



Substitute House Bill No. 5564

Public Act No. 14-232

AN ACT CONCERNING THE REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATE PLANS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND A STUDENT SAFETY HOTLINE FEASIBILITY STUDY.

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

Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) The Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection shall study the feasibility of establishing a student safety hotline. Such study shall include, but not be limited to, an analysis of (1) the feasibility of establishing a student safety hotline that receives anonymous phone calls and text messages relating school safety concerns of students in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, and provides assistance to and referrals for such students, (2) the relevant referral areas and appropriate entities and agencies to receive such referrals, (3) training for operators of such student safety hotline, (4) existing student safety hotlines in other states, (5) legal issues that might be associated with the administration of such student safety hotline, and (6) any other relevant topics or issues associated with such student safety hotline. Not later than January 1, 2015, the department shall submit such study to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

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Sec. 2. Subsection (c) of section 10-222d of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(c) Not later than ~~[January 1, 2012]~~ September 1, 2014, each local and regional board of education that has not had a safe school climate plan, developed pursuant to this section, previously reviewed and approved by the Department of Education shall [approve the] submit a safe school climate plan [developed pursuant to this section and submit such plan to the Department of Education] to the department for review and approval in accordance with the provisions of section 3 of this act. Not later than thirty calendar days after approval by the department of such safe school climate 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.

Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Department of Education shall receive each safe school climate plan submitted pursuant to subsection (c) of section 10-222d of the general statutes, as amended by this act, and review each such plan for compliance with the provisions of subsection (b) of section 10-222d of the general statutes. Not later than thirty calendar days after receiving such plan, the department shall approve or reject such plan. If the department rejects a safe school climate plan, the department shall provide notice of such rejection and the reasons for such rejection to the local or regional board of education that submitted such plan. Such local or regional board of education shall redevelop and resubmit a safe school climate plan to the department for approval not later than thirty calendar days after receipt of notice of such rejection. Not later than thirty calendar days after receiving such resubmitted plan, the

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department shall approve or reject such plan. If the department rejects a resubmitted safe school climate plan, the department shall provide notice of such rejection to the local or regional board of education that resubmitted such plan. Not later than thirty calendar days after receiving notice of such rejection and the reasons for such rejection, such local or regional board of education shall adopt an appropriate model safe school climate plan, developed or recommended by the department pursuant to subdivision (3) of subsection (a) of section 10-222h of the general statutes, as amended by this act.

(b) The Department of Education shall make available on the department's Internet web site (1) each safe school climate plan that has been approved by the department, (2) a list of the school districts that have an approved safe school climate plan, and (3) a list of the school districts whose safe school climate plan has been rejected and is in the process of resubmitting its safe school climate plan for approval by the department.

Sec. 4. Section 10-222h of the 2014 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) The Department of Education shall, within available appropriations, (1) document school districts' articulated needs for technical assistance and training related to safe learning and bullying, (2) collect information on the prevention and intervention strategies used by schools to reduce the incidence of bullying, improve school climate and improve reporting outcomes, (3) develop or recommend [a] model safe school climate [plan] plans for grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, and (4) in collaboration with the Connecticut Association of Schools, disseminate to all public schools grade-level appropriate school climate assessment instruments, approved by the department, [including surveys,] to be used by local and regional boards of education for the purposes of collecting information

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described in subdivision (2) of this subsection so that the department can monitor bullying prevention efforts over time and compare each district's progress to state trends. Such school climate assessment instruments shall (A) include surveys that contain uniform grade-level appropriate questions that collect information about students' perspectives and opinions about the school climate at the school, and (B) allow students to complete and submit such assessment and survey anonymously.

(b) On or before February 1, 2014, and annually thereafter, the department shall, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, submit a report on the status of its efforts pursuant to this section including, but not limited to, the number of verified acts of bullying in the state, an analysis of the responsive action taken by school districts, an analysis of student responses on the uniform grade-level appropriate questions described in subparagraph (A) of subdivision (4) of subsection (a) of this section and any recommendations it may have regarding additional activities or funding to prevent bullying in schools and improve school climate to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education and children and to the speaker of the House of Representatives, the president pro tempore of the Senate and the majority and minority leaders of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

(c) The department may accept private donations for the purposes of this section.

Approved June 13, 2014