AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL LITERACY.

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

Section 1. Section 10-14t of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2019):

(a) On or before [January 1, 2016] July 1, 2019, the Department of Education shall develop or approve reading assessments for use by local and regional boards of education for towns designated as an alliance district, as defined in section 10-262u, as amended by this act, for the school year commencing July 1, [2016] 2019, and each school year thereafter, to identify students in kindergarten to grade [three] five, inclusive, who are below proficiency in reading, provided any reading assessments developed or approved by the department include frequent screening and progress monitoring of students. Such reading assessments shall (1) measure phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, (2) provide opportunities for periodic formative assessment during the school year, (3) produce data that is useful for informing individual and classroom instruction, including the grouping of students based on such data and the selection of instructional activities based on data of individual student response patterns during such progress monitoring, (4) be compatible with best practices in reading instruction and research, and (5) assist in identifying, in whole or in part, students at risk for dyslexia, as defined in section 10-3d, or other reading-related learning disabilities.
(b) Not later than [February 1, 2016] July 1, 2020, the Commissioner of Education shall submit the reading assessments developed or approved under this section to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a.

Sec. 2. Section 10-14u of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2019):

(a) As used in this section:

(1) "Achievement gap" means the existence of a significant disparity in the academic performance of students among and between (A) racial groups, (B) ethnic groups, (C) socioeconomic groups, (D) genders, and (E) English language learners and students whose primary language is English.

(2) "Scientifically-based reading research and instruction" means (A) a comprehensive program or a collection of instructional practices that is based on reliable, valid evidence showing that when such programs or practices are used, students can be expected to achieve satisfactory reading progress, and (B) the integration of instructional strategies for continuously assessing, evaluating and communicating the student's reading progress and needs in order to design and implement ongoing interventions so that students of all ages and proficiency levels can read and comprehend text and apply higher level thinking skills. Such comprehensive program or collection of practices includes, but is not limited to, instruction in five areas of reading: Phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension.

(b) For the school year commencing July 1, [2014] 2019, and each school year thereafter, the Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the coordinator of the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success, established pursuant to section 5 of this act, shall create an intensive reading instruction program to improve student literacy in
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grades kindergarten to grade [three] five, inclusive, and close the
achievement gap. Such intensive reading instruction program shall
include routine reading assessments for students in kindergarten to
grade [three] five, inclusive, scientifically-based reading research and
instruction, an intensive reading intervention strategy, as described in
subsection (c) of this section, supplemental reading instruction and
reading remediation plans, as described in subsection (d) of this
section, and an intensive summer school reading program, as
described in subsection (e) of this section. [For the school year
commencing July 1, 2014, the commissioner shall select five elementary
schools that are (1) located in an educational reform district, as defined
in section 10-262u, as amended by this act, (2) participating in the
commissioner's network of schools, pursuant to section 10-223h, or (3)
among the lowest five per cent of elementary schools in school subject
performance indices for reading and mathematics, as defined in
section 10-223e, to participate in the intensive reading instruction
program and for the school year commencing July 1, 2015, and each
school year thereafter, the commissioner may select up to five
additional such elementary schools to participate in the intensive
reading instruction program.] For the school year commencing July 1,
2019, the commissioner, in consultation with the Center for Literacy
Research and Reading Success, shall provide, upon request, such
intensive reading instruction program to a local or regional board of
education for a town designated as an alliance district, as defined in
section 10-262u, as amended by this act, or may include such intensive
reading instruction program in the tiered supports in early literacy
provided under the reading readiness program pursuant to section 10-
14y, as amended by this act.

