AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL DISCIPLINE.

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

Section 1. Subsection (g) of section 10-233c of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2024):

(g) On and after July 1, 2015, all suspensions pursuant to this section shall be in-school suspensions, except a local or regional board of education may authorize the administration of schools under its direction to impose an out-of-school suspension on any pupil in (1) grades three to twelve, inclusive, if, during the hearing held pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, (A) the administration determines that the pupil being suspended poses such a danger to persons or property or such a disruption of the educational process that the pupil shall be excluded from school during the period of suspension, or (B) the administration determines that an out-of-school suspension is appropriate for such pupil based on evidence of (i) previous disciplinary problems that have led to suspensions or expulsion of such pupil, and (ii) efforts by the administration to address such disciplinary problems.
through means other than out-of-school suspension or expulsion, including positive behavioral support strategies, or (2) grades preschool to two, inclusive, if during the hearing held pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, the administration (A) determines that an out-of-school suspension is appropriate for such pupil based on evidence that such pupil's conduct on school grounds is [of a violent or sexual nature that endangers persons] behavior that causes physical harm, (B) requires that such pupil receives services that are trauma-informed and developmentally appropriate and align with any behavioral intervention plan, individualized education program or plan pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended from time to time, for such pupil upon such pupil's return to school immediately following the out-of-school suspension, and (C) considers whether to convene a planning and placement team meeting for the purposes of conducting an evaluation to determine whether such pupil may require special education or related services. An out-of-school suspension imposed under subdivision (2) of this subsection shall not exceed two school days. An in-school suspension may be served in the school that the pupil attends, or in any school building under the jurisdiction of the local or regional board of education, as determined by such board. Nothing in this section shall limit a person's duty as a mandated reporter pursuant to section 17-101a to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

Sec. 2. Section 10-233h of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2024):

(a) If any person who is at least [seven] ten years of age but less than twenty-one years of age and an enrolled student is arrested for [a violation of section 53-206c, a class A misdemeanor or a felony] possession of a firearm, as defined in 18 USC 921, as amended from time to time, on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity, the municipal police department or Division of State Police within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection that made such arrest shall, not later than the end of the weekday following such arrest, orally notify the superintendent of schools of the school district
in which such person resides or attends school of the identity of such
person and the offense or offenses for which he was arrested and shall,
within seventy-two hours of such arrest, provide written notification of
such arrest, containing a brief description of the incident, to such
superintendent. The superintendent shall maintain such written report
in a secure location and the information in such report shall be
maintained as confidential in accordance with section 46b-124. [The
superintendent may disclose such information only to the principal of
the school in which such person is a student or to the principal or
supervisory agent of any other school in which the superintendent
knows such person is a student. The principal or supervisory agent may
disclose such information only to special services staff or a consultant,
such as a psychiatrist, psychologist or social worker, for the purposes of
assessing the risk of danger posed by such person to himself, other
students, school employees or school property and effectuating an
appropriate modification of such person's educational plan or
placement, and for disciplinary purposes. If the arrest occurred during
the school year, such assessment shall be completed not later than the
end of the next school day. If an expulsion hearing is held pursuant to
section 10-233d, a representative of the municipal police department or
the Division of State Police, as appropriate, may testify and provide
reports and information on the arrest at such hearing, provided such
police participation is requested by any of the following: The local or
regional board of education, the impartial hearing board, the principal
of the school or the student or his parent or guardian. Such information
with respect to a child under eighteen years of age shall be confidential
in accordance with sections 46b-124 and 54-76l, and shall only be
disclosed as provided in this section and shall not be further disclosed.]

(b) If any person who is at least ten years of age but less than twenty-
one years of age and an enrolled student is arrested for a violation of
section 53-206c, a class A misdemeanor or a felony, other than
possession of a firearm as described in subsection (a) of this section, the
Court Support Services Division of the Judicial Branch shall provide a
written report of such arrest to the superintendent of schools of the
school district in which such person resides or attends school upon its presentation to the court, if appropriate. Such notice shall not be provided to the superintendent of schools if the arrest has been diverted to the community-based diversion system, screened and found to be eligible for nonjudicial handling or dismissed by the court. Such written report shall include, but need not be limited to, the identity of such person, the violation or violations for which such person has been arrested, a brief description of the incident that is the basis for such violation and, if applicable, the identity of the alleged victim if such alleged victim is another enrolled student. The superintendent shall maintain such written report in a secure location and the information in such report shall be maintained as confidential in accordance with section 46b-124.

(c) (1) The superintendent may disclose a written report described in subsection (a) or (b) of this section only to the principal of the school in which such person is a student or to the principal or supervisory agent of any other school in which the superintendent knows such person is a student.

