

CABE Advocacy Highlights

2026 Legislative Wrap Up What Happened and What Are the Implications for Your School District?

PASSED both CHAMBERS

HB 5563 AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS CRIMINAL LAW PROPOSALS.

An amendment to this bill **impacts the education funding provisions in HB 5222 and SB 1**. The amendment clarifies that municipalities can adjust the adopted budget or mill rate to reduce the local share for education provided the local share is not less than the greater of:

- the amount of funding for education in the adopted budget or
- the FY 2026 budget plus the supplemental ECS funds in HB 5222.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

PA 26-3 AN ACT ESTABLISHING CONNECTICUT VACCINE STANDARDS.

(Signed by Gov.) This bill makes various changes to state laws on immunizations. Principally, it:

1. requires the Department of Public Health (DPH) commissioner to establish an immunization standard of care for adults, in addition to children as under current law, and authorizes her to (a) consider recommended vaccine schedules from an additional organization when doing so and (b) include passive immunizations, in addition to active immunizations as allowed under current law.
2. requires the Connecticut Vaccine Program (CVP) to give all children's vaccines included under DPH's standard of care, instead of only those recommended by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), and allows DPH to purchase the vaccines by means other than through CDC under certain conditions...
3. expressly provides that the state's Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) does not apply to immunization requirements for (a) public and private schools, including higher education institutions and (b) child care centers and group and family day care homes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except that provisions on (1) insurance coverage for vaccines take effect January 1, 2027, and (2) RFRA take effect upon passage and apply to any civil action pending on or filed after that date.

PA 26-12 AN ACT CONCERNING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND WORKING CONDITIONS IN THE STATE.

§ 1 & 75 — ENHANCED WORKERS' COMPENSATION BENEFITS FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND TEACHERS ASSAULTED AT

WORK Allows certain teachers, health care providers, and related employees to receive enhanced workers' compensation benefits if they are unable to work due to being assaulted at work. The bill allows certain teachers, health care providers, and related employees to receive enhanced workers' compensation benefits if they are unable to work (totally or partially) as a result of a physical or negligent assault upon them while performing their duties within the scope of their employment. For teachers and other education employees, the bill substitutes this for an existing similar benefit (which the bill repeals) that is outside of workers' compensation. More specifically, the bill requires these teachers, health care providers, and employees to receive a workers' compensation benefit that equals 100% of their average weekly earnings as of the date of the injury (calculated using the same process that applies to other workers' compensation claimants), with no cap on the benefit amount, plus their expenses reasonably incurred for medical or other services needed due to the assault, and any lost wages due to an absence for a court appearance connected to the assault.

Under existing law, an injured employee's workers' compensation benefit generally equals 75% of their after-tax average weekly earnings, subject to a cap set at the average weekly earnings of all workers in the state (CGS §§ 31-307(a) & 31-309). It covers related medical expenses, but not other out-of-pocket expenses or lost wages for court appearances.

Under the bill, a teacher, health care provider, or employee must continue to be paid their salary or contracted wage if they miss work due to an injury sustained during an assault or for a court appearance connected to the assault. However, workers' compensation benefits may be deducted from these wages during the absence. In addition, the absence cannot be charged against the provider's or employee's sick leave, vacation time, or personal leave.

Under current law, if a teacher, board member, or other employee of a school district or certain state institutions or agencies is assaulted while performing their duties and suffers a financial loss or expense, then the employer must generally cover those losses and expenses. These include reasonable medical or other service expenses the injured person incurred that were not covered by insurance, workers' compensation, or another outside source. The bill correspondingly repeals this law (§ 75).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Covered Teachers and Educational Employees

The bill's enhanced workers' compensation benefits are also available to any (1) member of a board of education, the State Board of Education (SBE), the Board of Regents of Higher Education (BOR), or the UConn Board of Trustees, and (2) teacher or other employee employed by those boards.

The bill further specifies that a "teacher" or "other employee" also includes (1) any student completing a student teaching experience under the direction of a teacher employed by (a) a local or regional board of education, (b) SBE, or (c) BOR and (2) any member of the faculty or staff of, or any student employed by, the UConn Health Center or health services.

Assault

Under the state's criminal statutes, unchanged by the bill, third degree assault occurs when a person (1) intends to physically injure someone and injures that person or someone else; (2) recklessly causes serious physical injury to another person; or (3) with criminal negligence, physically injures someone with a deadly weapon, a dangerous instrument, or an electronic defense weapon (CGS § 53a-61). First degree and second degree assault are similar in that the crime involves physical injury due to intentional or reckless actions (although there are factors that heighten the crime in these instances) (CGS §§ 53a-59 & -60).

The bill does not define "physical or negligent assault." Under the bill's use of "physical or negligent" assault, it is unclear (1) what level of negligence triggers the bill's provisions (for example, criminal negligence as used in the state's third degree assault statute) or (2) if intent is necessary.

§ 2 — DISCLOSURE OF WAGE RANGES AND BENEFITS IN PUBLIC AND INTERNAL JOB ADVERTISEMENTS The bill expands the wage disclosure law to require an employer to include a position's wage or wage range, and a general description of the position's benefits, in its public and internal job advertisements. The bill defines benefits as (1) health insurance; (2) retirement; (3) fringe; (4) paid leave; and (5) any other compensation, other than wages, offered with a position. Under the bill, an employer is required to set a wage range for a position in good faith, instead of setting the range the employer anticipates relying on. In setting the range, current law allows the employer to refer to a number of items.

