
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5213

AN ACT CONCERNING DISCONNECTED YOUTH.

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§ 1 — PLAN TO ADDRESS STRATEGIES TO ASSIST AT-RISK STUDENTS

Requires the Two-Generational Advisory Board to develop a plan to address strategies to assist at-risk students and reengage individuals identified as disconnected youth

This bill requires the Two-Generational Advisory Board to develop a plan to address strategies to assist at-risk students and reengage individuals identified as disconnected youth and submit it to the Education Committee by January 1, 2025. The advisory board must collaborate with the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities and Connecticut Council of Small Towns in developing the plan.

The plan must include the following:

1. ways of identifying and addressing the needs of individuals defined as disconnected youth;
2. opportunities for interagency and cross-branch collaboration and streamlining of resources at the state and local levels;
3. statewide expansion and enhancement of a shared data platform, in collaboration with the Compass Youth Collaborative, to

provide a streamlined way for community-based providers in the state that serve disconnected youth to access and share individual-level de-identified data to improve collaboration, communication, efficiency, transparency, and outcomes over time; and

4. recommendations to improve the Connecticut Preschool through Twenty and Workforce Information Network (P20WIN) to promote data-sharing and retention of data models for future comparisons.

For purposes of the plan, “disconnected youth” means an individual ages 14-26 who (1) holds a high school diploma but is neither employed nor attending a higher education institution or otherwise pursuing secondary education, (2) does not hold a high school diploma (whether employed or not employed), or (3) is incarcerated. “At-risk” students are those enrolled in high school who are in danger of not graduating due to (1) not earning sufficient credits; (2) being chronically absent (i.e., absences totaling at least 10% of the number of days enrolled); or (3) behavioral and other disciplinary issues (e.g., suspensions and expulsions).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 2 — ASSET AND CAPACITY MAPPING FOR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Requires UConn’s School of Public Policy to conduct a study and comprehensive asset and capacity mapping for nonprofit organizations to support information-sharing and collaboration between nonprofits and communities

The bill requires UConn’s School of Public Policy to conduct a study and comprehensive asset and capacity mapping for nonprofit organizations in the state to support information-sharing and collaboration between the nonprofits and the communities they serve.

Under the bill, the study and mapping must do the following:

1. assess the nonprofit organizations’ capacity to assist the state in addressing public needs and identifying assets’ availability and strength and services’ gaps or weaknesses;

2. provide an effective tool for sharing data, documents, and communication among the nonprofit organizations to strengthen their capacity to serve state residents;
3. provide a resource for policymakers to determine gaps in services and capacity and enhance collaboration among different nonprofit organizations working in the same geographic areas and serving the same target population;
4. provide information to policymakers on ways to ensure that resources are invested in areas and populations with the greatest need; and
5. present data by town, by county, and statewide, as well as by each regional council of government, and include a summary of available resources, including nonprofit organizations and state agencies, to create a database of the state's nonprofit organizations by target service population, mission, and geography.

The bill requires the Department of Consumer Protection and the secretary of the state to provide UConn's School of Public Policy, upon its request, with any data needed to conduct the study and mapping.

The school must submit to the Education Committee a preliminary report by October 1, 2024, and a final report by June 30, 2025. The final report must include a model to enhance collaboration among nonprofit organizations to ensure that state investments are addressing gaps in services and not contributing to duplicative efforts or competition among the organizations.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§§ 3, 4 & 6 — DATA SHARING

Requires (1) local and regional boards of education to enter into data-sharing agreements with youth service bureaus (YSBs) or juvenile review boards, (2) the education commissioner to develop a model data-sharing agreement, and (3) the State Board of Education to enter into a data-sharing agreement with an association representing a network of YSBs

The bill requires each local and regional board of education, by October 1, 2024, to enter into a data-sharing agreement with each youth service bureau (YSB) or juvenile review board (JRB) serving the municipality in which a student enrolled in a school within the board's jurisdiction resides (§ 3).

