

Education Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1093

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JUVENILE
JUSTICE POLICY AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE CONCERNING

Title: EDUCATION.

Vote Date: 3/17/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/1/2023

File No.: 442

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Education Committee

Rep. Robyn A. Porter, 94th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

Sections 1, 5, and 6 intend on improving suspension/expulsion plans through school board requirements, annual reporting, and the creation of a State Department of Education (SDE) committee for preschool through grade two suspensions/expulsions. Section 2 creates new SDE staff positions. Sections 3 and 4 look to improve mental health through screening recommendations. This bill mainly addresses research and concerns regarding the safety, academic outcomes, and social-emotional development of students with respect to suspension and expulsion.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The substitute language for this bill adds a provision Section 2 requiring the Office of Policy Management (OPM) to redesignate existing, unfilled SDE staff positions to create four new positions which would assist schools with suspension/expulsion improvement plans. Section 3 regarding capping class sizes is removed. Section 4 adds language allowing school boards to screen students exhibiting mental health distress. Section 5 is changed to require school boards to annually report to JJPOC and SDE.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

State Department of Education, Commissioner, Charlene Russell-Tucker: provides general comments on the bill. Regarding Sections 1 and 2, they suggest that the department publish corrective plans online rather than report to the education committee. Regarding Section 3 and 4, they raise concern that creating a class size cap will require increased funding and staffing* and highlight the importance preschool classroom space as it impacts class sizes. Regarding Section 5, they note the department's continuing work on youth mental health assessments and suicide prevention efforts. Regarding Section 6, they raise concern that student data being requested by JJPOC may not be in line with federal and state privacy laws. They suggest providing aggregate data as an alternative. Finally, regarding Section 7, they request that language reflects the engagement of the School Discipline Collaborative in place of the JJPOC subcommittee as the department already has a significant number of mandated committees and taskforces.

**The substitute language for this bill removes the provision on class size caps.*

Office of the Child Advocate, Associate Child Advocate, Christina Ghio: supports for the bill stating that it addresses disproportionate disciplinary actions, reduces class sizes for a more individualized educational experience*, puts focus on students' mental health, provides alternative educational opportunities, and addresses disciplinary issues for students in preschool through grade two.

**The substitute language for this bill removes the provision on class size caps.*

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity, & Opportunity (CWCSEO), Children's Policy Analyst, Thomas Nuccio: supports this bill stating the effects of exclusionary discipline are associated with youth disengagement, academic turmoil, and an increased risk of entrance into the juvenile justice system.

Special Education Equity for Kids in CT (SEEK), Legislative Chair, Andrew Feinstein: states that there are additional steps that need to be taken in addition to defining the ban more narrowly regarding expulsion discipline of very young children. They state that we need safe, therapeutic spaces in schools to provide more support and resources for kids who are alienated and acting out instead of punishment that removes those kids from schools. They mention that capping class sizes would require a substantial increase in funding for Connecticut cities*.

**The substitute language for this bill removes the provision on class size caps.*

Recovery For All, Director, Puya Gerami: states that we need to ensure all Connecticut students will benefit from smaller class sizes because they will improve learning conditions for children and working conditions for school staff*. They state that we can fund this by requiring our wealthy corporations and residents to contribute more of what they owe to public education.

**The substitute language for this bill removes the provision on class size caps.*

Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS), Executive Director, Fran Rabinowitz: requests that the committee fully reconsider the Suspension and Expulsion Workgroup's recommendations. They state that districts with high number of suspensions and expulsions should be required to implement and submit a plan for improvement to SDE. They support reducing and implementing a cap on class sizes*.

**The substitute language for this bill removes the provision on class size caps.*

New Haven Federation of Teachers (NHFT), President, Leslie Blatteau: states that their school system primarily educates Black and Brown students, and they welcome new students throughout all points in the school year. This means their class sizes fluctuate. They state that lowering our class sizes is within our reach and suggest using the surplus and Rainy-Day Fund to do so. They state that lower class sizes have proven benefits for both students in academic performance, student engagement, graduation rates, college persistence, school culture and climate, and teachers in morale and retention*.

**The substitute language for this bill removes the provision on class size caps.*

New Haven Federation of Teachers Local 933 (NHFT-933R), President, Nancy Charest: supports the smaller class sizes in this bill*, stating that research shows how smaller class sizes can have positive impacts on school climate, student socio-emotional development, school safety, parent engagement, and teacher attrition. They state that these benefits are valuable given increased anxiety, stress, and other mental health and social wellbeing concerns among students.

**The substitute language for this bill removes the provision on class size caps.*

School and State Finance Project, Senior Data Analyst & Policy Analyst, Morgan Considine & Sasha Davis: shares data about in- and out-of-school suspensions in the state. They state that there is a disparity in the rate of suspensions among Black and Hispanic/Latino students compared with white students, highlighting that reduced class sizes and increase in staff support are necessary, but may be a financial burden for districts with higher-need students*. They ask that there be funding supplied by the state to support the school districts that will need the most investment.