(c) On or before July 1, [2014] 2019, the Department of Education, in
consultation with the Center for Literacy Research and Reading
Success, shall develop an intensive reading intervention strategy for
use by [schools selected by the Commissioner of Education to
participate in the intensive reading instruction program to address the
achievement gap at such schools and to] any elementary school located
in an alliance district that enrolls students who are not reading at or above grade level to ensure that [all] such students are reading proficiently by grade [three] five in such schools. Such intensive reading intervention strategy [for schools] shall (1) include, but not be limited to, (A) rigorous assessments in reading skills, (B) scientifically-based reading research and instruction, (C) [one] external literacy [coach for] coaches made available to each school [, to be funded by the department,] who will work with the reading data collected, support the principal of the school as needed, observe, and coach classes and supervise the reading interventions, (D) [four] reading interventionists [for each school, to be funded by the department,] who will develop a reading remediation plan for any student who is reading below proficiency, be responsible for all supplemental reading instruction, and conduct reading assessments as needed, and (E) training for teachers and administrators in scientifically-based reading research and instruction, including [.] training for school administrators on how to assess a classroom to ensure that all children are proficient in reading by grade [three] five, and (2) outline, at a minimum, how (A) reading data will be collected, analyzed and used for purposes of instructional development, (B) professional and leadership development will be related to reading data analysis and used to support individual teacher and classroom needs, (C) [the selected] schools will communicate with parents and guardians of students on reading instruction strategies and student reading performance goals, and on opportunities for parents and guardians to partner with teachers and school administrators to improve reading at home and at school, (D) teachers and school leaders will be trained in the science of teaching reading, (E) periodic student progress reports will be issued, and (F) such [selected school] intensive reading intervention strategy will be monitored at the classroom level. The commissioner shall review and evaluate the [school] intensive reading intervention strategy for model components that may be used and replicated in other [schools and school] alliance districts to ensure that all children are proficient in reading by grade [three] five.
(d) (1) For the school year commencing July 1, [2014] 2019, and each school year thereafter, each school selected by the Commissioner of Education to participate in the intensive reading instruction program under this section shall [local and regional board of education for a town designated as an alliance district] shall, in consultation with the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success, provide supplemental reading instruction to students in kindergarten to grade three, inclusive, who are reading below proficiency, as identified by the reading assessment described in section 10-14t, as amended by this act. Such supplemental reading instruction shall be provided by a reading interventionist during regular school hours.

(2) A reading remediation plan shall be developed by a reading interventionist for each student in an alliance district in kindergarten to grade three, inclusive, who has been identified as reading below proficiency to address and correct the reading deficiency of such student. Such remediation plan shall include instructional strategies that utilize research based reading instruction materials and teachers trained in reading instruction, parental involvement in the implementation of the remediation plan and regular progress reports on such student.

(3) The principal of a school selected by the Commissioner of Education to participate in the intensive reading instruction program under this section of each school in an alliance district shall notify the parent or guardian of any student in kindergarten to grade three, inclusive, who has been identified as being below proficiency in reading. Such notice shall be in writing and (A) include an explanation of why such student is below proficiency in reading, and (B) inform such parent or guardian that a remediation plan, as described in subdivision (2) of this subsection, will be developed for such student to provide supplemental reading instruction, including strategies for the parent or guardian to use at home with such student.

(e) (1) Any student enrolled in a school selected by the
Commissioner of Education that is located in a priority school district, pursuant to section 10-266p, to participate in the intensive reading instruction program under this section and who is reading below proficiency at the end of the school year shall be enrolled in] Each local and regional board of education for a town designated as an alliance district shall, in collaboration with the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success, provide any student in kindergarten to grade five, inclusive, who is reading below proficiency at the end of the school year with an intensive summer school reading instruction program. Such intensive summer school reading instruction program shall include, (A) a comprehensive reading intervention program, (B) scientifically-based reading research and instruction strategies and interventions, (C) diagnostic assessments administered to a student prior to or during an intensive summer school reading instruction program to determine such student's particularized need for instruction, (D) teachers who are trained in the teaching of reading and reading assessment and intervention, and (E) weekly progress monitoring to assess the reading progress of such student and tailor instruction for such student.

(2) [The principal of a school selected by the Commissioner of Education to participate in] Each local and regional board of education for a town designated as an alliance district providing supplemental reading instruction as part of the intensive reading instruction program under this section shall submit reports to the Department of Education, at such time and in such manner as prescribed by the department, on (A) student reading progress for each student reading below proficiency based on the data collected from the screening and progress monitoring of such student using the reading assessments described in section 10-14t, as amended by this act, and (B) the specific reading interventions and supports implemented.

(f) Not later than October 1, [2015] 2019, and annually thereafter, the department shall report to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, in
accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, on student reading levels [in schools participating] in the intensive reading instruction program. Such report shall include recommendations on model components of the school intensive reading intervention strategy that may be used and replicated in other [schools and school] alliance districts.