Under the bill, the education commissioner must (1) develop a model data-sharing agreement by September 1, 2024, for local and regional boards of education, YSBs, and JRBs and (2) make the agreement available upon request and on the department's website (§ 4).

The bill similarly requires the State Board of Education (SBE), by October 1, 2024, to enter into a data-sharing agreement with an association representing a network of YSBs in Connecticut. The agreement must require SBE to provide required student data within 30 days after receiving it from a local or regional board of education (§ 6).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

Agreement Requirements (§ 3)

The bill defines a "data-sharing agreement" as a contract between a board of education and a YSB or JRB establishing processes and procedures that govern the sharing and use of students' education records and personally identifiable information (PII, see *Background – FERPA*) to engage in data analysis of students' long-term outcomes to help improve available programming, instruction, and services.

Under the bill, the agreement must do the following:

1. require the board of education to provide required student data (see below) to the YSB or JRB on a monthly basis;
2. state that disclosure of education records and students' PII without consent of a parent or guardian is permissible under federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations as long as the disclosure's purpose is to allow a YSB or JRB to conduct a study to improve instruction and assess the effectiveness of state and federally funded education programs

(see *Background – FERPA*); and

3. allow a YSB or JRB to (a) share any study’s results with the board of education and (b) use the data to help assess long-term outcomes of students served by the YSB or JRB to evaluate the YSB’s or JRB’s program and service effectiveness, improve instruction, and identify areas for program improvement.

Required Student Data. Under the bill, “required student data” includes the following:

1. date of birth; first, middle, and last name; and state-assigned student identifier;
2. demographic information, including race, ethnicity, and gender;
3. whether the student is a multilingual learner, a homeless child or youth (as defined in federal law), or receiving special education or related services;
4. grade level; date of graduation or anticipated graduation year; and current enrollment status (including active registration, transfer, and withdrawal data);
5. attendance records (including whether absences were excused or unexcused) and disciplinary history, including the type, number, and nature of disciplinary actions; and
6. any additional student information or data YSBs need to comply with state law.

Background – FERPA

With certain exceptions, FERPA requires schools, school districts, and federally funded institutions to keep PII contained in a student’s records confidential unless (1) the parents (of students under age 18) or students age 18 or older (“eligible students”) consent to disclose it or (2) one of the legal exceptions to the confidentiality requirement applies (20 U.S.C. § 1232g).

Under FERPA’s regulations, “education records” are, with certain exceptions, records that refer to a student and are maintained by an educational agency or institution. Examples of PII include a student’s name, date of birth, and personal identifier (34 C.F.R. § 99.3)

Research Exception. FERPA regulations specify several exceptions under which PII may be disclosed from education records without a parent’s or student’s consent. One of these exceptions allows disclosure to organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, educational agencies or institutions to (1) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (2) administer student aid programs; or (3) improve instruction.

Among other things, (1) the study must not permit personal identification of parents and students except by representatives of the organization with a legitimate interest in the information; (2) the information must be destroyed when no longer needed for the study’s purposes; and (3) there must be a written agreement that specifies the study’s or studies’ purpose, scope, and duration (34 C.F.R. § 99.31(a)(6)).

§ 5 — SCHOOL-LEVEL SUPPORT MEETINGS AND ATTENDANCE REVIEW TEAMS

Requires local and regional boards of education to include individuals designated by a YSB or JRB in school-level support meetings and on attendance review teams

The bill requires local and regional boards of education to include individuals designated by a YSB or JRB with which the board of education has a data-sharing agreement (see above) in school-level support meetings and on attendance review teams (i.e., teams established by a board of education to address chronic absenteeism in a school district or at one or more schools).