The bill also:

1. requires employers to give job applicants and employees this benefit information when they are currently required to give them wage information (with one change on the timing of providing information, see below);
2. prohibits employers from retaliating or discriminating against a job applicant or employee for exercising their rights under the wage disclosure law, including by refusing to hire or interview an applicant or refusing to promote or terminating an employee (the law already prohibits adverse job actions against an employee who asks about the wages of other employees or discloses or discusses their own or other employees' wages);
3. specifies that the wage disclosure law applies to positions with duties in the state or when the duties are performed out of state but the employee reports directly to a supervisor, office, or worksite in the state; and
4. makes conforming changes.

The state's current wage disclosure law generally (1) requires employers, including the state and municipalities, to give job applicants and employees the wage range for their positions upon request and (2) prohibits employers from

taking certain steps to limit their employees' ability to share information about their wages. Under current law, an employer who violates the wage disclosure law may be found liable in a lawsuit for compensatory damages, attorney's fees and costs, punitive damages, and other court-awarded legal and equitable relief. The bill removes a court's ability to impose punitive damages in these cases.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 8 — TEACHER TERMINATIONS The bill makes changes to the process for terminating public school teachers. It sets a standard of review for when a tenured public school teacher is terminated for the reasons allowed by existing law (inefficiency, incompetence, insubordination, moral misconduct, disability, elimination of a position to another teacher, or other due and sufficient reasons). Current law does not specify a standard of review for these terminations. The bill requires the standard of review to be the same standard applied in other disciplinary actions under the teacher's collective bargaining agreement. This permits the standard to be determined through the collective bargaining process. The bill also changes who makes the final decision when a tenured teacher is under consideration for termination and requests a hearing.

Current law generally allows such a teacher to request a hearing before either a board of education (BOE) subcommittee or an impartial hearing officer. The bill eliminates the option for the hearing before a BOE subcommittee. Under current law, the subcommittee or hearing officer must submit its findings and a recommendation to the BOE, which then makes a final decision on the termination. The bill instead requires the hearing officer to make the final disposition, and makes it binding on the parties.

Current law allows teachers aggrieved by a BOE's termination decision to appeal to the Superior Court, and requires the court to review the proceedings under the Uniform Administrative Procedure Act's (UAPA) standards for reviewing appeals of agency decisions. The bill instead allows tenured teachers or BOEs aggrieved by a hearing officer's decision to apply to the court to confirm, vacate, or modify the decision under the laws for court consideration of arbitration awards. It also makes various minor and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

Court Review Standards for Appeals

Current law generally requires a court considering an appeal of a teacher's termination under the UAPA standards to affirm the decision unless it finds that substantial rights of the teacher have been prejudiced because the findings, inferences, conclusions, or decisions (1) violate constitutional or statutory provisions; (2) exceed statutory authority; or (3) were (a) made using an unlawful procedure, (b) affected by another error of law, (c) clearly erroneous, or (d) arbitrary or capricious. The bill instead requires a court to consider an appeal from either a tenured teacher or the BOE under the statutory standards for appeals of arbitration awards. Under these standards, a court must confirm an award unless it vacates or modifies it (CGS § 52-417). The court generally must vacate an award if (1) it was made through corruption, fraud or undue means; (2) it was evident the arbitrator was partial or corrupt; (3) the arbitrator

was guilty of misconduct by refusing to postpone the hearing or in refusing to hear pertinent and material evidence; or (4) the arbitrator exceeded his or her powers, or so imperfectly executed them that a mutual, final, and definite award was not made (CGS § 52-418).

Under these same standards, a court must modify an award if (1) there was an evident material miscalculation of figures or an evident material mistake in the description of something referred to in the award; (2) the arbitrator awarded for a matter not submitted for arbitration, unless it does not affect the merits of the decision; or (3) the award is imperfect in matter of form not affecting the merits of the controversy (CGS § 52-419).

Current law prohibits a court from awarding costs to a teacher appealing his or her termination unless it finds that the BOE acted with gross negligence, in bad faith, or with malice in its original decision. The bill removes this limitation for tenured teachers, and the arbitration standards used under the bill do not explicitly allow costs to be awarded to either party.

§ 13 — PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER PAYROLL DEDUCTION OF UNION DUES This bill conforms the state's collective bargaining law for public school teachers to federal case law, which generally prohibits public sector collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) from requiring public employees who were covered by a CBA, but not dues paying members of the union, to pay other fees instead of union dues (Janus v. American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Council 31, 585 U.S. 878 (2018)).

Current state law generally specifies that the teachers' collective bargaining law does not preclude their CBAs from requiring that union dues and service fees (fees paid by teachers who do not join the union) be collected by payroll deduction. The bill instead specifies that the parties may negotiate CBA provisions that allow the teachers to choose to have their dues and initiation (rather than service) fees paid through payroll deductions.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§ 25 — RESC AND CTECS REPORT ON WORK-BASED LEARNING PROGRAMS Starting by July 1, 2027, the bill requires each regional educational service center (RESC) and the Technical Education and Career System's (CTECS) executive director, in consultation with the state Department of Education (SDE), to annually give the Education and Labor and Public Employees committees a report on the high school work-based learning programs offered in each RESC's region and by CTECS. It must also be posted on SDE's website.

The report must at least include (1) an inventory of work-based learning programs offered by local or regional boards of education and CTECS, (2) the number of students enrolled in these programs, and (3) the total cost to each school district and CTECS for each program.

§ 26 — PRIVATE SECTOR EDUCATOR EXTERNSHIPS The bill requires the education commissioner, by January 1, 2028, and in consultation with the Office of Workforce Strategy, to establish a two-year pilot program for educator

externships for certified educators. The program must allow the educators to participate in experiential learning with private sector employers so they can align classroom instruction with current industry standards and workforce needs. In developing the program, the commissioner must:

1. set criteria for (a) identifying and screening participating employers and (b) matching educators with externships based on subject matter relevance,
2. develop a curriculum that ensures that the learned skills are incorporated into the educator's future lesson plans, and
3. set eligibility for (a) stipends for educators completing an externship and (b) grants for participating employers.