Sec. 3. Section 10-14v of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2019):

On or before January 1, [2014] 2019, the Department of Education shall, in collaboration with the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success, established pursuant to section 5 of this act, develop a coordinated state-wide reading plan for students in kindergarten to grade [three] five, inclusive, that contains strategies and frameworks that are research-driven to produce effective reading instruction and improvement in student performance. Such plan shall include: (1) The alignment of reading standards, instruction and assessments for students in kindergarten to grade [three] five, inclusive; (2) teachers' use of data on the progress of all students to adjust and differentiate instructional practices to improve student reading success; (3) the collection of information concerning each student's reading background, level and progress so that teachers can use such information to assist in the transition of a student's promotion to the next grade level; (4) an intervention for each student who is not making adequate progress in reading to help such student read at the appropriate grade level; (5) enhanced reading instruction for students who are reading at or above their grade level; (6) the coordination of reading instruction activities between parents, students, teachers and administrators of the school district at home and in school; (7) school district reading plans; (8) parental involvement by providing parents and guardians of students with opportunities for partnering with teachers and school administrators to (A) create an optimal learning environment, and (B) receive updates on the reading progress of their student; (9) teacher training and reading performance tests aligned
with teacher preparation courses and professional development activities; (10) incentives for schools that have demonstrated significant improvement in student reading; (11) research-based literacy training for early childhood care and education providers and instructors working with children birth to five years of age, inclusive, and transition plans relating to oral language and preliteracy proficiency for children between prekindergarten and kindergarten; (12) the alignment of reading instruction with the common core state standards adopted by the State Board of Education; and (13) the alignment of reading instruction with the two-generational initiative established pursuant to section 17b-112l, as amended by this act.

Sec. 4. Section 10-14y 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 and in collaboration with the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success, established pursuant to section 5 of this act, establish a reading readiness program that provides tiered supports in early literacy to each school district designated as an alliance district, pursuant to section 10-262u, and each school participating in the commissioner's network of schools, pursuant to section 10-223h. The department shall conduct an assessment of the reading readiness of students enrolled in kindergarten to grade [three] five, inclusive, for each such school and school district. Such reading readiness assessment shall consider any combination of the following:

(1) Whether such school or school district has developed and is implementing a multiyear plan and allocated resources specifically for early literacy in kindergarten to grade [three] five, inclusive, (2) whether teachers and administrators have received training regarding the science of teaching reading, and the extent to which teachers and administrators have completed the program of professional development in scientifically based reading research and instruction, pursuant to section 10-148b, (3) the level of access to external coaches in literacy, and (4) whether there is reading intervention staff
(b) The department shall identify the early literacy needs of each school and school district described in subsection (a) of this section based on the results of the reading readiness assessment conducted pursuant to [said] subsection (a) of this section, and provide, in collaboration with the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success, tiered supports in early literacy as follows:

(1) Tier one universal supports shall [be provided to each such school district that is an educational reform district, as defined in section 10-262u, and] include online professional development modules aligned with the reading instruction survey, as described in section 10-145r, and other literacy modules and programs available in the state;

(2) Tier two targeted supports shall include (A) a two-year program of literacy leadership training for certain teachers and administrators, (B) targeted professional development, in accordance with the provisions of section 10-148b, using the results of the reading instruction survey, as described in section 10-145r, and (C) external coaching support using funding received pursuant to section 10-223h or 10-262u; and

(3) Tier three intensive supports shall include multiyear support from the department and a commitment from such school or school district, that includes, but need not be limited to, (A) the use of funding received pursuant to section 10-262u, as amended by this act, to support an early literacy program for students enrolled in kindergarten to grade [three] five, inclusive, (B) technical support in the drafting and submission of alliance district reading plans, as described in section 10-262u, as amended by this act, (C) identifying and embedding dedicated literacy coaches and reading interventionists, (D) targeted and intensive professional development, and (E) funds for assessment and instructional materials.
(c) Any tiered supports in early literacy provided under this section shall be aligned with any turnaround plan, developed pursuant to section 10-223h, or alliance district plan, developed pursuant to section 10-262u, as amended by this act, as applicable.

Sec. 5. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2019) (a) The Department of Education shall establish a Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success. The center shall be responsible for (1) collaborating with the department in the implementation of the coordinated state-wide reading plan for students in kindergarten to grade five, inclusive, established pursuant to section 10-14v of the general statutes, as amended by this act, (2) researching and developing, in collaboration with the department and Office of Early Childhood, a birth to grade twelve reading success strategy to be included in the alignment of reading instruction with the two-generational initiative, established pursuant to section 17b-112l of the general statutes, as amended by this act, (3) providing direct support to schools and boards of education to improve reading outcomes for students in kindergarten to grade five, inclusive, through coaching, leadership training, professional development, parental engagement and technical assistance that is consistent with the intensive reading instruction program, as described in section 10-14u of the general statutes, as amended by this act, and aligned with evidence-based practices, (4) developing and maintaining an Internet web site for the purpose of (A) disseminating tools and information associated with the intensive reading instruction program and other reading initiatives, and (B) supporting the community of teachers, schools and boards of education engaged in improving student reading, and (5) serving as a collaborative center for institutions of higher education and making available to the faculty of teacher preparation programs (A) the science of teaching reading, (B) the intensive reading instruction program, and (C) samples of available curriculum.

