



Substitute Senate Bill No. 1096

Public Act No. 13-286

**AN ACT REQUIRING GREATER TRANSPARENCY AND A
TRANSITION PLAN FOR THE GOVERNANCE OF THE STATE
EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER.**

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

Section 1. Subdivision (28) of section 4e-1 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(28) "State contracting agency" means any executive branch agency, board, commission, department, office, institution or council. "State contracting agency" does not include the judicial branch, the legislative branch, the offices of the Secretary of the State, the State Comptroller, the Attorney General, the State Treasurer, with respect to their constitutional functions, any state agency with respect to contracts specific to the constitutional and statutory functions of the office of the State Treasurer. For the purposes of section 4e-16, [state contracting agency] "state contracting agency" includes any constituent unit of the state system of higher education and for the purposes of section 4e-19, "state contracting agency" includes the State Education Resource Center, established under section 10-4q, as amended by this act, and any regional educational service centers, as described in section 10-66a;

Substitute Senate Bill No. 1096

Sec. 2. Section 10-4q of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) The State Board of Education shall establish a State Education Resource Center to assist the board in the provision of programs and activities that will promote educational equity and excellence. Such activities, to be provided by the State Education Resource Center or a regional educational service center, may include training and professional development seminars, publication of technical materials, research and evaluation, and other related activities. The center may support programs and activities concerning early childhood education, the federal No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-110, and closing the academic achievement gap between socio-economic subgroups, and other related programs. The center shall be subject to (1) the competitive bidding requirements of section 4a-57, and (2) audit by the Auditors of Public Accounts under section 2-90. The center shall be considered a public agency, as defined in section 1-200, for purposes of chapter 14, and a state agency, as defined in section 4-212, for purposes of chapter 55a.

(b) The Commissioner of Education, with the assistance of the State Education Resource Center, may provide grants to local and regional boards of education for districts identified as in need of improvement under the provisions of section 10-223e. The grants shall be for the creation and acquisition of new curricula, training in the use of the curricula and related supporting textbooks and other materials. Local and regional boards of education may use such grants only for curricula, training and related textbooks and materials that have been authorized by the commissioner. Local and regional boards of education shall apply for grants pursuant to this subsection at such time and in such manner as the commissioner prescribes, and the commissioner shall determine the amount of the grant awards.

(c) Within available appropriations, the Department of Education

Substitute Senate Bill No. 1096

shall establish a Connecticut School Reform Resource Center within the State Education Resource Center established pursuant to subsection (a) of this section or by contract through a regional educational service center. The center shall operate year-round and focus on serving the needs of all public schools. The center shall (1) publish and distribute reports on the most effective practices for improving student achievement by successful schools, (2) provide a program of professional development activities for (A) school leaders, including curriculum coordinators, principals, superintendents and board of education members, and (B) teachers to educate such students that includes research-based child development and reading instruction tools and practices, (3) provide information on successful models for evaluating student performance and managing student data, (4) develop strategies for assisting such students who are in danger of failing, (5) develop culturally relevant methods for educating students whose primary language is not English, and (6) provide other programs and materials to assist in the improvement of public schools.

Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Not later than January 15, 2014, and annually thereafter, the Commissioner of Education shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education and government administration containing (1) all contracts, including personal service agreements, awarded by the Department of Education and the State Education Resource Center to private vendors and regional education service centers during the previous year for purposes of fulfilling the duties of the Department of Education; (2) all amounts and sources of private funding, including grants, received by the Department of Education and the State Education Resource Center; and (3) the amounts paid by the Department of Education or the State Education Resource Center for the salary, fringe benefits and other compensation

Substitute Senate Bill No. 1096

for any department or center employee or consultant. Such report shall also be posted on the Internet web sites of the Department of Education and the State Education Resource Center.

Sec. 4. (*Effective from passage*) Not later than January 15, 2014, the Commissioner of Education shall submit a plan, 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, to transition the State Education Resource Center from its status under section 10-4q of the general statutes, as amended by this act, to becoming either a quasi-public agency, state agency or nonprofit. Such plan shall include the commissioner's analysis concerning the following in regards to each possible option, whether quasi-public agency, state agency or nonprofit: (1) A description of how the transition will affect the center's current programs; (2) which personnel, payroll and administrative and business office functions being provided for the center by an entity pursuant to a contract with the Department of Education will be transferred to staff employed by the center; (3) how the retirement benefits of current employees of the center will be affected, including whether employee participation in the teachers' retirement system and in the deferred compensation plan offered by the entity providing personnel, payroll and administrative and business office functions for the center will continue; (4) how the transition will affect any outstanding workers' compensation claims, personal service agreements, or other personnel issues; (5) whether the transition will change the relationship between the center and the Department of Education and other educational organizations, including regional educational service centers; (6) how the center will address any recommendations of the Auditors of Public Accounts; and (7) which option the commissioner prefers and any recommended legislation necessary to implement such plan. The Commissioner of Education shall submit any revisions to such plan to said committee not later than March 1, 2014.

Substitute Senate Bill No. 1096

Approved July 12, 2013