



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 451

February Session, 2014

Substitute House Bill No. 5564

House of Representatives, April 8, 2014

The Committee on Education reported through REP. FLEISCHMANN of the 18th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL SAFETY.

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

1 Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) (a) For the fiscal year ending June
2 30, 2015, the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection
3 shall establish a safe travel to school grant program to provide grants
4 to towns for expenses incurred as part of improving student safety
5 along routes of travel to schools and in the immediate areas around
6 schools during the hours before and after regular school hours.

7 (b) On or before July 15, 2014, a town may submit an application, at
8 such time and in such manner as the department prescribes, to the
9 department for a grant pursuant to this section. Each application shall
10 include a plan for the improvement of student safety along routes of
11 travel to school and in the immediate areas around schools during the
12 hours before and after regular school hours. Such plan shall (1) be
13 developed by the town in consultation with the local law enforcement
14 agency and local or regional board of education for such town, (2)

15 include the travel routes to schools and areas around such schools that
16 will be covered by such plan, (3) establish the hours before and after
17 school during which supervision may be provided along such travel
18 routes and areas around such schools, and (4) require that any person
19 assisting in the implementation of such plan submit to state and
20 national criminal history records checks prior to implementation of
21 such plan.

22 (c) Not later than August 1, 2014, the department shall select up to
23 ten towns to receive grants under this section and shall give priority to
24 towns in which priority school districts are located or towns in which a
25 priority school is located.

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

42 Sec. 3. Section 84 of public act 13-3, as amended by section 15 of
43 public act 13-122 and section 191 of public act 13-247, is repealed and
44 the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

45 (a) For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2013, to June 30, 2015,
46 inclusive, the Departments of Emergency Services and Public
47 Protection, Construction Services and Education shall jointly

48 administer a school security infrastructure competitive grant program
49 to reimburse (1) towns for certain expenses for schools under the
50 jurisdiction of the town's school district incurred on or after January 1,
51 2013, and (2) the supervisory agent for nonpublic schools for certain
52 expenses incurred on or after January 1, 2013, for: [(1)] (A) The
53 development or improvement of the security infrastructure of schools,
54 based on the results of school building security assessments pursuant
55 to subsection (c) of this section, including, but not limited to, the
56 installation of surveillance cameras, penetration resistant vestibules,
57 ballistic glass, solid core doors, double door access, computer-
58 controlled electronic locks, entry door buzzer systems, scan card
59 systems, panic alarms or other systems; and [(2) (A)] (B) (i) the training
60 of school personnel in the operation and maintenance of the security
61 infrastructure of school buildings, or [(B)] (ii) the purchase of portable
62 entrance security devices, including, but not limited to, metal detector
63 wands and screening machines and related training.

64 (b) On and after the effective date of this section, each local and
65 regional board of education [may,] on behalf of its town or its member
66 towns [,] and supervisory agent for a nonpublic school, may apply, at
67 such time and in such manner as the Commissioner of Emergency
68 Services and Public Protection prescribes, to the Department of
69 Emergency Services and Public Protection for a grant for certain
70 expenses for schools under the jurisdiction of such board of education
71 or supervisory agent incurred on and after January 1, 2013, for the
72 purposes described in subsection (a) of this section. Ten per cent of the
73 funds available under this program for the fiscal year ending June 30,
74 2015, shall be awarded to the supervisory agents of nonpublic schools,
75 in accordance with the provisions of subdivision (2) of subsection (c) of
76 this section. Prior to the date that the School Safety Infrastructure
77 Council makes its initial submission of the school safety infrastructure
78 standards, pursuant to subsection (c) of section 80 of public act 13-3,
79 the Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection, in
80 consultation with the Commissioners of Construction Services and
81 Education, shall determine which expenses are eligible for
82 reimbursement under the program. On and after the date that the

83 School Safety Infrastructure Council submits the school safety
84 infrastructure standards, the decision to approve or deny an
85 application and the determination of which expenses are eligible for
86 reimbursement under the program shall be in accordance with the
87 most recent submission of the school safety infrastructure standards,
88 pursuant to subsection (c) of section 80 of public act 13-3.