**The substitute language for this bill removes the provision on class size caps.*

Connecticut Education Association (CEA), President, Kate Dias: states that this bill provides resources to students whose behaviors indicate a need for additional support – mental health counseling and treatment, and better school environments. They state they are pleased with the caps on class sizes* and share their own experience with teaching large class sizes and the difficulties that caused – crammed classrooms, not enough desks, no space for work groups, no meaningful connections. They also share the stark difference once class sizes were reduced making engaging with students easier and provided more opportunity for creative teaching ideas.

**The substitute language for this bill removes the provision on class size caps.*

Hartford Federation of Teachers, President, Carol Gale: supports this bill stating that students deserve smaller class sizes and teacher's attention to address their individual needs, as struggling students will often develop behavioral issues as a cry for help*.

**The substitute language for this bill removes the provision on class size caps.*

Connecticut Justice Alliance, Justice Advisor, Sage Grady: supports this bill stating that children should not be punished in punitive ways, rather, there should be alternative solutions to help children understand the root of the problem.

Connecticut Justice Alliance, Justice Advisor, Al'Urdun Islam: supports this bill stating exclusionary discipline does not have a proven track record of helping with underlying behavioral issues.

UU Congregation of Danbury, Board President, Margaret Henderson: supports this bill stating research has shown smaller class sizes benefit everyone, as it will increase high school graduation rates while also resulting in more engaged and less disruptive students*.
**The substitute language for this bill removes the provision on class size caps.*

CT Legal Services, Managing Attorney, Agata Raszcyk-Lawska: supports this bill stating there are no positive outcomes of suspending a student at a young age, as it causes students to fail both academically and behaviorally as many students are sent back to bad issues at home.

University of New Haven, Research Fellow, Jessica Morgan: supports this bill stating that there are many destructive impacts on students who receive suspensions or expulsions, and young people who are a part of marginalized groups are being impacted at a disproportionate rate.

Connecticut Voices for Children, Policy Fellow, Lauren Ruth: supports this bill stating that students of color are at a higher risk of being expelled or suspended compared to white students, and in face of the pandemic, these students need more support.

Center for Children's Advocacy (CCA), Attorney, Kathryn Scheinberg Meyer: supports this bill while also requesting that "conduct that is of a violent or sexual nature" in lines 131 and 132 in Section 7 are removed or substituted, as they state that these terms are inappropriate in contexts referring to preschool and young elementary school students.

Hartford Deportation Defense, Organizer, Constanza Segovia: supports this bill stating that smaller class sizes will allow teachers to interact with students more frequently and use a greater variety of teaching methods, which will have a positive impact on both students and teachers state-wide*.
**The substitute language for this bill removes the provision on class size caps.*

ACLU-CT, Policy Counsel, Jess Zaccagnino: supports this bill stating that it takes several important steps in ending the school-to-prison pipeline.

The following educators and other school staff submitted testimony in support of this bill. They emphasize the importance of smaller classes sizes*. They state that it is challenging to meet the needs of students in large classes and that students do better in smaller classes. Many share personal experiences as educators. Several mention how class sizes have grown post COVID making things even more challenging. They further stress the importance of investing in education and students.

**The substitute language for this bill removes the provision on class size caps.*

Bloomfield Educator, Denise Johnson

Bloomfield Educator, Mary Munson

Branford Educator, Sharon Shirley

Bridgeport Educator, Nelida Agosto

Bridgeport Educator, Flaza Bungu
Bridgeport Educator, Kim Doran
Bridgeport Educator, Edward Kozinski
Bridgeport Educator, David Meyer
Bridgeport Educator, William Minalga
Bridgeport Educator, Kathleen Paskiewicz
Bridgeport Educator, Maria Stage
Bridgeport Educator, Diana Vincent
Cheshire Educator, Jennifer Zebarth
Columbia Educator, Brooke Kleinman
Coventry Educator, Marie Pappano
CREC Educator, Monica Quimby-Gupta
East Hartford Educator, Paul Apostalon
East Hartford Educator, Carolyn O'Connor
East Hartford Educator, Dana Saccomano
East Hampton Educator, Kevin Doherty
Educator, Paloma Aufran
Educator, Marie Coulson
Educator, Brittany Thompson
E O Smith Educator, Heather Bunnell
Fairfield Educator, Helen Cihl
Fairfield Educator, Kelly Jasper
Fairfield Educator, John Whaley
Glastonbury Educator, Erin Bernard
Glastonbury Educator, Katherine Butler
Glastonbury Educator, Meghan Gagne
Glastonbury Educator, Ryan Kelly
Glastonbury Educator, Molly Murphy
Granby Educator, Kimberly Quinn
Granby Educator, Leigh Ann Ryan
Greenwich Educator, Laurie Brehm
Guilford Educator, Gheryl Robertson
Haddam-Killingworth Educator, Lauren Roby
Haddam-Killingworth Educator, Melissa Walston
Hamden Educator, Lori Voegeli
Killingly Educator, Patricia Maher
LEARN Educator, Kathleen Auperin
LEARN Educator, Stacy Pleau-Guckian
LEARN Educator, Debra Guinan-Morizio
LEARN Educator, Lucy Regan
Lisbon Educator, Rita Miller
Lisbon Educator, Kate Gilgenbach
Lisbon Educator, Kathy Snyder
Madison Educator, Renee Pardo
Manchester Educator, Eileen Godbout
Manchester Educator, Kathrine Grant
Manchester Educator, Lisa Miner
Marlborough Educator, Amy Fariior
Milford Educator, Joanna Teodosio

