

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 13-206—HB 6622

Education Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING DISTRICT PARTNERSHIPS

SUMMARY: Beginning in the 2013 school year, this act allows a school district designated as an alliance district to mutually agree with a charter school within the district to use the charter school's students' academic achievement scores as part of the district's overall scores. Under prior law, this was permitted as a pilot program for the Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven school districts that was scheduled to expire on June 30, 2013. By law, unchanged by the act, the State Board of Education (SBE) must approve these agreements.

The act expands the type of charter school that can enter into these agreements to include local charters. By law, state charters, which are granted by SBE, are already permitted. Local charters may be granted by local boards of education; there are none currently in Connecticut.

The act also changes the measure of academic achievement from the prior law's "adequate yearly progress and academic performance" to the "calculation of the district performance index" (DPI). DPI is the method of measuring academic performance using a district's standardized test scores. By law, DPI is used to determine which 30 districts are designated as the lowest performing districts. Alliance districts receive additional state assistance because they are low performing. The act specifies that the State Department of Education (SDE) calculates the DPI.

The act also extends, from October 1, 2013 to October 1, 2014, the deadline for SDE to report to the Education Committee on DPI scores reported under the act.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2013

BACKGROUND

District Performance Index

A school district's DPI is its students' weighted performance on the statewide mastery tests in reading, writing, and mathematics given in grades three through eight and 10, and science given in grades five, eight, and 10. The index is calculated by:

1. weighting student scores in each of these subjects as follows: zero for below basic (the lowest score), 25% for basic, 50% for proficient, 75% for goal, and 100% for advanced;
2. adding up the weighted student scores for each subject;
3. multiplying the aggregate student results in each subject by 30% for mathematics, reading, and writing and 10% for science; and
4. adding up the weighted subject scores.

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The weightings produce the lowest indexes for districts with the lowest test scores.

Alliance Districts

An alliance district is a town whose school district is among those with the lowest academic performance as measured by DPI. SDE does not release an alliance district's increase in Education Cost Sharing (ECS) aid unless the district agrees to take certain steps to improve student performance. These districts also receive a greater increase in ECS aid than non-Alliance districts.

OLR Tracking: JM:DC:PF:th/eh