The bill allows the commissioner to contract with non-governmental entities, including nonprofit organizations, to implement the program.

For the 2028-29 and 2029-30 school years, the bill requires the commissioner to prioritize program placement for educators who (1) are employed in a town designated as an alliance district or (2) teach a topic related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics, manufacturing, or health care.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 27 — REGIONAL WORKFORCE NAVIGATOR The bill requires each of the state's regional workforce development boards to include a regional workforce navigator appointed by the chief elected officials of the municipalities in each board's region (as the law also requires for the other board members). Under the bill, the navigator must coordinate with the boards, the Governor's Workforce Council, and the Department of Labor (DOL) to connect people in adult education programs, and public school students in grades 9 through 12, with workforce opportunities such as internships, apprenticeships, job shadowing opportunities, and credentials offered in the state.

Under the bill, a "credential" is generally a documented award issued by an authorized body, such as a (1) diploma from a higher education institution or private career school; (2) certification awarded through an examination process designed to show the acquisition of certain knowledge, skill, and ability to do a specific job; (3) government-issued license that allows someone to practice a specific occupation; or (4) documented completion of an apprenticeship or job training program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 28 — TRAINING ON ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS The bill requires the chief workforce officer, by October 1, 2026, and in consultation with educational institutions, the regional workforce development boards, and the Governor's Workforce Council, to develop training on adult education programs in the state, including funding streams for the programs and performance measures to ensure informed collaboration. The training must be given to the regional workforce navigators (see § 27) by December 30, 2026.

§ 29 — SDE STUDY OF CO-INSTRUCTION TEACHING MODELS The bill establishes a working group to study the effectiveness and benefits of co-instruction teaching models used by public schools, including models that allow people who do not have a professional teaching certification to teach collaboratively with a certified teacher. Under the bill, the Education Committee’s chairpersons each appoint two members to the working group, and the committee’s ranking members each appoint one member. The working group must submit the study’s results to the Education Committee by January 1, 2027.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§§ 30 & 31 — FEDERAL ADA INFORMATION The bill requires the DOL commissioner to post information about the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on DOL’s website. The information must (1) at least include the ADA’s definition of a disability and how it relates to reasonable accommodations in the workplace and (2) be on DOL’s website in both English and Spanish and in a form that allows an employer to download it for display at its place of business.

Relatedly, the bill requires employers to give written notice about an employee’s right to reasonable accommodations in the workplace for a disability under the ADA to (1) new employees at the start of their employment; (2) existing employees by January 29, 2027; and (3) any employee who notifies the employer about his or her disability within 10 days after the notification. Under the bill, an employer can alternatively comply with the requirement by displaying the poster created by the DOL commissioner in a conspicuous place, accessible to employees, at the employer’s place of business.

The bill also allows the DOL commissioner to adopt regulations to establish additional requirements on how employers must provide the notice.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 32 — BREASTFEEDING AND EXPRESSING MILK IN THE WORKPLACE The bill requires employers to provide reasonable break times for an employee to express breastmilk for the employee’s nursing child or to breastfeed at the workplace, in addition to the employee’s scheduled breaks. Current law allows an employee to express breastmilk or breastfeed during her meal or break period.

Existing law, unchanged by the bill, requires an employer to make reasonable efforts to provide a room or location near the work area, except a toilet stall, that (1) is private, (2) has or is near a refrigerator or other employee-provided portable cold storage device, and (3) has access to an electrical outlet. This generally aligns with federal law that requires a reasonable break time and a private space other than a bathroom to express breast milk for up to one year after a child’s birth (29 U.S.C. § 218d).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 38 — PAYCHECK TRANSPARENCY The bill requires employers with at

least 100 employees (including the state and municipalities) to create a guide for their employees on the pay codes the employer uses for overtime and its most commonly used pay differentials, such as shift differentials, on-call pay, hazard pay, call-back pay, holiday or weekend pay, or geographic pay differentials. The bill requires each guide, if applicable, to include at least 10 pay codes and be posted on the employer's website in English, Spanish, and the most common other languages spoken by their employees. The guide must also include contact information for the designated office or person who will handle employee disputes about calculations of hours and pay differentials.

Under the bill, employers must update the guide each time a new pay code is added for overtime or a pay differential. They must also (1) include a link to the guide on each record of hours given to an employee and (2) give new employees a link to the guide upon hire. They may also comply by giving a written copy of the guide to an employee upon hire in English and the employee's primary language.

The bill deems an employer in compliance with these paycheck transparency provisions if it uses a third-party payroll services company that provides the pay code guide as required by the bill. It also specifies that it does not require an employer to (1) establish and maintain an Internet web site if it does not currently have one or (2) establish new pay codes in order to satisfy the provisions of this section.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 51 — “REASONABLE ASSURANCE” OF RETURNING TO WORK FOR PARAEducATORS Under state and federal law, employees who work at an educational institution are ineligible to receive unemployment benefits for a school break (for example, between two successive academic years, between two regular terms, or during a customary vacation or holiday recess) if they have a reasonable assurance” to work for any educational institution once courses resume (in the next academic year or term or period after the vacation or recess).

The bill requires school districts, at least 10 days before the last day of regular school sessions, to give DOL lists of their paraeducators who have and do not have reasonable assurance of returning to work for them once courses resume. More specifically, the requirement applies to each local or regional board of education, regional educational service center, governing authority for a state charter school, or an endowed or incorporated academy approved by the State Board of Education (collectively referred to as “school districts”).

The bill allows the labor commissioner to consider the information on these lists when making reasonable assurance determinations, but specifies that unless it is accompanied by additional evidence, it cannot be conclusive evidence of reasonable assurance in any case.