(2) Upon receipt of such written report, the principal or supervisory agent may disclose such report only to special services staff or a consultant, such as a psychiatrist, psychologist or social worker, for the purposes of assessing the risk of danger posed by such person to himself or herself, other students, school employees or school property and effectuating an appropriate modification of such person's educational plan or placement, and for disciplinary purposes. Such person shall not be prevented from attending class prior to the holding of an informal hearing pursuant to section 10-233c, as amended by this act, or an expulsion hearing pursuant to section 10-233d.

(d) If an expulsion hearing is held pursuant to section 10-233d, a representative of the municipal police department or the Division of State Police, as appropriate, may testify and provide reports and information on such violation at such hearing, provided such police participation is requested by any of the following: The local or regional
board of education, the impartial hearing board, the principal of the
school or the student or his parent or guardian. Such information with
respect to a child under eighteen years of age shall be confidential in
accordance with sections 46b-124 and 54-76l, and shall only be disclosed
as provided in this section and shall not be further disclosed.

Sec. 3. Section 10-233p of the 2024 supplement to the general statutes
is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July
1, 2024):

Each school resource officer, as defined in section 10-233m, shall
submit to the chief of police of such school resource officer's local law
enforcement agency a report for each investigation or behavioral
intervention of challenging behavior or conflict that escalates to violence
or constitutes a crime conducted by such school resource officer not later
than five school days after conducting such investigation or behavioral
intervention. The chief of police shall submit such report to the
superintendent of schools for the school district in which such
investigation or behavioral intervention occurred in accordance with
the provisions of the memorandum of understanding entered into
pursuant to section 10-233m, but shall be not less frequently than
monthly. If a school resource officer's local law enforcement agency has
no chief of police, such school resource officer shall submit such report
directly to the superintendent of schools for the school district in which
such investigation or behavioral intervention occurred in the same
manner specified in this section for the chief of police to submit such
report. Such superintendent shall submit such report to the local or
regional board of education of the school district. Such report shall
include, but need not be limited to, (1) the date, time and location of
such investigation or behavioral intervention, (2) the name and badge
number of such school resource officer, (3) the race, ethnicity, gender,
age and disability status for each student involved in such investigation
or behavioral intervention, (4) the reason for and nature of such
investigation or behavioral intervention, (5) the disposition of such
investigation or behavioral intervention, and (6) whether any student
involved in such investigation or behavioral intervention was (A)
searched, (B) apprised of such student's constitutional rights, (C) issued a citation or a summons, (D) arrested, or (E) detained, including the amount of time such student was detained. For purposes of this section, "investment or behavioral intervention" means a circumstance in which a school resource officer is conducting (i) a fact-finding inquiry concerning student behavior or school safety, including, but not limited to, emergency circumstances, or (ii) an intervention to resolve violent or nonviolent student behavior or conflicts.

Sec. 4. Subsection (a) of section 10-222q of the 2024 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2024):

(a) There is established a social and emotional learning and school climate advisory collaborative. The collaborative shall (1) collect information concerning the school climate improvement efforts of local and regional boards of education, (2) document any needs articulated by local and regional boards of education for technical assistance and training relating to fostering positive school climates, (3) identify best practices for promoting positive school climates, (4) direct resources to support state-wide and local initiatives on issues relating to fostering and improving positive school climates and improving access to social and emotional learning in schools, (5) develop an assessment for screening students in grades three to twelve, inclusive, to determine whether such students are at risk for suicide, (6) develop a biennial state-wide school climate survey, as described in subsection (c) of section 2 of public act 19-166, (7) develop a model positive school climate policy, as described in subsection (a) of section 2 of public act 19-166, (8) develop a plain language explanation of the rights and remedies available under sections 10-4a and 10-4b for distribution to parents and guardians pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (c) of section 10-222d, and provide such explanation to each local and regional board of education not later than January 1, 2021, (9) develop school climate survey standards, including, but not limited to, standards for the collection of data on diversity, equity and inclusion and for the reduction in disparities in data collection between school districts, (10) develop a
model school climate improvement plan, and [(9)] (11) perform other functions concerning social and emotional learning and fostering positive school climates.

Sec. 5. Subsection (a) of section 10-222q of the 2024 supplement to the general statutes, as amended by section 65 of public act 23-167, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2025):

(a) There is established a social and emotional learning and school climate advisory collaborative. The collaborative shall (1) collect information concerning the school climate improvement efforts of local and regional boards of education, (2) document any needs articulated by local and regional boards of education for technical assistance and training relating to fostering positive school climates, (3) identify best practices for promoting positive school climates, (4) direct resources to support state-wide and local initiatives on issues relating to fostering and improving positive school climates and improving access to social and emotional learning in schools, (5) develop an assessment for screening students in grades three to twelve, inclusive, to determine whether such students are at risk for suicide, (6) develop a biennial state-wide school climate survey, as described in subsection (c) of section 2 of public act 19-166, (7) adopt a Connecticut school climate policy, as defined in section 10-222aa, as amended by this act, (8) develop a plain language explanation of the rights and remedies available under sections 10-4a and 10-4b for distribution to parents and guardians, and provide such explanation to each local and regional board of education not later than January 1, 2021, (9) develop standards for a school climate survey, including, but not limited to, standards for the collection of data on diversity, equity and inclusion and for the reduction in disparities in data collection between school districts, (10) develop a model school climate improvement plan, and [(9)] (11) perform other functions concerning social and emotional learning and fostering positive school climates.

