

Education Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5446

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES.

Vote Date: 3/23/2018

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/14/2018

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Education Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill does the following:

- Section 1: requires school nurses to do 12 hours of professional development during their first year on the job
- Section 2: extends Youth Service Bureau grants to bureaus that applied for grants during FY 18
- Section 3: adds the Safe Haven Act to the required public school program of instruction
- Section 4: requires the chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan by school districts to include a means for collecting and analyzing data on student attendance/truancy/chronic absenteeism for the purpose of disaggregating data by students with disabilities
- Section 5: requires SDE to use truancy intervention models that address the needs of students with disabilities
- Section 6: requires the data in the annual children's report card to be presented according to disability, in addition to other categories in current law, for each progress indicator

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

Substitute language removed language specifying that the required pre-enrollment student dental screenings for public schools must be performed by a dentist who is licensed to practice dental medicine in CT or another state. It also removes from Section 6 the requirement that SDE use truancy prevention models (but maintains the requirement that the department use intervention models).

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner, State Department of Education:

Commissioner Wentzell testified on behalf of the State Department of Education stating support for several sections of HB 5446 but expressed concern about Section 4 and 6 of the bill:

Section 4: Dental screenings: Requiring families to have dental screenings performed by a dentist creates a burden to families by having to have a separate visit besides having to see a pediatrician who is qualified to conduct the screening. An additional appointment could cause a student to have to miss school until the dental screening occurs and might cause the parent to have to miss work which could cause a financial strain. *(This concern is addressed in substitute language.)*

Section 6: Truancy Interventions: Many of the current truancy intervention models the Department includes in its catalog do not specifically state that they help students with disabilities but they are effective with this population. The Department will continue adding models including those that “may have shown success with students with disabilities. *(This is in reference to language that was added which states: including intervention and prevention models that address the needs of students with disabilities.)*” Also, adding the term “prevention” changes the intention of the act (which is currently stated as “intervention”) and would require a completely new process to find models designed to prevent truancy.

Department of Children and Families (DCF):

DCF supports section 3 of HB 5446 which would require public schools to provide instruction about the Safe Haven Act. The act went into effect in October 2000 and allows people to drop infants off at a hospital emergency room without persecution; the infant would then be placed with a DCF licensed person to provide foster or adoptive care. In addition, HB 5446 provides an expedited path for adoptions. Although there have been successes since the act passed, 5 babies have been abandoned and three of these babies died. These cases highlight the need for greater public awareness of the Safe Haven law, particularly among high school age teens.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Section 1: 12 hours of professional development for first year school nurses

Chlo-Anne Bobrowski, RN MSN, President, Association of School Nurses of Connecticut (ASNC):

Ms. Bobrowski testified on behalf of the ASNC in support of Section 1 of HB 5446, which increases the number of professional development hours a first year school nurse must attend from 10 to 12 hours. This change was recommended by the School Nurse Advisory Council and will ensure that new nurses learn about “school health services, educational requirements in Special Education, Section 504” and other aspects unique to the school environment.

Donna Kosiorowski, RN MS NCSN, Association of school Nurses of CT and Connecticut Nurses’ Association:

Ms. Kosiorowski, Co-Chair of School Nurse Advisory Council, submitted testimony in favor of Section 1 of HB 5446 for the same reasons cited in testimony submitted by Ms. Bobrowski above.

Mary Jane M. Williams, PhD, R.N., Chair of Government Relations, Connecticut Nurses’ Association (CNA):

Ms. Williams testified on behalf of the CNA in support of Section 1 of HB 5446 but asked that the following substitute language be added:

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2018*) On and after July 1, 2018, any school nurse who is initially qualified as a school nurse pursuant to sections 10-212-1 to 10-212-7, inclusive, of the regulations of Connecticut state agencies, shall complete twelve hours of professional development **{DELETE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REPLACE WITH ORIENTATION TO THE PRACTICE OF SCHOOL NURSING}** during the first year, such school nurse is employed by a local or regional board of education. Such professional development shall use curriculum approved by the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Association of School Nurses and the Connecticut Nurses' Association.

Ms. Williams did not specify why she proposes this alternate language.

Section 2: Grant Funding for Youth Service Bureaus

Representative Christopher Davis, District 57 (East Windsor, Ellington):

Rep. Davis testified in support of Section 2 of HB 5446 stating that providing grants to Youth Service Bureaus (YSB) will provide youths with the necessary skills to learn, engage and excel in a different environment for youth to evolve and thrive.

Melissa Maltese, Director of Recreations and Community Services, East Windsor:

Ms. Maltese testified in support of Section 2 of HB 5446. She stated that East Windsor wants to create a Youth Service Bureau to provide a quality after school program to help youth make positive choices and avoid risky behavior. They plan to collaborate with Community and Board of Education Services to help address truancy issues.

Tamrah Briody, School Resource Officer, East Windsor:

Ms. Briody testified in support of Section 2 of HB 5446. She stated that in her capacity as a school resource officer many young adults have stated that they are bored and want more options and opportunities to channel their energy in a positive direction. By creating a YSB, the youth of East Windsor would be given this opportunity and promote healthy social interactions which is crucial in this age of technology isolation.