Reasonable Assurance

Under the bill, “reasonable assurance” exists if two conditions are met. First, there must be a written, oral, or implied employment offer for the following school year that:

1. was made by an authorized school district employee;
2. is for (a) services in the same capacity the person performed in the previous school year and (b) at least 90% of the wages or salary paid to the person, in total, by every educational institution he or she worked for during the previous school year; and
3. does not depend on factors within the school district's control, such as course programming, available funding allocation, program modifications, or facility availability.

Second, it must be highly probable that the paraeducator will work in the same capacity once courses resume, based on the totality of the circumstances, including funding availability, past enrollment levels, the paraeducator's seniority level, and the nature of the offer's contingencies.

Paraeducator Lists

The bill requires school districts to submit two employee lists to DOL, in a way the commissioner sets, at least 10 days before last day of regular school sessions. The first must list employees, including their names and Social Security numbers, who worked as a paraeducator for the school and do not have reasonable assurance of working in the same capacity once courses resume.

The second list must contain employees who worked as paraeducators and have reasonable assurance of working in the same capacity once courses resume. It must also describe how each paraeducator was given reasonable assurance, including (1) whether the offer was written, oral, or implied; (2) the nature of any offer contingencies; and (3) the information about the offer communicated to the paraeducator.

§ 52 — SCHOOL PARAEDUCATOR ADVISORY COUNCIL The bill adjusts paraeducator representation on the School Paraeducator Advisory Council. Current law requires the council to have one paraeducator from each state-wide bargaining representative organization that represents paraeducators with instructional responsibilities. The bill instead requires it to have five paraeducators from those state-wide bargaining representative organizations (without allotting any to a particular organization) and requires that they be nominated by the Connecticut AFL-CIO.

By law, unchanged by the bill, the council also has (1) a representative from each of the exclusive bargaining units for certified employees, (2) the most recent recipient of the Connecticut Paraeducator of the Year Award, (3) two representatives from the regional educational service centers, and (4) a school administrator. In general, the council advises the education commissioner on the needs for paraeducator professional development and the training, appropriate staffing strategies for paraeducators, and other relevant paraeducator issues.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§ 75 — REPEALER The bill repeals a law that generally requires school boards

and state higher education institution to indemnify teachers, board members, or other school employees if they are assaulted while performing their duties and suffer a financial loss or expense.

PA 26-13 AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH STATUTES.

§ 15-17 — ATHLETIC HEALTH ASSESSMENTS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ATHLETES Generally requires public high school students, before playing interscholastic sports, to have an annual athletics health assessment to screen for serious cardiac conditions Starting in the 2027-28 school year, the bill generally requires public high school students, before participating in interscholastic sports, to have an annual athletics health assessment by a health professional. This must include a physical exam that screens for serious cardiac conditions that could lead to sudden death. Among other things, the assessment form must include information on relevant patient or family history and whether the provider referred the student for additional cardiac screening or treatment. As with other student health assessments under existing law, the bill requires schools to (1) provide the assessment for free if the student is eligible for free or reduced price meals and (2) record the assessment results in the student’s health record. The bill extends to these athletic health assessments certain other provisions that apply to student health assessments under existing law, including those shielding the records from public inspection and requiring a religious exemption (CGS §§ 10-208 & -209).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§§ 19-22 — SCHOOL SAFETY PLANS The bill regulates the review and sharing of certain minors’ “safety plans” (written documents health care providers and patients create collaboratively, outlining coping strategies, activities, and support networks the patient can use to prevent or manage a potential mental health crisis).

Starting April 1, 2027, the bill requires each health care provider that prepares a safety plan for a minor patient who received at least 12 consecutive days of inpatient behavioral health care treatment to (1) review it with the minor, if medically appropriate, and (2) ask whether the minor or the minor’s parent or legally authorized representative consents to sharing the safety plan with the minor’s school. If this consent is given, the provider must (1) get written consent from the minor’s parent or legally authorized representative (or the minor if they are at least age 16) and (2) send the plan to the minor’s school or school district using a secure messaging system or in a way that complies with the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA ACT).

Relatedly, the bill also requires: 1. school districts and schools to sign up for an organizational account on a secure messaging system and give at least one designated employee (such as a school nurse, social worker, or psychologist) access to the account; 2. local and regional education boards to give the State Department of Education (SDE) commissioner each school’s and school district’s secure messaging system address to make available to health care providers; and 3. local and regional education boards to give new designated employees SDE-developed guidance on how to use the secure messaging system.

Additionally, the bill makes it a goal of the Statewide Health Information Exchange (“Connie”) to give, within available appropriations, schools and school districts a secure messaging system organizational account that designated employees may access to receive these safety plans.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except that the provision on guidance for new designated employees takes effect July 1, 2027.

PA 26-14 AN ACT CONCERNING DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY. (Signed by Gov.)

§ 7 — TAKING INTO CUSTODY IN STATE OR MUNICIPAL FACILITIES OR PROTECTED AREAS

The bill prohibits peace officers from detaining, arresting, or taking someone into custody based on a civil offense in certain locations unless the officer (1) is acting in his or her official capacity and (2) has a judicial warrant for the person. Officers subject to the prohibition are those covered by the bill’s expanded definition of “peace officer” for use of force investigations, which includes broader applicability to federal law enforcement.

Prohibited Custody Locations

State or Municipal Facilities. State or municipal facilities are buildings owned, leased, occupied, controlled, or used for business by an executive department office or agency or municipal government, and entities that provide direct services on their behalf. This includes the grounds and garages or parking lots that are used as part of the facilities’ operation, regardless of whether they are contiguous (in contact with one another), but not state-owned property leased to a federal entity.

