AN ACT CONCERNING ENHANCED CLASSROOM SAFETY AND SCHOOL CLIMATE.

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

Section 1. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2019) (a) Not later than July 1, 2020, each local and regional board of education shall develop a classroom safety plan for the schools under the jurisdiction of such board. Each board shall implement a classroom safety plan for the school year commencing July 1, 2020, and each school year thereafter. Such classroom safety plan shall include:

(1) Protocols and supports for enhancing classroom safety, and addressing incidents that (A) require the temporary removal of a majority of the students and staff to reduce the likelihood of injury, (B) result in an injury that requires medical attention beyond basic first aid and that may include emergency room or doctor visits, or (C) result in an injury that (i) has been caused by the same person on more than one occasion, such as by means of kicking, biting or punching, (ii) has been verified by the school nurse or other medical personnel, and (iii) may not result in an emergency room or doctor visit. Such protocols and supports shall include:

(I) A process for designating an administrator who is responsible for mobilizing the crisis intervention team, described in subdivision (2) of subsection (o) of section 10-236b of the general statutes, in the absence
of the school principal;

(II) The location where a student who is responsible for or involved in such incident is sent when such student is temporarily removed from the classroom, in accordance with section 10-233b of the general statutes, in order to ensure the safety of such student and the other students and staff in the classroom, and which shall include access to appropriate professional staff, and which may include, but need not be limited to, therapeutic resources, instructional materials and technology, and any other resources conducive to addressing the temporary needs of such student;

(III) A plan, developed in accordance with the provisions of the safe school climate plan developed for the school district pursuant to section 10-222d of the general statutes, to generally and proactively lessen negative behaviors, enhance resiliency, increase the use of deescalation strategies, and improve social and peer-relations skills, which shall include training and may include, but need not be limited to, therapeutic supports, restorative practices, protocols and support provided by the Department of Education pursuant to section 3 of this act, trauma-informed instruction, or strategies to improve the school climate; and

(IV) A process for ensuring that such protocols and supports described in this subdivision comply with all state and federal laws and regulations for students who receive special education services or an accommodation for a disability, and that any recommendations for such students are consistent with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended from time to time, and section 10-76d of the general statutes, and are consistent with the individualized education program for such student developed by such student's planning and placement team or revised with the advice and consent of such planning and placement team;

(2) A notification process concerning incidents described in subdivision (1) of this subsection that occur within a classroom that
requires the principal of the school to (A) notify the parents or guardians of the students who were engaged in or were injured during such incident, provided such notification complies with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 USC 1232g, as amended from time to time, and (B) discuss at a meeting with the parents or guardians of the students who were engaged in such incident the specific supports or interventions undertaken by the school to address such incident, provided such meeting is conducted in a mutually agreed upon location that is convenient for the parent or guardian, which may be at the school or by means of a telephone conversation or video conference;

(3) A procedure for each school to document and maintain records relating to all reports and investigations of incidents described in subdivision (1) of this subsection that occur at the school, including the number of such incidents and grade level of the students involved in such incidents;

(4) A prohibition against discrimination or retaliation against any individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an incident described in subdivision (1) of this subsection;

(5) A requirement that an administrator conduct a meeting with the teacher who witnesses an incident described in subdivision (1) of this subsection, not later than two school days following such incident, to discuss and determine the supports and interventions necessary to support the student and teacher, provided such meeting does not violate the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 USC 1400 et seq., as amended from time to time, section 10-76d of the general statutes and the individualized education program for such student developed by such student's planning and placement team;

(6) A requirement that notice of an incident described in subdivision (1) of this subsection be sent, not later than two school days following such incident, to the planning and placement team, if any, of a student
who was involved in such incident for the purpose of determining any
supports and interventions for such student; and

(7) A requirement that any student who is not receiving special
education and related services and who engages in (A) two or more
incidents described in subdivision (1) of this subsection, or (B) one or
more such incidents and whose behavior, attendance or academic
performance in school is considered unsatisfactory, be referred to a
planning and placement team to determine eligibility for special
education and related services pursuant to sections 10-76a to 10-76d,
inclusive, of the general statutes.

(b) In the case of a student who is not receiving special education
and related services, but for whom supports and interventions have
been provided following an incident described in subdivision (1) of
subsection (a) of this section, whenever a teacher has continued
concerns with such supports or interventions, or lack thereof, to
address such incident, the teacher may request an emergency meeting
of the scientific research-based intervention team or crisis intervention
team, as appropriate, to review the response to such incident. Such
emergency meeting shall occur not later than three school days
following such request. The committee shall review such supports or
interventions determined pursuant to subdivision (5) or (6) of
subsection (a) of this section, and may revise such supports or
interventions to address the concerns of the teacher. There shall be no
discrimination or retaliation against any teacher who requests a
meeting pursuant to this subsection.

(c) Any supports or interventions provided under this section to any
student who receives special education or related services or an
accommodation for a disability shall be determined in accordance with
and comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations,
including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of
1973, as amended from time to time, the Individuals with Disabilities
Education Act, 20 USC 1400 et seq., as amended from time to time,
section 10-76d of the general statutes and the individualized education
program for such student developed by such student's planning and
placement team.

(d) Each local and regional board of education shall submit an
annual report to the Department of Education concerning all incidents
described in subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of this section that
occurred in the classrooms of schools under the jurisdiction of such
board. Such report shall include the total number of such incidents, the
grade levels of students involved in such incidents, and the race and
category of disability of students involved in such incidents.

Sec. 2. Section 10-222h of the general statutes is repealed and the
following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2019):

(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
model safe school climate 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,
to be used by local and regional boards of education for the purposes
of collecting information 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] July 1, 2020, and annually

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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 and incidents described in subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of section 1 of this act 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 and incidents described in subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of section 1 of this act in schools and improve school climate and safety 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) Not later than January 1, 2020, the department shall procure or otherwise invite requests for proposals to develop and implement a biennial state-wide school climate survey, and thereafter enter into a contract to carry out the provisions of this section and subsection (d) of section 10-222d. The state-wide school climate survey shall at a minimum:

(1) Seek confidential responses from school employees, including principals, assistant principals, teachers, school social workers, school psychologists, school nurses, school counselors and school paraprofessionals, and, in a separate survey, seek confidential responses from parents; and

(2) Solicit information from school employees and parents, as deemed appropriate and relevant for such respondent, on (A) the learning environment for students, including academic supports and resources, school safety and security and outreach to parents, (B) the teaching environment, including resources, supports and professional
development for teachers, administrators and other educators, teacher leadership and collaborative planning time, (C) strategies for establishing a positive and welcoming environment for students, parents of students, teachers and administrators of all races, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds, and (D) supports and strategies for the development and retention of new teachers, minority teachers and administrators, school psychologists and school counselors.

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

Sec. 3. (Effective from passage) The Department of Education shall solicit public input regarding the development and implementation of the biennial state-wide school climate survey described in subsection (c) of section 10-222h of the general statutes, as amended by this act.

Sec. 4. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2019) The Department of Education shall, within available appropriations, (1) develop and disseminate strategies to assist local and regional boards of education in (A) enhancing their safe school climate plans, developed pursuant to section 10-222d of the general statutes, and classroom safety plans, developed pursuant to section 1 of this act, (B) reducing incidents of school violence, and (C) promoting trauma sensitivity in schools, and (2) make available to school districts designated as alliance districts pursuant to section 10-262u of the general statutes, resources to promote systemic improvement of school climate through training, strategies for connecting youth to appropriate services and fostering trauma-sensitive school communities.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

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