



General Assembly

February Session, 2014

Raised Bill No. 5357

LCO No. 1574



Referred to Committee on EDUCATION

Introduced by:
(ED)

AN ACT CONCERNING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM.

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

1 Section 1. Section 10-198a of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2014*):

3 (a) For purposes of this section: [, "truant"]

4 (1) "Truant" means a child age five to eighteen, inclusive, who is
5 enrolled in a public or private school and has at least four unexcused
6 absences from school in any one month or [ten] at least ten, but fewer
7 than eighteen unexcused absences from school in any school year;

8 (2) "Chronically absent child" means a child age five to eighteen,
9 inclusive, who is enrolled in a public or private school and has
10 eighteen or more unexcused absences from school in any school year;
11 and

12 (3) "Chronic absenteeism rate" means the total number of
13 chronically absent children for a school in the previous school year
14 divided by the total number of children enrolled in such school for

15 such school year.

16 (b) Each local and regional board of education shall adopt and
17 implement policies and procedures concerning truants and chronically
18 absent children who are enrolled in schools under the jurisdiction of
19 such board of education. Such policies and procedures shall include,
20 but need not be limited to, the following: (1) The holding of a meeting
21 with the parent of each child who is a truant, or other person having
22 control of such child, and appropriate school personnel to review and
23 evaluate the reasons for the child being a truant, provided such
24 meeting shall be held not later than ten school days after the child's
25 fourth unexcused absence in a month or tenth unexcused absence in a
26 school year, (2) coordinating services with and referrals of children to
27 community agencies providing child and family services, (3) annually
28 at the beginning of the school year and upon any enrollment during
29 the school year, notifying the parent or other person having control of
30 each child enrolled in a grade from kindergarten to eight, inclusive, in
31 the public schools in writing of the obligations of the parent or such
32 other person pursuant to section 10-184, (4) annually at the beginning
33 of the school year and upon any enrollment during the school year,
34 obtaining from the parent or other person having control of each child
35 in a grade from kindergarten to eight, inclusive, a telephone number or
36 other means of contacting such parent or such other person during the
37 school day, and (5) a system of monitoring individual unexcused
38 absences of children in grades kindergarten to eight, inclusive, which
39 shall provide that whenever a child enrolled in school in any such
40 grade fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day and
41 no indication has been received by school personnel that the child's
42 parent or other person having control of the child is aware of the
43 pupil's absence, a reasonable effort to notify, by telephone and by mail,
44 the parent or such other person shall be made by school personnel or
45 volunteers under the direction of school personnel. Such mailed notice
46 shall include a warning that two unexcused absences from school in a
47 month or five unexcused absences in a school year may result in a

48 complaint filed with the Superior Court pursuant to section 46b-149
49 alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the child are such that
50 the child's family is a family with service needs. Any person who, in
51 good faith, gives or fails to give notice pursuant to subdivision (5) of
52 this subsection shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal,
53 which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the
54 same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding which results
55 from such notice or failure to give such notice.

56 (c) If the parent or other person having control of a child who is a
57 truant fails to attend the meeting held pursuant to subdivision (1) of
58 subsection (b) of this section or if such parent or other person
59 otherwise fails to cooperate with the school in attempting to solve the
60 truancy problem, such policies and procedures shall require the
61 superintendent of schools to file, not later than fifteen calendar days
62 after such failure to attend such meeting or such failure to cooperate
63 with the school attempting to solve the truancy problem, for each such
64 truant enrolled in the schools under [his] the superintendent's
65 jurisdiction a written complaint with the Superior Court pursuant to
66 section 46b-149 alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the child
67 are such that the child's family is a family with service needs.

68 (d) Any elementary school or middle school with a chronic
69 absenteeism rate of eight per cent or greater for the previous school
70 year and any high school with a chronic absenteeism rate of fifteen per
71 cent or greater for the previous school year shall establish a school
72 attendance review team to address chronic absenteeism at the school.
73 The school attendance review team shall consist of a school
74 administrator, guidance counselor, school social worker and a teacher.
75 The school attendance review team shall be responsible for reviewing
76 the cases of chronically absent children, discussing school
77 interventions and community referrals for such children and making
78 any additional recommendations for such children and their families.
79 The school attendance review team shall meet at least weekly.

80 [(d)] (e) Nothing in subsections (a) to (c), inclusive, of this section
81 shall preclude a local or regional board of education from adopting
82 policies and procedures pursuant to this section [which] that exceed
83 the requirements of said subsections.

84 [(e)] (f) The provisions of this section shall not apply to any child
85 receiving equivalent instruction pursuant to section 10-184.

86 Sec. 2. Subsection (c) of section 10-220 of the general statutes is
87 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
88 *1, 2014*):

89 (c) Annually, each local and regional board of education shall
90 submit to the Commissioner of Education a strategic school profile
91 report for each school under its jurisdiction and for the school district
92 as a whole. The superintendent of each local and regional school
93 district shall present the profile report at the next regularly scheduled
94 public meeting of the board of education after each November first.
95 The profile report shall provide information on measures of (1) student
96 needs, (2) school resources, including technological resources and
97 utilization of such resources and infrastructure, (3) student and school
98 performance, including [truancy] the number of truants and
99 chronically absent children, as defined in section 10-198a, as amended
100 by this act, (4) the number of students enrolled in an adult high school
101 credit diploma program, pursuant to section 10-69, operated by a local
102 or regional board of education or a regional educational service center,
103 (5) equitable allocation of resources among its schools, (6) reduction of
104 racial, ethnic and economic isolation, and (7) special education. For
105 purposes of this subsection, measures of special education include (A)
106 special education identification rates by disability, (B) rates at which
107 special education students are exempted from mastery testing
108 pursuant to section 10-14q, (C) expenditures for special education,
109 including such expenditures as a percentage of total expenditures, (D)
110 achievement data for special education students, (E) rates at which
111 students identified as requiring special education are no longer

112 identified as requiring special education, (F) the availability of
113 supplemental educational services for students lacking basic
114 educational skills, (G) the amount of special education student
115 instructional time with nondisabled peers, (H) the number of students
116 placed out-of-district, and (I) the actions taken by the school district to
117 improve special education programs, as indicated by analyses of the
118 local data provided in subparagraphs (A) to (H), inclusive, of this
119 subdivision. The superintendent shall include in the narrative portion
120 of the report information about parental involvement and if the district
121 has taken measures to improve parental involvement, including, but
122 not limited to, employment of methods to engage parents in the
123 planning and improvement of school programs and methods to
124 increase support to parents working at home with their children on
125 learning activities. For purposes of this subsection, measures of
126 truancy include the type of data that is required to be collected by the
127 Department of Education regarding attendance and unexcused
128 absences in order for the department to comply with federal reporting
129 requirements and the actions taken by the local or regional board of
130 education to reduce truancy in the school district. Such truancy data
131 shall be considered a public record for purposes of chapter 14.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2014</i>	10-198a
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2014</i>	10-220(c)

Statement of Purpose:

To require school districts to address issues relating to chronic absenteeism.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]