Protected Areas. The bill’s protection from being taken into custody in certain areas applies to the following buildings or locations, including their grounds and garages or parking lots that are used as part of their operation, regardless of whether they are contiguous:

1. schools, ranging from preschools to colleges or universities;
2. licensed hospitals or urgent care centers;
3. places of worship or religious study;
4. social services establishments, such as crisis centers, shelters, supervised visitation or family justice centers, victim services centers, food banks or pantries, or substance counseling and treatment facilities;
5. places for disaster or emergency response and relief, including supply distribution sites, to register for disaster-related assistance, or to be reunited with family;
6. cemeteries or other internment locations; and
7. playgrounds, recreation or child care centers, before- or after-school care centers, foster care facilities, group homes for children, or school bus stops when children are there.

SB 1 AN ACT CONCERNING AFFORDABILITY.

§ 252 — SCHOOL BUDGET REFERENDUM NOTIFICATIONS BY SCHOOLS

State law prohibits spending government funds to send unsolicited electronic or automated communications about school budget referenda or to advocate for or against a referendum, except for certain notices. For example, it authorizes notice of specific information on an upcoming referendum by (1) using a community notification system or (2) posting on municipal or regional school district websites. The notice may only include (1) the referendum's time and location; (2) a statement of the question as it will appear on the ballot; and (3) if applicable, the explanatory text or other material prepared and approved under state law. It may not advocate for or against the question or try to influence its success or defeat.

In addition to these, the bill explicitly allows a school superintendent to give written notice through the schools within the district to inform parents or legal guardians that a referendum about the school district is coming up. The notice is subject to the same content requirements and advocacy restrictions described above.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 376 — WATERBURY 2025-26 SCHOOL YEAR NOTWITHSTANDING Allows the Waterbury school board to reduce the number of actual school sessions for the 2025-26 school year to 176 days

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§§ 377, 379 & 390-395 — EDUCATION GRANTS Provides (1) supplemental education grants to towns and choice schools and (2) district relief and compensatory use learning grants and exempts these grants from the MBR calculation; adjusts existing education grants (see Fiscal Note)

Fiscal Note-Sections 390 and 391- appropriate \$183 million to SDE in FY 26 for supplemental education grants as follows: (1) \$162.2 million for supplemental education aid grants to every town; (2) \$5.55 million to increase the per student grant amount for non-BOE operated magnet schools; (3) \$2.75 million to increase the per student grant amount for BOE operated magnet schools; (4) \$8.7 million for charter schools; (5) \$800,000 to increase the per student grant amount for vocational agriculture; and (6) \$3 million for SDE to implement Section 388. The sections allow funding to be carried forward and distributed in FY 27. Hartford may receive \$5 million of its supplemental education aid grant in FY 26.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except that (1) provisions on charter school planning grants, interdistrict magnet school grants, and district relief and compensatory use learning grants are effective July 1, 2026, and (2) the provision on FY 28 ECS grants is effective July 1, 2027.

§ 378 — GRANTS FOR HEALTH SERVICES FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS Extends to FY 27 the requirement to proportionately reduce grants for health services provided to private school students under state law

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§ 381 — TEACHER APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM Starting in FY 27, requires SDE to administer a teacher apprenticeship program within available appropriations

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§§ 388 & 389 — REVIEWING BOARD OF EDUCATION FINANCIAL CONDITIONS AND MEMBER ADDED TO MARB Creates a process for BOEs to ask SDE for a fiscal intervention and oversight plan; requires (1) MARB to review the plan and (2) the OPM secretary and SBE to approve the plan before a BOE implements it; requires BOEs with a plan to meet with MARB to discuss compliance; adds the SDE commissioner to MARB

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§ 396 — PRIORITY LIST GRANT COMMITMENTS Authorizes school construction state grant commitments totaling \$150.6 million toward total estimated project costs of \$305.6 million

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 397 — THE SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM GRANT REIMBURSEMENT RATE Caps the total reimbursement percentage a board of education may receive for school construction grants at 95% of eligible costs; creates a new bonus of an additional 20% for any school district that has increased enrollment by 20% or more over a 10-year period

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§ 398-403 — RENAMING THE SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS ADVISORY COUNCIL AS THE SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY INFRASTRUCTURE ADVISORY COUNCIL Renames the School Building Projects Advisory Council as the School Safety and Security Infrastructure Advisory Council and revises its responsibilities

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 404 — ENDOWED HIGH SCHOOL OR ACADEMY AND SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION Authorizes the DAS commissioner to waive the school construction grant requirements to provide school construction grants to the state's three endowed high schools or academies

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§§ 405-441 — SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS EXEMPTIONS, WAIVERS, AND MODIFICATIONS Exempts school construction projects in 26 towns and three regional school districts from statutory and regulatory requirements to allow them to qualify for state reimbursement, receive a higher

reimbursement rate, or have their project reauthorized, among other things (commonly referred to as “notwithstanding”)

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, unless otherwise noted.

SB 5 AN ACT CONCERNING ONLINE SAFETY.

§ 23 — COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT The bill expands the purposes of the “computer science education account” and renames it the “computer science education and workforce development account.” It allows the State Department of Education (SDE) to use the account funds, in coordination with the Office of Workforce Strategy and BOR, to support workforce development initiatives.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

As under current law, the account is a separate, nonlapsing account, and SDE can also use it in various ways to support computer science education.

§ 27 — TEACHER CERTIFICATION PREPARATION PROGRAM Existing law requires teacher certification preparation programs to include computer science instruction as part of the curriculum. The bill specifies this may include instruction in topics such as the responsible use of emerging technologies.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

SB 9 AN ACT SUPPORTING COMMUTERS AND MICROTRANSIT SERVICES. This bill makes various changes in laws related to, among other things, commuters, transit, and the Department of Transportation (DOT), including requiring the:

- (a) State Department of Education (SDE) to administer a free bus pass program for students and
- (b) Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) to provide free bus passes for veterans (§§ 7 & 8). See SB 477.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

SB 137 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD.

