



General Assembly

**Substitute Bill No. 1512**

January Session, 2025



**AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE SCHOOL DISTRICT ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW BOARD AND REQUIRING A FORENSIC AUDIT OF THE BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT.**

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2025) (a) There is established a  
2 School District Accountability Review Board, which shall be within the  
3 Department of Education. The board shall assist each local or regional  
4 board of education identified by the State Board of Education pursuant  
5 to section 10-223e of the general statutes, as amended by this act, with  
6 the financial management of the school district and fiscal accountability  
7 of the board's budget.

8 (b) The board shall consist of the following members:

9 (1) The Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, or the  
10 secretary's designee;

11 (2) The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee;

12 (3) Five appointed by the Governor, one of whom shall be an  
13 administrator in a public school, one of whom shall be a teacher in a  
14 public school, one of whom has experience in education policy, one of  
15 whom has experience in managing a school budget or a school district's  
16 financial responsibilities and one of whom has experience working in

17 underperforming schools;

18 (4) One appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives,  
19 who has experience in curriculum design and implementation;

20 (5) One appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, who  
21 has experience in school district intervention creation, implementation  
22 and evaluation;

23 (6) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of  
24 Representatives, who has experience in implementing the guidelines  
25 outlined in the state plan submitted to the United States Department of  
26 Education pursuant to the provisions of the Elementary and Secondary  
27 Education Act, 20 USC 6301 et seq., as amended from time to time;

28 (7) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, who has  
29 experience in data analysis;

30 (8) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of  
31 Representatives, who has experience in education law; and

32 (9) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, who has  
33 experience working with a local or regional board of education at the  
34 state or local level.

35 (c) The Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, or the  
36 secretary's designee, and the Commissioner of Education, or the  
37 commissioner's designee, shall serve as the chairpersons of the board.

38 (d) All initial appointments to the board shall be made not later than  
39 September 1, 2025. All appointed members shall serve for terms of six  
40 years and until a successor is appointed except that two of the five initial  
41 appointments by the Governor shall each be for a term of three years  
42 with all subsequent appointments being for a term of six years. The  
43 filling of any vacancy shall be for the remainder of the applicable  
44 member's terms. The members of the board shall serve without  
45 compensation, but shall be reimbursed for expenses incurred in  
46 performance of their duties.

47 (e) Not later than January 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the board  
48 shall develop an annual report on its activities. The board shall submit  
49 such annual report to the joint standing committees of the General  
50 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education and  
51 appropriations, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the  
52 general statutes.

53 Sec. 2. Subsections (e) and (f) of section 10-223e of the general statutes  
54 are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
55 *1, 2025*):

56 (e) (1) (A) Any school or school district identified as in need of  
57 improvement pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of this  
58 section and requiring corrective action pursuant to the requirements of  
59 the No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-110, shall be designated and  
60 listed as a low achieving school or school district and shall be subject to  
61 intensified supervision and direction by the State Board of Education.

62 (B) Any school classified as a category four school or category five  
63 school or a school designated as a focus school shall be designated as  
64 low achieving and shall be subject to intensified supervision and  
65 direction by the State Board of Education.

66 (2) Notwithstanding any provision of this title or any regulation  
67 adopted pursuant to said title, except as provided in subdivision (3) of  
68 this subsection, in carrying out the provisions of subdivision (1) of this  
69 subsection and this subdivision, the State Board of Education shall take  
70 any of the following actions to improve student performance of the  
71 school district, a particular school in the district or among student  
72 subgroups, and remove the school or district from the list of schools or  
73 districts designated and listed as a low achieving school or district  
74 pursuant to said subdivision (1), and to address other needs of the  
75 school or district: (A) Require an operations audit to identify possible  
76 programmatic savings and an instructional audit to identify any deficits  
77 in curriculum and instruction or in the learning environment of the  
78 school or district; (B) require the local or regional board of education for