Section 3: School-based Instruction related to Safe Haven Act

Pam Sawyer, Coordinator, Baby Safe Havens Working Group:

Ms. Sawyer testified on behalf of the Baby Safe Havens Working Group stating support for section 3 of HB 5446 using the slogan “Ten Minutes in Tenth Grade.” Ms. Sawyer stated that educating all high school students about this law will save and improve lives. The law states that someone unable to care for an infant can bring the baby to one of 37 emergency rooms, leave the baby there with no questions asked, and receive a matching wrist bracelet in case the parent changes their mind in the next 30 days. The infant will be placed in a pre-approved adoptive home. If the parent changes his/her mind they can start a process to reclaim the infant. Ms. Sawyer noted that instructional materials about the law are available for download on the DCF website so teachers can easily find the information they need to teach their students.

Douglas Hood:

Mr. Hood submitted testimony in support of Section 3 of HB 5446. Starting in 2014, Mr. Hood went around Connecticut to learn how many newborns were killed by their mothers and what the consequences were for the mothers. He learned of 10 cases (6 were teenagers), each resulting in different judicial outcomes- some of the females received prison time, others are mandated to get counseling. The one commonality is none of the women knew about Connecticut’s Safe Haven Act. Mr. Hood feels schools should educate all students about this Act so lives can be saved.

Katie Leavitt, Farmington, CT:

Ms. Leavitt submitted testimony in support of Section 3 of HB 5446 citing that nearly 30 babies have been surrendered since 2000. Ms. Leavitt believes that ensuring that every generation of students is educated about this law is essential so that no infants die because of abandonment.

Recommended Amendment related to 5 year rolling average in determining ADM

Robert Valentine, First Selectman of Goshen:

Mr. Valentine submitted testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) on HB 5446. He proposed an amendment to HB 5446 to allow towns to use of a five-year rolling average in determining the ADM in schools for purposes of calculating member town allocations for more predictability in annual town assessments so that districts can draft an effective budget in the near term, while placing more efforts in providing quality education. This proposal came from the working group that COST put together to identify challenges faced by Regional School Districts. Mr. Valentine noted that in the current ADM trend “the Town of Goshen will see an increase next fiscal year of \$655,201 or 9% over current, while the Regional School District 6 budget is proposed to hold even for the coming year. However, under a five year rolling average the change would be a \$139,170 increase or 2%”.

Christopher G. Leone, Superintendent, Regional School District No. 6:

Mr. Leone stated his support for the substitute language proposed by COST for HB 5446. Mr. Leone expanded on the example Mr. Valentine offered regarding Goshen's future budget increases. He stated that if the formula for cost sharing is not modified to a five-year average these significant six-figure changes will become more commonplace in future years; even if the district maintains a 0% change to the local revenue, fiscal projections for 2019-2020, and 2020-2021, show Goshen with annual increases of \$128,301 and \$300,988, respectively. Mr. Leone stated these figures represent a total three-year increase to Goshen of \$1,084,490, or 14.7%, despite a total enrollment change of 1 student. He believes in order to continue a 45 year tradition of collaborative regional district budgeting, the committee should adopt the amendment to help towns absorb huge school budget increases which dramatically impact local tax payers and threaten district collaboration.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR SECTION 3:

The following individuals submitted testimony in support of the substitute language proposed by COST that is included in Mr. Valentine's testimony summary:

Craig B. Nelson, First Selectman, Warren:

Mr. Nelson stated his support for the substitute language proposed by COST for HB 5446 and noted that only regional school districts would be affected and it would be a positive effect.

Catherine Iino, First Selectwoman, Killingworth)

Chris Sanders, Board Member, Regional School District #6, Goshen

Section 4: Dental Screenings

Melanie Bonjour, School Based Health Centers (SBHCs) Program Manager, CT Institute for Communities, Inc.:

Ms. Bonjour submitted testimony on behalf of CT Institute for Communities about Section 4 of HB 5446. The five SBHCs that Ms. Bonjour manages provide school entry physicals to many children. Allowing the professionals who work there to perform dental assessments at the same time as the physical would ensure that the entire checkup is completed in a timely manner and limits the financial, transport and scheduling burden on families.

Ms. Bonjour suggests editing the bill language to "include School Based Health Center providers (APRSs, PAs and/or Dental Hygienists, and Dentists." *(This concern is partially addressed in substitute language.)*

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Section 1: 12 hours of professional development for first year school nurses

Daniel C. Giungi, Senior Legislative Associate for Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM):

Daniel Giungi submitted testimony on behalf of CCM in opposition to Section 1 of HB 5446 stating that increasing the professional development hours for first year school nurses from 10 to 12 hours would "further strain local resources."

Section 4: Dental Screenings

Chlo-Anne Bobrowski, RN MSN, President, Association of School Nurses of Connecticut (ASNC):

Ms. Bobrowski testified on behalf of the ASNC in opposition of Section 4 of HB 5446 noting that requiring families to see a dentist for the mandated dental screening, which many families do not have insurance coverage for, creates a financial burden and creates a barrier for student entry into school. Dental screenings are important and must be accessible to all families. *(This concern is addressed in substitute language.)*

Donna Kosiorowski, RN MS NCSN, Association of school Nurses of CT and Connecticut Nurses' Association:

Ms. Kosiorowski submitted testimony in opposition of Section 4 of HB 5446 stating that not allowing dental hygienists to perform dental screenings required for school entry creates a more restrictive policy creating a barrier for students to enter school. *(This concern is addressed in substitute language.)*

Section 6: Truancy Interventions

Daniel C. Giungi, Senior Legislative Associate for Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM):

Daniel Giungi submitted testimony on behalf of CCM in opposition to Section 6 of HB 5446 asking that the committee amend this bill to include language that allows for flexibility of implementation of truancy prevention models for students with disabilities at the local level.

Reported by: Tamara Morris

Date: April 2, 2018