89 (c) (1) A town may receive a grant equal to a percentage of its
90 eligible expenses. The percentage shall be determined as follows: [(1)]
91 (A) Each town shall be ranked in descending order from one to one
92 hundred sixty-nine according to town wealth, as defined in
93 subdivision (26) of section 10-262f of the general statutes, [(2)] (B)
94 based upon such ranking, a percentage of not less than twenty or more
95 than eighty shall be assigned to each town on a continuous scale, and
96 [(3)] (C) the town ranked first shall be assigned a percentage of twenty
97 and the town ranked last shall be assigned a percentage of eighty.

98 (2) The supervisory agent for a nonpublic school may receive a
99 grant equal to fifty per cent of its eligible expenses.

100 (d) If there are not sufficient funds to provide grants to all towns
101 and supervisory agents for nonpublic schools based on the percentage
102 determined pursuant to [this] subsection (c) of this section, the
103 Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection, in
104 consultation with the Commissioners of Construction Services and
105 Education, shall give priority to applicants on behalf of schools with
106 the greatest need for security infrastructure, as determined by said
107 commissioners based on school building security assessments of the
108 schools under the jurisdiction of the town's school district conducted
109 pursuant to this subsection. Of the applicants on behalf of such schools
110 with the greatest need for security infrastructure, said commissioners
111 shall give first priority to applicants on behalf of schools that have no
112 security infrastructure at the time of such school building security
113 assessment and succeeding priority to applicants on behalf of schools
114 located in priority school districts pursuant to section 10-266p of the
115 general statutes. To be eligible for reimbursement pursuant to this

116 section, an applicant board of education or supervisory agent shall
117 [(A)] (1) demonstrate that it has developed and periodically practices
118 an emergency plan at the schools under its jurisdiction and that such
119 plan has been developed in concert with applicable state or local first-
120 responders, and [(B)] (2) provide for a uniform assessment of the
121 schools under its jurisdiction, including any security infrastructure,
122 using the National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities' Safe
123 Schools Facilities Check List. The assessment shall be conducted under
124 the supervision of the local law enforcement agency.

125 Sec. 4. Subsection (c) of section 10-222d of the general statutes is
126 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from*
127 *passage*):

128 (c) Not later than [~~January 1, 2012~~] July 1, 2014, each local and
129 regional board of education shall [~~approve~~] submit the safe school
130 climate plan developed pursuant to this section [~~and submit such plan~~]
131 to the Department of Education for approval in accordance with
132 section 5 of this act. Not later than thirty calendar days after approval
133 of [~~such~~] the safe school climate plan by the [~~local or regional board of~~
134 ~~education~~] department, the board shall make such plan available on
135 the board's and each individual school in the school district's Internet
136 web site and ensure that such plan is included in the school district's
137 publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for
138 schools and in all student handbooks.

139 Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Department of
140 Education shall receive and review each safe school climate plan
141 submitted pursuant to subsection (c) of section 10-222d of the general
142 statutes, as amended by this act. The department may approve or
143 reject a safe school climate plan if such plan does not adequately
144 ensure a safe school climate at the schools under the jurisdiction of the
145 board of education submitting such plan. If the department rejects a
146 safe school climate plan submitted by a local or regional board of
147 education, such board of education shall redevelop and resubmit the
148 safe school climate plan to the department for approval not later than

149 thirty calendar days after such rejection. If the department rejects such
150 resubmitted plan, such board of education shall adopt the model safe
151 school climate plan, developed by the department pursuant to
152 subdivision (3) of subsection (a) of section 10-222h of the general
153 statutes, as amended by this act.