Under the bill, “school-level support meetings” are scheduled meetings of school administrators, teachers, social workers, school counselors, or other school officials to review and discuss student data related to absenteeism, discipline, or mental and behavioral health.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 7 — BUS FARE EXEMPTION

Exempts students enrolled in priority school district public schools from fares on state-owned or -controlled buses during specified parts of the school day

The bill exempts students enrolled in priority school district public schools from fares on state-owned or -controlled buses for the two hours before the start of the school day and the four hours following the end of the school day. Students who are exempt from fares during these times must show the bus driver or fare inspector a student identification card issued by the board of education.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 8 — DUAL CREDIT COURSES

Requires higher education institutions and local and regional boards of education, before establishing a dual credit course, to enter into an MOU for delivering the course and awarding credit

The bill requires higher education institutions and local and regional boards of education, before establishing a dual credit course, to enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for delivering the course and awarding credit. The MOU must ensure the following:

1. the course aligns with the standards developed by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP),
2. (a) the course instructor meets NACEP qualifications and (b) the school superintendent attests to the higher education institution that the educator meets these qualifications before being assigned to teach the course,
3. the educator completes the same professional development training that a higher education faculty member would complete,
4. the higher education institution may evaluate the course or the professional development associated with it, and
5. students enrolled in the course (a) complete an orientation program offered by the institution and (b) meet the course's prerequisites.

Under the bill, a “dual credit course” is one for which credit is offered

by a local or regional board of education to students in grades 9-12 and for which both high school and college credit is awarded. The course may be concurrent enrollment (i.e., delivered at a high school by a certified educator employed by a board of education) or dual enrollment (i.e., delivered at a higher education institution by a member of the institution's faculty).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 9 — ACCOUNTABILITY INDEX SCORE CRITERIA

Requires that the accountability index score for a district or school include the availability of a credit recovery program and the number of students who earn credit and graduate as a result of the program

By law, the accountability index score for a school district or an individual school is the score resulting from multiple weighted measures that include, among other things, the mastery test scores (i.e., the performance index score) and high school graduation rates. The State Department of Education (SDE) uses the scores to designate alliance districts, among other things.

The bill requires that the accountability index score also include the availability of a credit recovery program and the number of students who earn credit and graduate as a result of the program. Generally, credit recovery is a strategy that allows students who lost credit (e.g., by failing or not completing a course) to recover the credit by retaking the course through a locally designed alternative (e.g., online coursework).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 10 — CREDIT RECOVERY PROGRAMS

Requires boards of education with a credit recovery program as part of their alternative education to allow certain students enrolled in a traditional school program to simultaneously enroll in the credit recovery program

Existing law allows local and regional boards of education to provide a school or program in a nontraditional setting that addresses students' social, emotional, behavioral, and academic needs (i.e., "alternative education").

Under the bill, local and regional boards of education with a credit

recovery program as part of their alternative education must allow students enrolled in a traditional school program and at risk of not graduating to also enroll in the credit recovery program while remaining enrolled in the traditional program. The boards must do so beginning with the 2024-2025 school year.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 11 — MODEL STUDENT WORK RELEASE POLICY

Requires the chief workforce officer to consult with the SDE commissioner when updating the model student work release policy

Existing law allows the state’s chief workforce officer to update the model student work release policy as necessary. The bill requires her to consult with the SDE commissioner when doing so. By law, local and regional boards of education must adopt the model policy or the most recently updated version of it beginning with the 2024-2025 school year.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 12 — REGIONAL TRAUMA COORDINATORS

Makes permanent the requirement for RESCs to employ regional trauma coordinators

The bill makes permanent the requirement that each regional education service center (RESC) employ a regional trauma coordinator. Current law requires RESCs to hire a coordinator for FYs 23 and 24 only. Among other things, each coordinator must develop and implement a trauma-informed care training program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§§ 13 & 14 — WORKING GROUPS ON HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS, GRADING POLICIES, AND ACCOUNTABILITY INDEX

Allows (1) CABE to convene a working group to review high school graduation requirements and (2) CEA and AFT to jointly convene a working group to review high school grading policies and the accountability index

The bill allows the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) to convene a 14-member working group to review high school graduation requirements to identify requirements that limit or restrict instruction or service provision to students (§ 13). CABE’s executive

director or a designee must chair the working group.

