



Substitute Senate Bill No. 106

Public Act No. 14-172

AN ACT CONCERNING IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH EDUCATION AND ENSURING SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATES.

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

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2014*) (a) The Commissioner of Social Services and the Labor Commissioner shall permit a recipient of temporary family assistance to take education courses as part of the requirements of the recipient's employability plan, established pursuant to section 17b-689c of the general statutes, provided: (1) The state complies with federal work participation requirements for the employment services program established pursuant to section 17b-688c of the general statutes, and (2) the education courses are approved pursuant to subsection (b) of this section.

(b) To the extent permissible under federal law, the Labor Commissioner, in consultation with the Commissioner of Social Services, may approve education courses as required employment activities for a recipient of temporary family assistance. Education courses that may be approved include, but are not limited to: (1) Two-year or four-year college degree programs, and (2) high school graduate equivalency degree or basic education programs for recipients otherwise ineligible to enroll in such programs during their

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first twenty weekly hours of required employment activities.

(c) The Labor Commissioner, in consultation with the Commissioner of Social Services, shall implement policies and procedures to establish (1) which programs may qualify as an approved employment activity, and (2) enrollment and academic requirements for students who are recipients of temporary family assistance. The Labor Commissioner shall implement such policies and procedures while in the process of adopting such policies and procedures in regulation form, provided the Labor Commissioner provides notice of intent to adopt the regulations in accordance with section 4-168 of the general statutes not later than twenty days after implementing such policies and procedures. Policies and procedures implemented pursuant to this subsection shall be valid until the time final regulations are effective.

(d) Nothing in this section shall be construed as requiring the state to pay for the tuition of any recipient of temporary family assistance.

Sec. 2. Section 10-222d of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2014*):

(a) As used in this section, sections 10-222g to 10-222i, inclusive, as amended by this act, and section 10-222k:

(1) "Bullying" means (A) the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district, or (B) a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district, that: (i) Causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property, (ii) places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property, (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for such student, (iv) infringes on the rights of such student at school, or (v)

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substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. "Bullying" shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics;

(2) "Cyberbullying" means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications;

(3) "Mobile electronic device" means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted;

(4) "Electronic communication" means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo-optical system;

(5) "Hostile environment" means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate;

(6) "Outside of the school setting" means at a location, activity or program that is not school related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased or used

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by a local or regional board of education;

(7) "School employee" means (A) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by a local or regional board of education or working in a public elementary, middle or high school; or (B) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the local or regional board of education; and

(8) "School climate" means the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults.

(b) Each local and regional board of education shall develop and implement a safe school climate plan to address the existence of bullying in its schools. Such plan shall: (1) Enable students to anonymously report acts of bullying to school employees and require students and the parents or guardians of students to be notified [annually] at the beginning of each school year of the process by which students may make such reports, (2) enable the parents or guardians of students to file written reports of suspected bullying, (3) require school employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying to orally notify the safe school climate specialist, described in section 10-222k, or another school administrator if the safe school climate specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying, and to file a written report not later than two school days after making such oral report, (4) require the safe school climate specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written

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reports made under this section and that the parents or guardians of the student alleged to have committed an act or acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such alleged act or acts were directed receive prompt notice that such investigation has commenced, (5) require the safe school climate specialist to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report, (6) include a prevention and intervention strategy, as defined by section 10-222g, as amended by this act, for school employees to deal with bullying, (7) provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying, (8) require each school to notify the parents or guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation described in subdivision (4) of this subsection, (9) require each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student [who commits any verified act of bullying and the parents or guardians of the student] against whom such act was directed to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student against whom such act was directed and policies and procedures in place to prevent further acts of bullying, (10) require each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying to a meeting, separate and distinct from the meeting required in subdivision (9) of this subsection, to discuss specific interventions undertaken by the school to prevent further acts of bullying, (11) establish a procedure for each school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying in such school and to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in such school and make such list available for public inspection, and annually report such number to the Department of Education, and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education, [(11)] (12) direct the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing repeated incidents of bullying

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against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline, ~~[(12)]~~ (13) prohibit discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying, ~~[(13)]~~ (14) direct the development of student safety support plans for students against whom an act of bullying was directed that address safety measures the school will take to protect such students against further acts of bullying, ~~[(14)]~~ (15) require the principal of a school, or the principal's designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such principal, or the principal's designee, believes that any acts of bullying constitute criminal conduct, ~~[(15)]~~ (16) prohibit bullying (A) on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the local or regional board of education, and (B) outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, or (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school, ~~[(16)]~~ (17) require, at the beginning of each school year, each school to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's safe school climate plan, and ~~[(17)]~~ (18) require that all school employees annually complete the training described in section 10-220a or section 10-222j. The notification required pursuant to subdivision (8) of this subsection and the invitation required pursuant to subdivision (9) of this subsection shall include a description of the response of school employees to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying.

(c) Not later than January 1, 2012, each local and regional board of

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education shall approve the safe school climate plan developed pursuant to this section and submit such plan to the Department of Education. Not later than thirty calendar days after approval of such plan by the local or regional board of education, the board shall make such plan available on the board's and each individual school in the school district's Internet web site and ensure that such plan is included in the school district's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.

(d) On and after July 1, 2012, and biennially thereafter, each local and regional board of education shall require each school in the district to complete an assessment using the school climate assessment instruments, including surveys, approved and disseminated by the Department of Education pursuant to section 10-222h. Each local and regional board of education shall collect the school climate assessments for each school in the district and submit such school climate assessments to the department.

Sec. 3. Section 10-222g of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2014*):

For the purposes of section 10-222d, as amended by this act, the term "prevention and intervention strategy" may include, but is not limited to, (1) implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying identified by the Department of Education, (2) school rules prohibiting bullying, harassment and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts, (3) adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur, (4) inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school, (5) individual interventions with the bully, parents and school employees, and interventions with the

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bullied child, parents and school employees, (6) school-wide training related to safe school climate, (7) student peer training, education and support, [and] (8) promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions, and (9) culturally competent school-based curriculum focusing on social-emotional learning, self-awareness and self-regulation. Funding for the school-based bullying intervention and school climate improvement strategy may originate from public, private, federal or philanthropic sources. For purposes of this section, "interventions with the bullied child" includes referrals to a school counselor, psychologist or other appropriate social or mental health service, and periodic follow-up by the safe school climate specialist with the bullied child.

Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2014*) The Office of Early Childhood, in collaboration with the State Department of Education, may offer from funds which may originate from public, private, federal or philanthropic sources, a competitive grant for up to three alliance school districts to develop and implement a strategy to promote the social and emotional well-being and health of preschool children from age three to children in third grade, with a focus on instructional tools and family engagement. Up to five per cent of the grant funds provided under this section for any fiscal year may be used to pay for administrative costs.

Approved June 11, 2014