successful completion of
63 coursework at an institution accredited by the Department of Higher
64 Education or regionally accredited. One three-credit semester course,
65 or its equivalent, at such an institution shall equal one-half credit for
66 purposes of this section; or (5) toward meeting the high school
67 graduation requirement upon the successful completion of online
68 coursework provided the local or regional board of education has
69 adopted a policy in accordance with this subdivision for the granting
70 of credit for online coursework. Such a policy shall ensure, at a
71 minimum, that (A) the workload required by the online course is
72 equivalent to that of a similar course taught in a traditional classroom
73 setting; (B) the content is rigorous and aligned with curriculum
74 guidelines approved by the State Board of Education, where
75 appropriate; (C) the course engages students and has interactive
76 components, which may include, but are not limited to, required
77 interactions between students and their teachers, participation in
78 online demonstrations, discussion boards or virtual labs; and (D) the
79 courses are (i) taught by teachers who are certified in Connecticut or
80 another state and have received training on teaching in an online
81 environment, or (ii) offered by institutions of higher education that are

82 accredited by the Department of Higher Education or regionally
83 accredited.

84 (f) A local or regional board of education may offer one-half credit
85 in community service which, if satisfactorily completed, shall qualify
86 for high school graduation credit pursuant to this section, provided
87 such community service is supervised by a certified school
88 administrator or teacher and consists of not less than fifty hours of
89 actual service that may be performed at times when school is not
90 regularly in session and not less than ten hours of related classroom
91 instruction. For purposes of this section, community service does not
92 include partisan political activities. The State Board of Education shall
93 assist local and regional boards of education in meeting the
94 requirements of this section.

95 (g) A local or regional board of education may award a diploma to a
96 veteran of World War II, pursuant to section 27-103, who left high
97 school prior to graduation in order to serve in the armed forces of the
98 United States and did not receive a diploma as a consequence of such
99 service.

100 Sec. 2. Section 10-184 of the general statutes is repealed and the
101 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2010*):

102 All parents and those who have the care of children shall bring them
103 up in some lawful and honest employment and instruct them or cause
104 them to be instructed in reading, writing, spelling, English grammar,
105 geography, arithmetic and United States history and in citizenship,
106 including a study of the town, state and federal governments. Subject
107 to the provisions of this section and section 10-15c, each parent or other
108 person having control of a child five years of age and over and under
109 eighteen years of age shall cause such child to attend a public school
110 regularly during the hours and terms the public school in the district in
111 which such child resides is in session, unless such child is a high school
112 graduate or the parent or person having control of such child is able to
113 show that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the

114 studies taught in the public schools. [The] For the school year
115 commencing July 1, 2010, and each school year thereafter, the parent or
116 person having control of a child [sixteen or] seventeen years of age
117 may consent, as provided in this section, to such child's withdrawal
118 from school. Such parent or person shall personally appear at the
119 school district office and sign a withdrawal form. [The] Such
120 withdrawal form shall include an attestation from a guidance
121 counselor or school administrator of the school that such school district
122 [shall provide] has provided such parent or person with information
123 on the educational options available in the school system and in the
124 community, including the availability, if any, of online courses offered
125 pursuant to section 10-221a, as amended by this act. The parent or
126 person having control of a child five years of age shall have the option
127 of not sending the child to school until the child is six years of age and
128 the parent or person having control of a child six years of age shall
129 have the option of not sending the child to school until the child is
130 seven years of age. The parent or person shall exercise such option by
131 personally appearing at the school district office and signing an option
132 form. The school district shall provide the parent or person with
133 information on the educational opportunities available in the school
134 system.

135 Sec. 3. Subsection (c) of section 10-220 of the general statutes is
136 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
137 *1, 2010*):

138 (c) Annually, each local and regional board of education shall
139 submit to the Commissioner of Education a strategic school profile
140 report for each school under its jurisdiction and for the school district
141 as a whole. The superintendent of each local and regional school
142 district shall present the profile report at the next regularly scheduled
143 public meeting of the board of education after each November first.
144 The profile report shall provide information on measures of (1) student
145 needs, (2) school resources, including technological resources and
146 utilization of such resources and infrastructure, (3) student and school
147 performance, (4) the number of students enrolled in an adult high

148 school credit diploma program, pursuant to section 10-69, operated by
149 a local or regional board of education or a regional educational service
150 center, (5) equitable allocation of resources among its schools, [(5)] (6)
151 reduction of racial, ethnic and economic isolation, and [(6)] (7) special
152 education. For purposes of this subsection, measures of special
153 education include (A) special education identification rates by
154 disability, (B) rates at which special education students are exempted
155 from mastery testing pursuant to section 10-14q, (C) expenditures for
156 special education, including such expenditures as a percentage of total
157 expenditures, (D) achievement data for special education students, (E)
158 rates at which students identified as requiring special education are no
159 longer identified as requiring special education, (F) the availability of
160 supplemental educational services for students lacking basic
161 educational skills, (G) the amount of special education student
162 instructional time with nondisabled peers, (H) the number of students
163 placed out-of-district, and (I) the actions taken by the school district to
164 improve special education programs, as indicated by analyses of the
165 local data provided in subparagraphs (A) to (H), inclusive, of this
166 subdivision. The superintendent shall include in the narrative portion
167 of the report information about (i) parental involvement and if the
168 district has taken measures to improve parental involvement,
169 including, but not limited to, employment of methods to engage
170 parents in the planning and improvement of school programs and
171 methods to increase support to parents working at home with their
172 children on learning activities, and (ii) the extent to which online
173 coursework provided in accordance with section 10-221a, as amended
174 by this act, assists students with credit recovery, provided such
175 information is available.