Montville Educator, Robin Slane
Naugatuck Educator, Steven Costa
Naugatuck Educator, Ashley Kastelein
Naugatuck Educator, John Tenney
Newington Educator, Patricia Borjestedt
Newington Educator, Jaimie Lindenmuth
North Haven Educator, Krista Kaplan
Norwich Educator, Nicholas Menapace
Pomperaug Educator, Jackie Duncan
Pomperaug Educator, Diane Sirica
Regional District 10 Educator, Sarah Allen
Regional District 10 Educator, Carol Brault
Regional District 10 Educator, Rebecca Edwards
Regional District 10 Educator, Deborah Rizzo
Retired Educator, Raymond Klimaszewski
Retired Educator, Richard Olson
Retired Educator, Robert Traber
Seymour Educator, Gina Kindt
Shelton Educator, Nicole Bogdanyi
Shelton Educator, Elizabeth Clement
Shelton Educator, Michelle Isabella
Shelton Educator, Jennifer Keene
Shelton Educator, Bailey Knowles
Shelton Educator, Michele Lovallo
Shelton Educator, Shannon Mazurick
Shelton Educator, Colleen Morrissey-Colon
Shelton Educator, Martha Parkins
Simsbury Educator, Janey Moreno
Southington Educator, Sara Cavanaugh
South Windsor Educator, Ann Malinowski
South Windsor Educator, Suzanne Robinson
Stamford Educator, Erin Taylor
Stamford Educator, Stefanie Aivalis
Stamford Educator, James Barron
Stamford Educator, Sarah Beauleau
Stamford Educator, Nicole Bronson
Stamford Educator, Jackqueline Brown
Stamford Educator, Sonia Plummer-Brown
Stamford Educator, Stephanie Cahill
Stamford Educator, Dana Carey
Stamford Educator, Drew Denbaum
Stamford Educator, Reina DiNino
Stamford Educator, Alyssa Domini
Stamford Educator, Edward Donnelly
Stamford Educator, Emily Fields
Stamford Educator, David Flynn
Stamford Educator, Toni Fox
Stamford Educator, Annamaria Gamberdella-Gagliardi
Stamford Educator, Stacey Gola

Stamford Educator, Ann Herz
Stamford Educator, Stephanie Jones
Stamford Educator, Vanessa Coy-Kenyhercz
Stamford Educator, Kamini Khazanchi
Stamford Educator, Robin Konrad
Stamford Educator, Mandi Leale
Stamford Educator, Patricia Lucadamo
Stamford Educator, Patrice Martin
Stamford Educator, Florina Merturi
Stamford Educator, Nancy Mould
Stamford Educator, Melissa Moulketis
Stamford Educator, Deborah Nolasco
Stamford Educator, Margo Sandahl
Stamford Educator, Aaron Schrag
Stamford Educator, Jaclyn Servillo
Stamford Educator, Brittany Summa
Stamford Educator, Kate Tobin
Stamford Educator, Sharlene Turner
Stamford Educator, Danielle Veith
Stamford Educator, Ruth-Terry Walden
Stamford Educator, Morgan Walton
Stamford Educator, Danielle Weber
Stamford Educator, Brian West
Stamford Educator, Brenda Zanga
Stratford Educator, Michael Ginicola
Stratford Educator, Cyrilla Turechek
Torrington Educator, Kimberly Wennberg
Trumbull Educator, Michele Slais
Wallingford Educator, Sarah Sigel
Wallingford Educator, Suzanne Sullivan
Waterbury Educator, Melissa Boucher
Waterbury Educator, Maria Mangino
Waterbury, Brenda Washington
Waterford Educator, Mary Childs
West Hartford Educator, Sophie Gocheva
Jennifer Darrigo
Cecile Perraud
A Ramirez
Fran Rukus
Caroline Sarlo

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Connecticut Association of Boards of Education \(CABE\), President, Liz Brown:](#)

opposes Section 3 of this bill stating that they do not support a cap on classroom sizes due to issues of space and hiring struggles districts face, such as significant fluctuation in student enrollment during the school year*.

**The substitute language for this bill removes the provision on class size caps.*

[Play to Learn/Cercle, Owner, Francheska Velazquez](#): states opposition to this bill because their staff is struggling to make ends meet and want there to be focus on helping early educators and the families they service.

The following individuals submitted testimony in opposition to this bill.

[CT Republican Assembly, President, Anne Manusky](#)
[Resident, Debbie Esposito](#)

**Reported by: Ash Northey, Riley St. Pierre, &
James Carroll**

Date: 4/3/2023