§ 2 — SMART START GRANT RATE INCREASE Increases the maximum per child and per classroom grant a school board can receive under the Smart Start program By law, OEC, in consultation with the state Department of Education, administers the Connecticut Smart Start competitive grant program to give school boards grants for capital and operating expenses to establish or expand preschool programs.

Under the program, school boards may receive (1) a one-time capital expenses grant up to \$75,000 per classroom and (2) an annual operating expenses grant in an amount based on either the number of children or preschool classrooms in the program. The bill increases the maximum annual operating expenses grant from \$5,000 to \$6,500 per child and from \$75,000 to \$97,500 per preschool classroom.

SB 138 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. This bill makes various unrelated changes to

education law including:

1. aligning the approval process for new charter schools with the governor's biennial budget process, rather than the annual process as under current law (§ 1);
2. making a receiving interdistrict magnet school responsible for the costs of a student's services under a Section 504 accommodation plan rather than the sending school district as under current law (§ 2);
3. requiring the State Department of Education (SDE) to pay transportation grants for Sheff region magnet schools operated by regional educational service centers (RESCs) in an amount equal to the actual cost incurred or paid by the RESC on or before October 31 of the fiscal year, rather than half of the total estimated cost by this date as under current law (§ 3); and
4. amending what must be in the report by a regional school study committee supporting the district's creation as part of the planning process to consider forming a regional school district (§ 9).

The bill also repeals various annual (unless frequency otherwise noted) reports that SDE must currently submit to the Education Committee, or other General Assembly committees (noted below), including those for:

1. school boards that have adopted the uniform regional school calendar and any related recommendations (§ 4);
2. the surrogate parent program (a joint program with the Department of Children and Families) also submitted to the Committee on Children (§ 5);
3. the commissioner's network of schools program reports that are required at certain steps of the process including (a) a one-time report on the turnaround plan for a school participating in the program, (b) a report analyzing the academic performance of all schools in the program, and (c) a final report at the conclusion of the turnaround plan evaluating the plan and performance for each participating school (§ 6);
4. activities and programs designed to reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation based on information received from school districts (reported biennially to the governor and General Assembly) (§ 7);
5. the status of educational technology in the public schools (reported biennially to the General Assembly) (§ 8); and
6. the quality of teacher preparation programs in Connecticut to the Education and Higher Education and Employment Advancement committees (§ 10).

SB 220 AN ACT CONCERNING STUDENT LITERACY. This bill makes the following unrelated changes to education laws:

1. modifies the aspiring educators diversity scholarship program by (a) making “aspiring educators,” rather than “diverse educators,” eligible the scholarship and (b) allowing the SDE commissioner to use a portion of unspent funds to promote the teaching profession;
2. requires SDE to establish the American Sign Language (ASL) education working group; and
3. makes permanent two health care subsidy programs for paraeducators employed by local or regional boards of education and expands the programs to include paraeducators at charter schools.

The bill also makes several minor and technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026, except that the creation of the American Sign Language working group is effective January 1, 2027

SB 375 AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL MAPPING DATA SERVICES. Beginning with FY 27, this bill allows the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to, annually and within available appropriations, administer a program to provide grants to municipalities and municipal police departments for services to give school mapping data that satisfies the bill’s requirements. By October 1, 2026, the department must create eligibility criteria for the grants, develop application forms and deadlines, and post a description of the program on DESPP’s website that includes the criteria, forms, and deadlines.

The bill also requires the department, starting by January 1, 2028, to annually report on the program to the Public Safety and Security Committee. The reports must include, for the prior calendar year, the number of applications received, and grants awarded and a list of the grantees.

SB 427 AN ACT CONCERNING DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAMS. This bill requires the state Department of Education (SDE) to appoint a dual and concurrent enrollment course coordinator by January 1, 2027, to track establishment of these courses and student outcomes, such as completion rates and grades, by school district. Dual and concurrent enrollment courses are a type of advanced course or program offered by high schools in collaboration with higher education institutions.

Existing law, beginning in FY 27, creates a high-need student fee-waiver grant program to expand opportunities for high-need high school students to access advanced courses or programs. Currently, only a school board can apply to SDE for reimbursement for fees, such as tuition, paid on behalf of a high-need student. The bill also allows higher education institutions to apply for reimbursement for fee waivers given to a high-need student in an advanced class or program. But the bill specifies that higher education institutions that receive a grant cannot charge the student’s parents any course or program enrollment costs. The bill also makes minor clarifying changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

SB 477 AN ACT CONCERNING THE FAILURE TO FILE FOR CERTAIN GRAND LIST EXEMPTIONS AND A MUNICIPAL OPTION TO ABATE DELINQUENT PROPERTY TAXES ON CERTAIN PARCELS OF LAND.

Sec. 65. (Effective from passage) The sum of \$2,500,000 of the amount appropriated in section 2 of public act 25-168, as amended by substitute senate bill 1 of the current session, as amended by Senate Amendment Schedule "A", to the Department of Transportation, for Bus Operations, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027, shall be expended by the department in said fiscal year for the purpose of (1) discounting the lawful charge to use state-owned or state-controlled bus public transportation for veterans,... and students who are enrolled in grades nine to twelve, inclusive, of a public school, and (2) issuing grants under the program established pursuant to section 7 of senate bill 9 of the current session, as amended by Senate Amendment Schedules "A" and "B" and section 64 of this act.