The bill also allows the Connecticut Education Association (CEA) and the American Federation of Teachers-Connecticut (AFT-CT) to jointly convene a 14-member working group to review (1) high school grading policies used by local and regional boards of education and (2) the accountability index and information and data SDE uses to calculate index scores (§ 14). CEA's and AFT-CT's executive directors, or their designees, must serve as the working group's chairpersons.

Under the bill, the groups must each submit a report to the Education Committee by January 1, 2026. The report from the group led by CEA and AFT-CT specifically must review mandates and make recommendations for amending or repealing them and developing a biennial review process.

Each group terminates on the date it submits its report or July 1, 2026, whichever is later.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

Membership

The bill establishes identical membership requirements for the two groups. Both groups must include one representative from each of the following organizations:

1. CAFE;
2. the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents;
3. the Connecticut PTA;
4. AFT-CT;
5. CEA;
6. the Connecticut Association of Schools;
7. the Connecticut Federation of School Administrators;

8. the Connecticut School Counselor Association; and
9. the Connecticut Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

The groups must also include the following ex-officio members or their designees: the education commissioner and Education Committee's chairpersons and ranking members.

The bill requires appointing authorities to make their initial appointments to the working groups by July 31, 2024, and fill any vacancies. Each group's chairpersons must schedule the initial meetings, which must be held by August 30, 2024. The groups may allow for public comment or seek input from students, parents, educators, boards of education, and other education stakeholders.

§ 15 — BEREAVEMENT AND GRIEF COUNSELING SERVICES TASK FORCE

Establishes a 13-member task force on bereavement and grief counseling services

Duties

The bill establishes a 13-member task force to develop recommendations for creating and administering a statewide program for delivering bereavement and grief counseling services to children and families at no cost to participants.

The task force must make recommendations on the following:

1. the appropriate administering agency or agencies;
2. scope of services, including services to marginalized communities and culturally informed services;
3. the role that existing counseling services and school-based health centers should have in service delivery;
4. service delivery, including necessary resources, in parts of the state where services are currently insufficient or non-existent;
5. long-term funding sources; and

6. additional considerations the task force identifies.

The task force must submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the Children and Public Health committees by July 1, 2025. It terminates on this date or the date it submits its report, whichever is later.

Membership

Under the bill, the task force consists of 13 members: eight legislative appointees (who may be legislators), shown in the table below, and five ex-officio members, listed below the table. Appointing authorities must make their initial appointments within 30 days after the bill’s passage and fill any vacancies.

Table: Appointed Task Force Members

Appointing Authority	Criteria
House speaker	Representative of a bereavement and grief counseling services program that serves children and families
Senate president pro tempore	Representative of a statewide association of school-based health centers
House majority leader	Representative of a statewide association of school counselors
Senate majority leader	Representative of the state chapter of a national nonprofit organization that works to improve the lives of children and families
House minority leader	Representative of a child study center affiliated with a medical school in the state
Senate minority leader	A licensed psychologist who has expertise in treating bereaved children
Education Committee House chairperson and ranking member (joint appointment)	A person who has experience with grief and bereavement
Education Committee Senate chairperson and ranking member (joint appointment)	A person who has experience with grief and bereavement

The task force also includes the following officials or their designees: the (1) children and families, education, mental health and addiction services, and public health commissioners and (2) Commission on

Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity's (CWCSEO) executive director.

The bill requires the House speaker and Senate president pro tempore to select the task force chairpersons from among its members. The chairpersons must schedule the task force's first meeting, which must be held within 60 days after the bill's passage. CWCSEO's administrative staff must serve as the task force's administrative staff.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

Background — Related Bill

sSB 218, § 1 (File 30), reported favorably by the Committee on Children, also establishes a task force to study this topic.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 42 Nay 3 (03/06/2024)