Sec. 6. Subdivision (12) of section 10-222aa of the 2024 supplement to
the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2024):

(12) "School climate survey" means a research-based, validated and developmentally appropriate survey administered to students, school employees and families of students, in the predominant languages of the members of the school community, that (A) measures and identifies school climate needs and tracks progress through a school climate improvement plan, and (B) (i) meets the school climate survey standards developed by the Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative, established pursuant to section 10-222q, as amended by this act, or (ii) is the state-wide school climate survey developed by said collaborative.

Sec. 7. Subsection (a) of section 10-222hh of the 2024 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2024):

(a) For the school year commencing July 1, 2025, and each school year thereafter, the school climate specialist, as described in section 10-222ee, for each school, in collaboration with the school climate coordinator, as described in section 10-222dd, shall develop, and update as necessary, a school climate improvement plan. Such plan shall be based on the results of the school climate survey, administered pursuant to section 10-222gg, any recommendations from the school climate committee, as described in section 10-222ff, the protocols and supports, described in subsection (b) of this section and any other data the school climate specialist and school climate coordinator deemed relevant. Such plan may incorporate the model school climate improvement plan developed by the Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative, established pursuant to section 10-222q, as amended by this act. [Such plan] The school climate specialist shall [be submitted] submit such plan to the school climate coordinator for review and approval on or before December thirty-first of each school year. Upon approval of such plan, a written or electronic copy of such plan shall be made available to members of the school community and such plan shall
be used in the prevention of, identification of and response to challenging behavior.

Sec. 8. Subsection (b) of section 10-222h of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2024):

(b) On or before February 1, 2014, and annually 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, (1) the number of verified acts of bullying in the state, including, but not limited to, the number of such acts directed at a student based on actual or perceived membership in a protected class, (2) an analysis of the responsive action taken by school districts, (3) 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 (4) any recommendations it may have regarding additional activities or funding to prevent bullying in schools and improve school climate 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.

Sec. 9. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2024) The Department of Education shall appoint a director of school climate improvement to serve as the state-wide social and emotional learning and school climate expert. The director of school climate improvement shall (1) assist local and regional boards of education with the implementation of (A) sections 10-222t to 10-222v, inclusive, and sections 10-222aa to 10-222jj, inclusive, of the general statutes, as amended by this act, and (B) the Connecticut school climate policy, as defined in section 10-222aa of the general statutes, as amended by this act, (2) assist the Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative, established pursuant to section 10-222q of the general statutes, as amended by this act, in the
development and implementation of tools and best practices related to
school climate and culture, including, but not limited to, the
development of a model school climate survey and a model school
climate improvement plan, (3) provide information and assistance to
local and regional boards of education, students and parents and
guardians of students on the uniform bullying complaint form created
pursuant to section 10-222bb of the general statutes, (4) not later than
January 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, submit a report, in accordance
with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint
standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of
matters relating to education on recommendations for best practices and
improvement of school climate improvement strategies in the state, (5)
assist school climate coordinators, appointed pursuant to section 10-
222dd of the general statutes, in the development of a continuum of
strategies to prevent, identify and respond to challenging behavior, (6)
develop and provide technical assistance and recommendations, in
collaboration with the Social and Emotional Learning and School
Climate Advisory Collaborative, to local and regional boards of
education on trainings for school employees for the purposes of school
climate improvement, and (7) in collaboration with the Social and
Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative,
develop strategies to improve the delivery of services concerning social
emotional learning, skills building and mental health supports.

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

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Statement of Purpose:
To (1) require services to be provided for certain youth who receive out-of-school suspensions; (2) revise the procedures by which notification is to be made to superintendents upon the arrest of a student; (3) clarify school resource officer reporting requirements; (4) require the Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative to develop standards for a school climate survey and a model school climate improvement plan; (5) require the school climate survey to meet the standards developed by the collaborative or be the state-wide school climate survey developed by the collaborative; (6) allow school climate specialists to incorporate the model school climate improvement plan in a school climate improvement plan for such specialist's school; and (7) require the Department of Education to (A) report on or before February 1, 2025, the number of acts of bullying based on a student's membership in a protected class, and (B) appoint a director of school climate improvement.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]