

Education Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7169

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A WORKING GROUP TO STUDY THE
INCORPORATION OF CONNECTICUT'S CULTURAL RESOURCES WITH

Title: PROJECT-BASED LEARNING.

Vote Date: 3/21/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/12/2025

File No.: 600

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Education Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill aims to create a working group to explore how Connecticut's cultural and artistic resources can be used in project-based learning for K-8 students. By identifying which resources best fit each grade level and how they align with current curriculum, the group will help develop engaging, hands-on lessons that connect students to the state's rich cultural heritage. It will also determine what support is needed for the State Education Resource Center (SERC) to create model lesson plans. The nine-member group will include teachers, state officials, and representatives from education and arts organizations, and must report its findings to the Education Committee by January 1, 2026. This effort aims to make learning more meaningful and accessible for all students by bringing real-world cultural experiences into the classroom.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The substitute refocuses the study on grades K-8, rather than K-5, and includes additional appointments.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Connecticut State Department of Education \(CSDE\), Charlene Russell-Tucker, Commissioner](#): While recognizing that the initiative is well-intentioned and offers valuable opportunities to develop model project-based learning aligned with local contexts and cultural resources, it also raises potential concerns regarding coordination and resource allocation.

Similar issues were highlighted in testimony for SB 1348, An Act Concerning the Creation of a Pilot Program for Certain At-Risk Youth, which also emphasizes project-based learning. A clear and coordinated approach is needed to ensure that both initiatives are effectively implemented and can inform future educational strategies.

[State Education and Resource Center \(SERC\), Dr Ingrid Canady, Executive Director:](#)

Support for this bill aligns with the agency's purpose of promoting educational equity and excellence, while also increasing the audience and potentially the income for many of the state's tourist attractions.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Jennifer Bausch, Secondary Curriculum Coordinator, Stonington Public Schools:](#) States that research shows that students learn most effectively through project-based learning (PBL) that connects them with authentic cultural resources and community experiences. For PBL projects to be successfully implemented, there are costs associated with partnering with cultural and artistic resources, which a working group could evaluate and fund to increase participation.

[Sarah Cahill, Director of Education at Mystic Seaport Museum:](#) Supports the establishment of a working group to secure funding and sustain partnerships between school districts and cultural and artistic resources in the community.

[Francine Coss, Superintendent, Thomaston School District:](#) Supports the bill for its potential positive impact on curriculum innovation; however, there are concerns about its limited impact, as a working group may not ensure actionable changes in classrooms.

[Fran Rabinowitz, Executive Director, CT Association of Public-School Superintendents \(CAPSS\):](#) While supportive of this bill, CAPSS referenced its updated Priorities for CT Public Education (1/2025), noting that it does not explicitly mention the establishment of a work group to integrate CT's cultural resources with project-based learning as a legislative priority.

[Leslie Blatteau, President, New Haven Federation of Teachers:](#) Supports this initiative, which will help students connect with Connecticut's rich cultural and artistic history while promoting best practices for student learning and engagement.

[Jason Mancini, Executive Director, CTHumanities:](#) Supports HB7169. CTHumanities has funded numerous initiatives that connect Connecticut's cultural and artistic resources with schools, particularly in the post-pandemic era.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed

Reported by: Chris Reddy

Date: 4/6/2025