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

161 Sec. 6. Section 10-222h of the 2014 supplement to the general statutes
162 is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*
163 *from passage*):

164 (a) The Department of Education shall, within available
165 appropriations, (1) document school districts' articulated needs for
166 technical assistance and training related to safe learning and bullying,
167 (2) collect information on the prevention and intervention strategies
168 used by schools to reduce the incidence of bullying, improve school
169 climate and improve reporting outcomes, (3) develop or recommend a
170 model safe school climate plan for grades kindergarten to twelve,
171 inclusive, and (4) in collaboration with the Connecticut Association of
172 Schools, disseminate to all public schools grade-level appropriate
173 school climate assessment instruments approved by the department,
174 including uniform surveys that collect information about students'
175 perspectives and opinions about the school climate at the school and
176 allow students to complete and submit such surveys anonymously, to
177 be used by local and regional boards of education for the purposes of
178 collecting information described in subdivision (2) of this subsection so
179 that the department can monitor bullying prevention efforts over time
180 and compare each district's progress to state trends.

181 (b) On or before February 1, 2014, and annually thereafter, the

182 department shall, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a,
 183 submit a report on the status of its efforts pursuant to this section
 184 including, but not limited to, the number of verified acts of bullying in
 185 the state, an analysis of the responsive action taken by school districts,
 186 an analysis of student perspectives and opinions about school climate
 187 at schools and any recommendations it may have regarding additional
 188 activities or funding to prevent bullying in schools and improve school
 189 climate to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly
 190 having cognizance of matters relating to education and children and to
 191 the speaker of the House of Representatives, the president pro tempore
 192 of the Senate and the majority and minority leaders of the House of
 193 Representatives and the Senate.

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

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	PA 13-3, Sec. 84
Sec. 4	<i>from passage</i>	10-222d(c)
Sec. 5	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 6	<i>from passage</i>	10-222h

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In section 1, made technical and grammatical changes; and in section 3(b), added "for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015," for accuracy.

ED *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 15 \$	FY 16 \$
Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection	GF - Cost	up to 4 million	none

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 15 \$	FY 16 \$
Various Local and Regional School Districts	Revenue Gain	up to 4 million	None
Various Local and Regional School Districts	Revenue Loss	See Below	See Below

Explanation

Section 1 of the bill creates a safe-travel-to-school grant program to provide grants to towns to improve student safety along routes to school. The Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) will administer the program, awarding up to 10 grants to towns by August 1, 2014. The average cost of a grant is anticipated to be approximately \$400,000 (based on national data of similar programs, including those operated by the Federal Department of Transportation). The total state cost to award up to 10 grants is anticipated to be approximately \$4 million in FY 15, and a corresponding revenue increase would result in the ten municipalities that receive a grant.

Section 2 requires DESPP to study the feasibility of establishing a student safety hotline, which is not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact as they have qualified staff available to conduct the study.

Section 3 (1) expands the state competitive school security grant program to private schools and (2) sets aside 10% of the funds available for FY 15 to be awarded to private schools.

Municipalities have received a total of \$21.2 million in school security infrastructure grants to date in bond funds. This funding has been expended.

However, sSB 29, the bond bill, as favorably reported by the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee, includes \$10 million for the School Security Infrastructure Grant Program. sSB 29 includes language allowing for grant funding for nonpublic schools. It is assumed that part of the \$10 million authorized in sSB 29 will be used to provide grants to nonpublic schools. Thus, under this bill nonpublic schools may receive \$1 million (10%) in school security grants in FY 15. This results in a potential revenue loss to local and regional school districts, as only 90% of the state grant would be eligible to public schools.

Sections 4, 5 and 6 make procedural and clarifying changes to the safe school climate plan submission, and are not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

Sources: Programs Promoting Safe Travel to School, OLR, 2013-R-0396

OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5564

AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL SAFETY.

SUMMARY:

This bill:

1. creates a new safe-travel-to-school grant program to improve student safety along routes to school,
2. extends a school security grant program to private schools,
3. requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to approve or reject school district safe school climate plans,
4. adds specific requirements to safe school climate surveys, and
5. requires a feasibility study for a student safety hotline.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§1 — SAFE-TRAVEL-TO-SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM

The bill creates a safe-travel-to-school grant program to provide grants to towns to improve student safety along routes to school. The Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) administers the program, accepting applications from towns until July 15, 2014, and awarding grants to up to 10 towns by August 1.

DESPP must establish the program for FY 15 to provide grants to towns for expenses incurred as part of improving student safety along routes of travel to schools and in the immediate areas around schools.

