

Education Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1069

AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS AND ADDITIONS TO THE

Title: EDUCATION STATUTES.

Vote Date: 3/25/2019

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/18/2019

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Education Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

Various revisions and additions to education statutes needed: types of schools were not previously defined to receive national criminal history record information, it was too costly for students in teacher preparation programs to pay for finger prints so fees will be waived, permits school operators and non-government school operators to require criminal background information from any person with direct contact with students, a report doesn't exist to identify regional cooperation with schools and towns, adding more topics not already covered to required health curriculum.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE LCO NO. 6597:

In Section 1-specified charter school's "governing councils" are employers who must follow background check rules, Section 2-adds criminal history records checks should be conducted with certain federal act, Section 5- clarifies that SBE must be provided to state police the identifying information of the individuals to be checked, Section 7-deletes to proposal to add additional topics.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner, State Department of Education: In support of the background check proposal to be compliant with federal rules. The SDE believes the added topics of "sexual harassment and assault, adolescent relationship abuse and intimate partner violence and human trafficking including commercial sexual exploitation" as mandated topics covered in health curriculum are important. However, the districts will need guidance and

support “in order to offer this instruction in a developmentally appropriate way, using culturally responsive methods” and the Department does not have a health education consultant who could assist with the work.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Senator Norm Needleman, 33rd Senatorial District: In support of the requirement for the Department of Education to identify methods school districts can begin to work on ridding red tape and inefficiencies that would allow new routes to success. Currently, the towns of Essex, Chester and Deep River operate a regional system with five boards of education due to existing state requirements.

Colleen Broderick: In support of topics added to health curriculum and would like to have sleep education and hygiene added to the list.

CABE: In support of provisions 1 through 5. But, some minor revisions to those sections are needed and will be presented by the Task Force, supports Section 6 for a study to identify any necessary statutory changes to enable school districts to engage in cooperative arrangements. Opposes Section 7 and urges refrain from the addition of specific items to the existing curriculum mandates, resources are available from SDE to enable districts to incorporate topics into the curriculum, specific mandate is not necessary.

Matthew Conway, Superintendent of Derby Public schools and Co-Chair of CAPSS Legislative Committee: In support of Task Force on Fingerprinting and Criminal History Background Checks for Educators and the study concerning authorization of towns and cooperative arrangements.

Bob Hannafin, Dean of Education School at Fairfield University: In support of waiver of state fees for background checks and fingerprint fee for student teacher which can be up to \$500. for two to possibly five separate in-district unpaid experiences and it moves the requirement for the background check to take place within 60 days of the student teacher placement so schools and teachers aren't violating state law due to lack of results being received.

Marty Isaac: In support of adding a late start time after 8:30 a.m. for middle and high schools to the bill.

Ruth Levy, Superintendent of Region 4 Schools, Chester, Deep River & Essex: In support of sharing personnel, cooperative agreements between the towns will allow shared personnel, programs and better programming and economic efficiencies.

Sarah A. Raskin, Ph.D. ABPP/ABCN: In support of an amendment to require late start time after 8:30 a.m. for middle and high school students.

Ray Rossomando, CEA: Supports Sections 1,2,3,4 and 5. He urges a centralized clearinghouse for fingerprinting educators who work in multiple districts and eliminate separate charges for substitute teachers and teachers who are employed in multiple districts He views Section 6 as redundant to SB 874. Regarding Section 7-CEA opposes adding more topics to health curricula because with passage, it would require 23 specific topics and

subtopics to be taught. Each year, there are numerous other legislative proposals that seek to expand topics and subtopics required to be taught in schools. “Together, they represent a significant shift of curricular decisions from teachers, administrators and locally elected boards of education to prescriptions by the state. CEA suggests that legislators consider new ways for developing a model curriculum for school districts that engages teachers, administrators and their school communities.”

Lon Seidman, Chairman, Essex Board of Education & Region 4 Supervision District:

Supports bill to help begin breaking down statutory barriers and roadblocks to regional cooperation, it will help his district eliminate redundancies that are in place now to be compliant with current state law and it would allow more flexibility in defining school districts.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Betsy Gara, COST: Supports efforts to facilitate the use of shared service regional approaches and urges lawmakers to revise law to authorize towns and cooperative arrangements to become a local education agency rather than require a time-consuming study.

Reported by: Kathy K. Shea

Date: April 8, 2019