(b) The center shall be under the direction of a coordinator who shall, in consultation with the Reading Leadership Advisory Council
described in subsection (c) of this section, be responsible for (1) overseeing all activities of the center, (2) facilitating communication between the center and boards of education, the Department of Education and other affiliates of the center, and (3) coordinating the dissemination of information, tools and services made available by the center.

(c) The activities of the center shall be implemented by the Reading Leadership Advisory Council which shall consist of the following members: (1) The coordinator of the center, or the coordinator's designee, (2) the director of reading initiatives for the Department of Education, as described in section 10-3c of the general statutes, as amended by this act, (3) the executive director of the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors, or the executive director's designee, (4) literacy experts, designated by the coordinator, who are engaged in the development and implementation of the intensive reading instruction program, (5) an individual designated by the chairperson of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus of the General Assembly, provided such individual is not a member of the General Assembly, and (6) the dean of the Neag School of Education at The University of Connecticut, or the dean's designee. The Reading Leadership Advisory Council shall develop and publish the annual goals for the center and meet at least once every two months. The Reading Leadership Advisory Council may establish an advisory board that consists of representatives from public, private and philanthropic organizations, and is responsible for providing advice, guidance and resources for the center's goal and mission.

(d) The center shall hire reading coaches who have experience and expertise in the intensive reading instruction program. Such reading coaches shall (1) provide training and professional development on the intensive reading instruction program, literacy leadership and effective instruction to teachers, (2) work directly with teachers to support the implementation of the intensive reading instruction program and attend school and school district leadership, data and planning
meetings, (3) provide coaching to teachers, and (4) lead and participate in family engagement activities.

(e) For purposes of establishing and administering the center under this section, the Department of Education may enter into a memorandum of understanding with a public institution of higher education that has expertise in scientifically-based reading research and instruction, as defined in section 10-14u of the general statutes, as amended by this act, and prior experience in the delivery of comprehensive school-wide evidence-based reading instruction and intervention in grades kindergarten to five, inclusive.

Sec. 6. (Effective from passage) (a) There is established a working group to study issues relating to the teaching of scientifically-based reading research and instruction, as defined in section 10-14u of the general statutes, as amended by this act, as part of teacher preparation programs, as defined in section 10-10a of the general statutes, offered by public and independent institutions of higher education in the state. Such study shall include, but need not be limited to, an examination of (1) whether, or to what extent, (A) such teacher preparation programs are providing, pursuant to subsection (e) of section 10-145a of the general statutes, instruction on the knowledge and pedagogy of the science of reading and the skills that are tested as part of the reading instruction examination approved by the State Board of Education on April 1, 2009, and (B) professors in such teacher preparation programs have received training on or are competent to provide such instruction, and (2) the number of credit hours of such instruction being provided in such teacher preparation programs.

(b) The working group shall consist of the following members:

(1) The director of reading initiatives for the Department of Education, as described in section 10-3c of the general statutes, as amended by this act;

(2) The executive director of the Commission on Women, Children
and Seniors, or the executive director's designee;

(3) Three members who are representatives from the Neag School of Education at The University of Connecticut, appointed by the president of The University of Connecticut;

(4) Four members who are representatives from each of the teacher preparation programs offered at Western Connecticut State University, Southern Connecticut State University, Eastern Connecticut State University and Central Connecticut State University, appointed by the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities;

(5) Three members who are representatives from teacher preparation programs offered by independent institutions of higher education in the state, appointed by the president of the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges; and

(6) Two members who have expertise in scientifically-based reading research and instruction, appointed by the executive director of the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors.

(c) All appointments to the working group shall be made not later than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority.

(d) The director of reading initiatives for the Department of Education shall schedule the first meeting of the working group, which shall be held not later than sixty days after the effective date of this section. The members of the working group shall elect the chairperson of the working group from among the members of the working group at the first meeting.

(e) Not later than January 1, 2021, the working group shall submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education and higher education, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes. Such report shall
include a recommendation as to the appropriate number of credit hours for the instruction on the knowledge and pedagogy of the science of reading and the skills that are tested as part of the reading instruction examination approved by the State Board of Education on April 1, 2009. The working group shall terminate on the date that it submits such report or January 1, 2021, whichever is later.