176 Sec. 4. Subsection (d) of section 10-186 of the general statutes is
177 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
178 *1, 2009*):

179 (d) [If] (1) For the school year commencing July 1, 2009, if a child
180 sixteen years of age or older voluntarily terminates enrollment in a
181 school district and subsequently seeks readmission, the local or

182 regional board of education for the school district may deny school
 183 accommodations to such child for up to ninety school days from the
 184 date of such termination, unless such child seeks readmission to such
 185 school district not later than ten school days after such termination in
 186 which case such board shall provide school accommodations to such
 187 child not later than three school days after such child seeks
 188 readmission.

189 (2) For the school year commencing July 1, 2010, and each school
 190 year thereafter, if a child seventeen years of age or older voluntarily
 191 terminates enrollment in a school district and subsequently seeks
 192 readmission, the local or regional board of education for the school
 193 district may deny school accommodations to such child for up to
 194 ninety school days from the date of such termination, unless such child
 195 seeks readmission to such school district not later than ten school days
 196 after such termination in which case such board shall provide school
 197 accommodations to such child not later than three school days after
 198 such child seeks readmission.

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| This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections: | | |
| Section 1 | July 1, 2009 | 10-221a |
| Sec. 2 | July 1, 2010 | 10-184 |
| Sec. 3 | July 1, 2010 | 10-220(c) |
| Sec. 4 | July 1, 2009 | 10-186(d) |

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: See Below

Municipal Impact: See Below

Explanation

The bill allows boards of education to grant credit towards meeting the high school graduation requirement for the successful completions of online coursework, which is not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact.

Additionally, the bill requires, beginning in FY 11, that sixteen year olds not be allowed to dropout of school, even with the consent of a parent. It is estimated that approximately 17% of all dropouts nationwide are attributable to sixteen year olds, this figure is estimated to be lower in Connecticut, as consent by a parent or guardian is currently required for dropping out at sixteen. To the extent that local and regional school districts establish school budgets based on the assumption that a certain percentage of a class dropout each year, this could result in an additional minimal cost and state mandate in FY 11 as they could potentially face an increase in the number of full-time, enrolled students. Concurrently, beginning in FY 12 local and regional school districts could have more students enrolled, which could result in a revenue gain, as the school district would receive additional funds associated with the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant. The size of the revenue gain will be dependent upon the number of students who do not dropout and continue to be enrolled.

Beginning in FY 12, SDE will incur an increased cost associated with the ECS grant. ECS funding is based on three major components: the

statutorily set foundation level of spending, the aid ratio (wealth measure), and the number of students. Changing the dropout age will increase the aid ratio as well as the number of students, which will increase total ECS spending. ECS grant calculations are based on previous year enrollment data.

The bill makes various other changes that are not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact.

“House B” requires, beginning in FY 11, that sixteen year olds not be allowed to dropout of school, even with the consent of a parent, and is anticipated to result in an additional minimal cost and a state mandate to local and regional boards of education beginning in FY 11, and a potential revenue increase to local and regional boards of education associated with an increase in the ECS grant, as towns could have more students than they did previously. Concurrently, “House B” will result in an increased cost to the state, beginning in FY 12, associated with the increased number of students and the ECS grant.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

Sources: Census Bureau, National Center for Education Statistics

OLR Bill Analysis**SB 947 (as amended by House "B")******AN ACT CONCERNING HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT FOR APPROVED ONLINE COURSEWORK.*****SUMMARY:**

By law, parents or guardians of a child between the ages of five and 17 must cause the child to go to the public school in their district, unless they can show that the child has graduated from high school or is elsewhere receiving an equivalent education. They may consent to the withdrawal of 16- and 17-year-olds from school, if they personally appear and sign a withdrawal form. Additionally, when parents or guardians withdraw a student under this provision, the school district must provide information on educational options for the student.

This bill eliminates the parental consent option for 16-year-olds, starting July 1, 2010. It requires districts to provide information on the availability of online courses. It also requires the withdrawal form to include an attestation from a school administrator or guidance counselor that the information was provided. The bill also makes it easier for a student who withdraws from high school to seek readmission.

The bill allows boards of education to grant credit towards meeting the high school graduation requirement for the successful completion of online coursework. Boards can do this if they have adopted a policy that meets certain requirements.

Finally, the bill requires boards of education to include in their strategic school profile (1) the number of students enrolled in a board of education- or regional education service center-operated adult high school credit diploma program and (2) if available, the extent to which

online coursework assists students with credit recovery.

*House Amendment "B" adds the dropout, readmission, and strategic school profile provisions.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2009, except for the changes to the dropout age and strategic school profile, which are effective July 1, 2010.

ONLINE COURSE WORK POLICIES

The policies must, at least, ensure that:

1. the workload required by the online course is equivalent to that of a similar course taught in a traditional classroom setting;
2. the content is rigorous and aligned with curriculum guidelines approved by the State Board of Education, where appropriate;
3. the course engages students and has interactive components, such as required interactions between students and teachers, participation in online demonstrations, discussion boards, or virtual labs; and
4. the courses are (a) taught by certified (by any state) teachers who have received training on teaching in an online environment, or (b) offered by higher education institutions that are regionally or Department of Higher Education accredited.

READMISSION OF STUDENTS

By law, if a student aged 16 or older voluntarily drops out and then seeks readmission, the board can deny the student school accommodations for up to 90 days from the date of the termination. Starting July 1, 2009 for 16-year-olds and July 1, 2010 for 17-year-olds, the bill requires school districts to provide school accommodations to students no more than three days after they ask for it, as long as they seek readmission no more than 10 days after the student terminated enrollment.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 31 Nay 0 (03/16/2009)