Sec. 80. Section 391 of substitute senate bill 1 of the current session, as amended by Senate Amendment Schedule "A", is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective from passage):

(2) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027, each town shall be paid a supplemental education aid grant equal to the amount prescribed in section 390 of [this act] substitute senate bill 1 of the current session, as amended by Senate Amendment Schedule "A". The amount due each town shall be paid by the Comptroller, upon certification of the Commissioner of Education, to the treasurer of each town not later than June thirtieth of said fiscal year. All aid distributed to a town pursuant to the provisions of this subdivision shall be expended for educational purposes only and shall be expended upon the authorization of the local or regional board of education. Such grant shall not be used to supplant local funding for educational purposes. For any town paid a supplemental education aid grant under subdivision (1) of this subsection, such amount paid shall be deducted from the town's grant paid for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027.

(b) Such grant shall not be considered part of the budgeted appropriation for education for the town for purposes of calculating the minimum budget requirement for the town pursuant to section 10-262j of the general statutes.

Sec. 99. Section 224 of public act 25-174, as amended by section 379 of senate bill 1 of the current session, as amended by Senate Amendment Schedule "A", is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective from passage):

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027, six million [two hundred fifty] four hundred ten thousand dollars of the Magnet Schools appropriation provided to the Department of Education for said fiscal year shall be distributed proportionally based on the share of students enrolled in interdistrict magnet school programs operated by entities that are (1) not a local or regional board of education, (2) the board of governors for an independent institution of higher education, as defined in subsection (a) of section 10a-173 of the general statutes, or the equivalent of such a board, on behalf of the independent institution of higher education, or (3) any other third-party, not-for-profit corporation approved by the Commissioner of Education.

HB 5259 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM TO OPERATE AUTOMATED TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT SAFETY DEVICES ON LIMITED ACCESS HIGHWAYS.

§§ 24 & 38 — ZERO-EMISSION SCHOOL BUSES Deadline Extensions Existing law requires school districts to gradually transition to zero emission school buses and sets deadlines for doing so. By law, a zero-emission school bus is a school bus certified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as having a drivetrain that does not produce any exhaust emission of any EPA-listed air pollutant or greenhouse gas under any possible operational mode or condition (42 U.S.C. § 16091(a)(8)).

Under current law, 100% of school buses that provide transportation for school districts in the state must be (1) either zero-emission or alternative-fuel (such as natural gas or propane) by January 1, 2035, and (2) zero-emission only by January 1, 2040.

The bill: 1. eliminates the 2035 requirement; 2. lowers the percentage of buses in each district that must be zero emission in 2040 to 90%; and 3. extends the deadline to July, rather than January in the same year, aligning with the legal school year (July 1 to June 30 of the following year).

Requirement in Environmental Justice Communities and Distressed Municipalities. Current law sets an earlier deadline for some school districts, requiring that 100% of buses providing transportation for school districts located in or containing at least one environmental justice community (as of July 1, 2022) be zero-emission by January 1, 2030. By law, an environmental justice community is (1) any U.S. census block group, as determined by the most recent census, for which at least 30% of the population consists of low-income people who are not institutionalized and have an income below 200% of the federal poverty level or (2) a distressed municipality (CGS § 22a-20a).

The bill eliminates this requirement and instead sets an interim deadline for school buses in municipalities that were distressed municipalities on July 1, 2026. Because the definition of environmental justice community includes distressed municipalities, this change effectively reduces the number of municipalities who must meet earlier deadlines for transitioning to zero-emission school buses.

Under the bill, buses providing transportation for each school district in a distressed municipality must be 50% zero-emission by July 1, 2035. Like all school districts under the bill, the school buses in a distressed municipality must also be 90% zero-emission by July 1, 2040.

Transition Plans The bill requires municipalities to submit plans and schedules outlining how they will comply with the bill's requirements to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner. Distressed municipalities must submit their plans by July 1, 2029, and all other municipalities must do so by July 1, 2035.

Changes to Grant Program Current law requires DEEP to administer a grant

program to give matching funds to municipalities, school districts, and bus operators who apply for federal grants to purchase zero-emission school buses and related charging infrastructure in order to maximize federal funding.

The bill makes several changes to this program. First, it broadens the purposes for which grants can be awarded by eliminating the requirement that the program provide matching funds for federal grants and instead requires that it provide a portion of funds necessary to maximize federal, state, or other sources of funding or financing. It also requires DEEP to (1) administer the program in consultation with the Connecticut Green Bank and (2) give preference to grant applications for school buses that will operate in a distressed municipality rather than an environmental justice community, conforming with the change to the zero-emission school bus transition requirements (see above).

Safety Plans The bill requires local and regional school boards, before purchasing or using a zero-emission school bus, to develop and implement safety plans that (1) consider the ages and developmental needs of students transported on zero-emission school buses and (2) include fire evacuation procedures.

§ 36 — DEEP WORKING GROUP ON SCHOOL BUS ALTERNATIVE FUELS AND TECHNOLOGIES The bill requires the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner, in support of administering the law on zero-emission school bus requirements and a related grant program (see § 24 above), to create a working group to evaluate and make recommendations on Connecticut school bus fleets' increased use of alternative fuels and technologies, including biodiesel, propane, and electric school buses.

The bill requires the working group to:

1. review school bus fleets' (in Connecticut and other jurisdictions) use of alternative fuels and technologies, including biodiesel, propane, and electric school buses, and identify relevant case studies and best practices;
2. evaluate the technical, operational, environmental, and economic considerations of school bus fleets' expanded use of alternative fuels and technologies, including (a) emissions performance, including impacts on criteria air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions; (b) fuel availability and supply constraints; (c) costs and potential savings, including lifecycle costs; (d) operational performance, including performance in cold weather; (e) impacts on engine durability and maintenance; (f) manufacturer warranty considerations; (g) fuel procurement and contracting practices for school districts and school transportation providers; and (h) a comparative assessment of alternative fuels and technologies, including renewable diesel and zero-emission school buses;
3. identify pathways and barriers to school bus fleets adopting alternative fuels and technologies, including infrastructure, contractual, regulatory, and economic considerations;
4. develop recommendations to support biodiesel's increased use where appropriate, including potential incentive structures, funding mechanisms, and procurement strategies; and

5. evaluate the role of alternative fuels as a transitional strategy toward deploying zero-emission school buses, including impacts on Connecticut's greenhouse gas reduction goals.

