
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5446

AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR REVISIONS AND ADDITIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES.

SUMMARY

This bill makes the following changes in the education statutes:

1. beginning July 1, 2018, requires newly hired school nurses to complete 12 hours of professional development during their first year of employment by a local or regional board of education (§ 1);
2. extends youth service bureau grant eligibility to bureaus who applied for grants in FY 18 (§ 2);
3. adds Connecticut's "safe haven law" to the required public school program of instruction (see BACKGROUND) (§ 3);
4. requires school districts' chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plans to include a way to collect and analyze data on student attendance, truancy, and chronic absenteeism for students with disabilities (§ 4);
5. requires SDE to identify effective truancy intervention models for local and regional boards of education that address the needs of students with disabilities and include them in a listing made available to the boards (§ 5); and
6. requires the Children's Committee's annual children's report card to present data indicators according to disability, in addition to other categories specified under current law (see BACKGROUND) (§ 6).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2018

§ 1 — PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SCHOOL NURSES

Starting July 1, 2018, the bill requires a school nurse who initially qualifies under State Board of Education regulations to complete 12 hours of professional development during his or her first year of employment by a local or regional board of education. (It is unclear whether a school nurse would have to complete such training again if hired by a different board of education later in his or her career.) The bill requires SDE, in collaboration with the Association of School Nurses and the Connecticut Nurses' Association, to approve the professional development curriculum.

§ 2 — YOUTH SERVICE BUREAU GRANTS

By law, the education commissioner must establish a youth service bureau grant program that, within available appropriations, awards \$14,000 grants to eligible bureaus that have applied for grants during designated fiscal years, with prior approval of their town's contribution. Towns must contribute an amount equal to the state grant amount of \$14,000.

The bill extends grant eligibility to bureaus that applied to receive grants during FY 18 with prior approval of their town's contribution. Current law limits eligibility to FY 17 applicants.

By law, youth service bureaus coordinate community-based services that provide prevention and intervention programs for delinquent, pre-delinquent, pregnant, parenting, and troubled youths referred to them by schools, police, and juvenile courts, among others.

§ 4 — CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM AND PREVENTION PLANS

By law, SDE must develop a chronic absenteeism and prevention plan for use by local and regional school boards. The plan must include the means for collecting and analyzing data relating to student attendance, truancy, and chronic absenteeism. The data must be disaggregated by school district, school grade, and specified subgroups, such as race, ethnicity, and gender. The bill adds students with disabilities to the list of data subgroups.

§ 5 — TRUANCY INTERVENTION MODELS

The bill requires SDE to identify effective truancy intervention models for local and regional boards of education that address the needs of students with disabilities. SDE must include them in a listing made available to boards of education by August 15, 2017 (a deadline that precedes this provision's effective date).

BACKGROUND

Children's Committee Annual Report Card

By law, the Children's Committee must maintain an annual report card evaluating the progress of state policies and programs in promoting the result that all Connecticut children grow up in a stable living environment, safe, healthy, and ready to lead successful lives. Progress must be measured by primary indicators, such as statewide rates of child abuse, child poverty, low birth weight, and third grade reading proficiency. Each progress indicator presents data by ethnicity or race, gender, geography, and, where appropriate, age and other characteristics (CGS § 2-53m of the 2018 supplement).

Safe Haven Law

The safe haven law allows a parent or a parent's lawful agent to voluntarily give up custody of an infant, age 30 days or younger, to the nursing staff of an emergency room without being subject to arrest for abandonment. The law does not protect the parent from being arrested and criminally prosecuted if abuse or neglect has occurred (CGS §§ 17a-57 to 17a-61).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 35 Nay 0 (03/23/2018)