79 such school or district to use state and federal funds for critical needs,  
80 as directed by the State Board of Education; (C) provide incentives to  
81 attract highly qualified teachers and principals; (D) direct the transfer  
82 and assignment of teachers and principals; (E) require additional  
83 training and technical assistance for parents and guardians of children  
84 attending the school or a school in the district and for teachers,  
85 principals, and central office staff members hired by the district; (F)  
86 require the local or regional board of education for the school or district  
87 to implement model curriculum, including, but not limited to,  
88 recommended textbooks, materials and supplies approved by the  
89 Department of Education; (G) identify schools for reconstitution, as may  
90 be phased in by the commissioner, as state or local charter schools,  
91 schools established pursuant to section 10-74g, innovation schools  
92 established pursuant to section 10-74h, or schools based on other models  
93 for school improvement, or for management by an entity other than the  
94 local or regional board of education for the district in which the school  
95 is located; (H) direct the local or regional board of education for the  
96 school or district to develop and implement a plan addressing deficits  
97 in achievement and in the learning environment as recommended in the  
98 instructional audit; (I) assign a technical assistance team to the school or  
99 district to guide school or district initiatives and report progress to the  
100 Commissioner of Education; (J) establish instructional and learning  
101 environment benchmarks for the school or district to meet as it  
102 progresses toward removal from the list of low achieving schools or  
103 districts; (K) provide funding to any proximate district to a district  
104 designated as a low achieving school district so that students in a low  
105 achieving district may attend public school in a neighboring district; (L)  
106 direct the establishment of learning academies within schools that  
107 require continuous monitoring of student performance by teacher  
108 groups; (M) require a local or regional board of education to (i) undergo  
109 training designed to improve the operational efficiency and  
110 effectiveness of the board of education as leaders of its district  
111 improvement plans by distinguishing and making clear the proper roles  
112 and different functions of the board of education, including the  
113 responsibility of developing the improvement plans and education

114 policy for the district, and the school and district-level administrators,  
115 including the responsibility of implementing such improvement plans  
116 and policies, and (ii) submit an annual action plan to the Commissioner  
117 of Education outlining how, when and in what manner their  
118 effectiveness shall be monitored; (N) require the appointment of (i) a  
119 superintendent, approved by the Commissioner of Education, or (ii) a  
120 district improvement officer, selected by the commissioner, whose  
121 authority is consistent with the provisions of section 138 of public act  
122 11-61, and whose term shall be for one school year, except that the State  
123 Board of Education may extend such period; (O) require the School  
124 District Accountability Review Board to provide technical assistance for  
125 the financial management of the school district or fiscal accountability  
126 for the local or regional board of education's budget; or [(O)] (P) any  
127 combination of the actions described in this subdivision or similar,  
128 closely related actions.

129 (3) If a directive of the State Board of Education pursuant to  
130 subparagraph (C), (D), (E), (G) or (L) of subdivision (2) of this subsection  
131 or a directive to implement a plan pursuant to subparagraph (H) of said  
132 subdivision (2) affects working conditions, such directive shall be  
133 carried out in accordance with the provisions of sections 10-153a to 10-  
134 153n, inclusive.

135 (f) The State Board of Education shall monitor the progress of each  
136 school or district designated as a low achieving school or district  
137 pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (e) of this section and provide  
138 notice to the local or regional board of education for each such school or  
139 district of the school or district's progress toward meeting the  
140 benchmarks established by the State Board of Education pursuant to  
141 subsection (e) of this section. If a school or district fails to make  
142 acceptable progress toward meeting such benchmarks established by  
143 the State Board of Education or fails to make adequate yearly progress  
144 pursuant to the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-  
145 110, for two consecutive years while designated as a low achieving  
146 school district, the State Board of Education, after consultation with the  
147 Governor and chief elected official or officials of the district, may (1)

148 request that the General Assembly enact legislation authorizing that (A)  
149 control of the district be reassigned to the State Board of Education or  
150 other authorized entity, or (B) control of the financial operations of the  
151 district be reassigned to the School District Accountability Review  
152 Board, established pursuant to section 1 of this act, or (2)  
153 notwithstanding the provisions of chapter 146, any special act, charter  
154 or ordinance, grant the Commissioner of Education the authority to  
155 reconstitute the local or regional board of education for such school  
156 district in accordance with the provisions of subsection (i) of this section.

157       Sec. 3. (*Effective from passage*) (a) For the fiscal year ending June 30,  
158 2026, in accomplishing their duties as set forth in section 7-396a of the  
159 general statutes and in accordance with the authority granted under  
160 chapter 111 of the general statutes, the Auditors of Public Accounts shall  
161 conduct a forensic audit of the financial operations and processes and  
162 the records, accounts and budget of the school district for the town of  
163 Bridgeport.

164       (b) (1) Not later than thirty days following the completion of the  
165 independent forensic audit described in subsection (a) of this section,  
166 the Auditors of Public Accounts shall submit such audit and a report on  
167 the findings of such audit to the joint standing committee of the General  
168 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, in  
169 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

170       (2) Not later than thirty days following the receipt of the independent  
171 forensic audit and report pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection,  
172 the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having  
173 cognizance of matters relating to education shall hold a hearing on such  
174 audit and report and invite the Commissioner of Education to present  
175 on the findings of such audit. The chairpersons of such joint standing  
176 committee may invite additional individuals to participate at such  
177 hearing.

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

Section 1	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10-223e(e) and (f)
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	New section

**ED**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*