Sec. 7. Subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of section 17b-112l of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2019):

(2) Alignment of existing state and local support systems around the (A) household, including how to leverage Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant funds, and services to equip such households with the tools and skills needed to overcome obstacles and engage opportunities, and (B) the coordinated state-wide reading plan for students in kindergarten to grade [three] five, inclusive, developed pursuant to section 10-14v, as amended by this act;

Sec. 8. Section 10-3c of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2019):

There shall be a director of reading initiatives within the Department of Education. The director shall be responsible for (1) administering the intensive reading instruction program to improve student literacy in kindergarten to grade [three] five, inclusive, and close the achievement gap, pursuant to section 10-14u, as amended by this act, (2) assisting in the development and administration of the program of professional development for teachers and principals in scientifically based reading research and instruction, pursuant to section 10-148b, (3) administering the coordinated state-wide reading plan for students in kindergarten to grade [three] five, inclusive, pursuant to section 10-14v, as amended by this act, (4) administering the incentive program described in section 10-14w, (5) providing assistance to local and regional boards of education in the administration of the reading assessments described in section 10-14t.
as amended by this act, and the implementation of school district
reading plans, (6) providing information and assistance to parents and
guardians of students relating to reading and literacy instruction, (7)
addressing reading and literacy issues related to students who are
English language learners, and (8) developing and administering any
other state-wide reading and literacy initiatives for students in
kindergarten to grade twelve, inclusive.

Sec. 9. Subsection (d) of section 10-262u of the general statutes is
repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July
1, 2019):

(d) The local or regional board of education for a town designated
as an alliance district may apply to the Commissioner of Education, at
such time and in such manner as the commissioner prescribes, to
receive any increase in funds received over the amount the town
received for the prior fiscal year pursuant to subsection (a) of section
10-262i. Applications pursuant to this subsection shall include
objectives and performance targets and a plan that are developed, in
part, on the strategic use of student academic performance data. Such
plan may include, but not be limited to, the following: (1) A tiered
system of interventions for the schools under the jurisdiction of such
board based on the needs of such schools, (2) ways to strengthen the
foundational programs in reading, through the intensive reading
instruction program pursuant to section 10-14u, as amended by this
act, to ensure reading mastery in kindergarten to grade [three] five,
inclusive, with a focus on standards and instruction, proper use of
data, intervention strategies, current information for teachers, parental
engagement, and teacher professional development, (3) additional
learning time, including extended school day or school year
programming administered by school personnel or external partners,
(4) a talent strategy that includes, but is not limited to, teacher and
school leader recruitment and assignment, career ladder policies that
draw upon guidelines for a model teacher evaluation program
adopted by the State Board of Education, pursuant to section 10-151b,
and adopted by each local or regional board of education. Such talent strategy may include provisions that demonstrate increased ability to attract, retain, promote and bolster the performance of staff in accordance with performance evaluation findings and, in the case of new personnel, other indicators of effectiveness, (5) training for school leaders and other staff on new teacher evaluation models, (6) provisions for the cooperation and coordination with early childhood education providers to ensure alignment with district expectations for student entry into kindergarten, including funding for an existing local Head Start program, (7) provisions for the cooperation and coordination with other governmental and community programs to ensure that students receive adequate support and wraparound services, including community school models, (8) provisions for implementing and furthering state-wide education standards adopted by the State Board of Education and all activities and initiatives associated with such standards, (9) strategies for attracting and recruiting minority teachers and administrators, (10) provisions for the enhancement of bilingual education programs, pursuant to section 10-17f, or other language acquisition services to English language learners, including, but not limited to, participation in the English language learner pilot program, established pursuant to section 10-17n, (11) entering into the model school district responsibilities agreement, described in section 10-223l, (12) leadership succession plans that provide training and learning opportunities for administrators and are designed to assist in the seamless transition of school and district personnel in and out of leadership positions in the school district and the continuous implementation of plans developed under this subsection, and (13) any additional categories or goals as determined by the commissioner. Such plan shall demonstrate collaboration with key stakeholders, as identified by the commissioner, with the goal of achieving efficiencies and the alignment of intent and practice of current programs with conditional programs identified in this subsection. The commissioner may (A) require changes in any plan submitted by a local or regional board of education before the
commissioner approves an application under this subsection, and (B) permit a local or regional board of education, as part of such plan, to use a portion of any funds received under this section for the purposes of paying tuition charged to such board pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (k) of section 10-264l or subsection (b) of section 10-264o.

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

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