Under the bill, a town can submit an application, in a manner DESPP prescribes, that includes a plan to improve student safety along routes of travel to school and in the immediate areas around schools

during the hours before and after regular school hours. Each plan must:

1. be developed by the town in consultation with the local police and the local or regional board of education for the town,
2. include the travel routes to schools and areas around the schools the plan will cover,
3. establish the hours before and after school during which supervision may be provided along the travel routes and areas around the schools, and
4. require any person helping to implement of the plan to submit to state and national criminal history records checks prior to plan implementation.

In awarding grants, DESPP must give priority to towns with priority school districts or priority schools (see BACKGROUND).

§2 — STUDENT SAFETY HOTLINE FEASIBILITY STUDY

The bill requires DESPP to study the feasibility of establishing a student safety hotline and submit the study's results by January 1, 2015 to the Education Committee.

The study must include an analysis of:

1. the feasibility of establishing a student safety hotline to receive anonymous phone calls and text messages about the school safety concerns of K-12 students and provide assistance and referrals to the students,
2. the relevant referral areas and appropriate entities and agencies to receive the referrals,
3. student safety hotline operator training,
4. existing student safety hotlines in other states,

5. legal issues that might be associated with administering a student safety hotline, and
6. any other relevant topics or issues associated with such a hotline.

§ 3 — SCHOOL SECURITY GRANTS AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The bill (1) expands the states competitive school security grant program to private schools and (2) sets aside 10% of the funds available for FY 15 to be awarded to private schools. Current law established the grant program to improve security infrastructure in schools and authorized up to \$15 million in state bonds for the program (which has already been awarded). The grant program is jointly administered by DESPP, the Division of Construction Services, and the State Department of Education (SDE).

The program reimburses towns for certain expenses for (1) the development or improvement of security infrastructure, based on a required security assessment and (2) (a) school personnel training in the operation and maintenance of the new or improved security structure or (b) the purchase of portable entrance security devices, including metal detector wands, screening machines, and related training. The bill extends these provisions to private schools and requires the supervisory agent of those schools to apply for the funds.

While towns are eligible for reimbursements based on a sliding scale of town wealth, with poorer towns receiving a larger reimbursement and wealthier towns receiving less, under the bill grants for all private schools reimburse for 50% of the original cost.

§§ 4 & 5 — SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATE PLAN SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL OR REJECTION

The bill requires SDE to review each safe school climate plan that local or regional boards of education submit and either approve or reject it. SDE may reject a plan if it does not adequately ensure a safe school climate at the district's schools. Under current law, the local board approves the plan. If SDE rejects the plan, the local board of education must redevelop and resubmit it to SDE for approval within

30 days after the rejection. If SDE rejects the resubmitted plan, the board of education must adopt the SDE-developed model safe school climate plan.

By law, each board of education must submit a safe school climate plan to SDE. The plan must address bullying in the school district and permit parents and students to file complaints and require complaint investigations, the development of a prevention and intervention strategy, and numerous other steps related to bullying and bullying prevention.

Current law requires the local board of education to approve the plan and submit it to SDE. The bill requires the board to submit it to SDE for approval by July 1, 2014. It requires that the board make the plan available on the school district's and individual school's website 30 days after SDE approves it, rather than 30 days after the board approves it.

§ 6 — SCHOOL CLIMATE ASSESSMENT SURVEYS

Under current law, boards of education must use surveys to collect information on bullying prevention and intervention in school as part of their assessment of school climate. The bill specifies that districts must use a uniform survey to (1) collect information about students' perspectives and opinions on the school climate of their school and (2) allow students to complete and submit the surveys anonymously.

BACKGROUND

Related Bill

sSB 106 (File 315), favorably reported by the Human Services Committee, also changes local board of education responsibilities regarding safe school climate plans. Among other changes, the bill requires boards to reassess their plans annually and resubmit them to SDE every two years.

Priority School Districts

By law, priority school districts are districts whose students receive

low standardized test scores and have high levels of poverty (CGS § 10-266p(a)). There are 15 priority districts. A priority school is one with a high concentration of low income students that is not located in a priority district (CGS 10-265e).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 32 Nay 0 (03/21/2014)