The bill requires (1) the DEEP commissioner, or her designee, to convene the working group and serve as its chairperson and (2) DEEP to provide administrative staff support. The working group's membership must include:

1. the commissioners of public health, education, and transportation (or their designees);
2. the Connecticut Green Bank's chief executive officer or his designee;
3. one representative of a school transportation provider operating in Connecticut;
4. one representative of a municipality or local or regional board of education;
5. one representative of the alternative fuels industry;
6. one representative of an environmental organization with expertise in air quality;
7. one representative of a statewide or regional coalition with expertise in clean transportation and alternative fuel deployment; and
8. anyone else the commissioner believes is needed to carry out the working group's purposes.

The bill requires the working group, by February 1, 2027, to submit a report to the Environment, Energy and Technology, and Transportation committees with the group's findings and recommendations, including any recommendations for regulatory or legislative action. The working group ends on the date it does so or February 1, 2027, whichever is later.

HB 5323 AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES.

§ 1 — ARMED SECURITY GUARDS Allows retired parole officers to provide armed security services in public schools; prohibits police and parole officers who left employment during an investigation or after disciplinary action from providing armed security services in schools

§ 2 — SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR MENTORSHIP PROGRAM Requires the Advisory Council for School Administrator Professional Standards to create a new school administrator mentorship pilot program

§ 3 — ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS Prohibits schools from requiring students in grades 9-12 who participate in interscholastic athletics to meet academic eligibility standards that are higher than those set by CIAC

§ 4 — THERAPEUTIC ARTS PROGRAM GRANTS Requires SDE to create a grant program, within available appropriations, for a therapeutic arts program in public schools starting in the 2027-28 school year

§ 5 — TEMPORARY PLACEMENT OF BRIDGEPORT MILITARY ACADEMY STUDENTS Allows the SDE commissioner to authorize the temporary placement of students enrolled in the Bridgeport Military Academy in available classroom space at the Fairchild Wheeler Interdistrict Magnet Campus to facilitate construction of a permanent facility for the Bridgeport Military Academy

§ 6 — REPEAL OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION REGULATIONS Delays the effective date of the repeal of various educator preparation regulations from July 1, 2026, to July 1, 2027

§ 7 — BROAD ASSESSMENT REDUCTION INCENTIVE PROGRAM Establishes an incentive program for school districts that limits broad assessments, integrates formative assessment tools, and increases teacher competency in the assessment process

§ 8 — REDUCING DISCRETIONARY LOCAL STUDENT ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE Requires SDE to develop and give guidance to school boards on reducing discretionary local student assessments

§ 9 — SDE REQUEST TO AMEND STATE PLAN UNDER ESSA Allows SDE to submit a request to the U.S. Department of Education to amend the state's approved plan submitted pursuant to ESSA

§ 10 — MATHEMATICS PATHWAYS, INSTRUCTION, AND SPECIALIST GUIDANCE Requires SDE to (1) redesign the state's high school mathematics pathways, (2) develop a list of professional development providers for high quality mathematics instruction, (3) explore the feasibility of launching MathConn, and (4) develop mathematics specialist guidelines

§§ 11-13 — MISCONDUCT-RELATED INFORMATION DISCLOSURE DURING PROSPECTIVE SCHOOL EMPLOYEE HIRING PROCESS Makes various revisions to the laws on the disclosure of certain misconduct-related information during the hiring process of a prospective school employee

HB 5447 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TRANSFORMING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE AND CONCERNING TEMPORARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE BENEFITS. Section 1. (a) The executive director of the WCSEO Commission shall convene two working groups. Each working group shall include one or more members of the Transforming Children's Behavioral Health Policy and Planning Committee and such other members as selected by the executive director.

(b) Not later than July 1, 2026, the executive director shall convene a working group concerning the treatment of eating disorders. The working group shall, in consultation with the DPH and DMHAS Commissioners, compile information to be made available to the public concerning (1) providers of eating disorder treatment services in the state, including, but not limited to, facilities that provide such treatment, (2) details concerning the types of services each such provider offers and the ages of persons typically served by such providers, and (3) other resources available in the state for persons with eating disorders. The working

group shall also consult with the DPH Commissioner to establish best practice guidelines for facilities in providing treatment for eating disorders.

(c) Not later than July 1, 2026, the executive director shall convene a working group to develop a state-wide food education roadmap and a model school nutrition curriculum that includes, but is not limited to, developmentally appropriate evidence-based education programs on disordered eating behaviors, nutrition, culinary skills, growing food, food safety and food systems.

(d) Not later than January 1, 2028, and annually thereafter, the executive director shall report, in accordance with the provisions of CGS 11-4a, to the chairpersons of the Transforming Children's Behavioral Health Policy and Planning Committee and the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children, public health, education and human services concerning the results of the working groups' studies.

HB 5464 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM TO OPERATE AUTOMATED TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT SAFETY DEVICES ON LIMITED ACCESS HIGHWAYS.

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- 3. identify pathways and barriers to school bus fleets adopting alternative fuels and technologies, including infrastructure, contractual, regulatory, and economic considerations;
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- 2. one representative of a school transportation provider operating in Connecticut;
- 3. one representative of a municipality or local or regional board of education;
- 4. one representative of the alternative fuels industry;
- 5. one representative of an environmental organization with expertise in air quality;
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