



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 5323

February Session, 2026



AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES.

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) On and after January 1, 2028,
2 each school-based health center shall (1) use an evidence-based
3 screening tool for early identification of disordered eating behaviors, as
4 a supplement to existing methods used to diagnose disordered eating
5 behaviors, and (2) provide such screening tool to each patient who is in
6 grades six to twelve, inclusive, during such patient's annual health
7 assessment, including, but not limited to, the health assessments
8 conducted pursuant to section 10-206 of the general statutes. Such
9 patient or such patient's parent or guardian may, in such patient's or
10 parent or guardian's discretion, complete such screening tool.

11 Sec. 2. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a task force to
12 develop recommendations for the early identification, awareness and
13 treatment of disordered eating behaviors in children, including, but not
14 limited to, recommendations for an evidence-based screening tool for
15 use in school-based health centers pursuant to section 1 of this act.

16 (b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

17 (1) The executive director of the Commission on Women, Children,

- 18 Seniors, Equity and Opportunity, or the executive director's designee;
- 19 (2) The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee;
- 20 (3) The Commissioner of Public Health, or the commissioner's
21 designee;
- 22 (4) The Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services, or
23 the commissioner's designee;
- 24 (5) The Child Advocate, or the Child Advocate's designee;
- 25 (6) The Comptroller, or the Comptroller's designee;
- 26 (7) The executive director of the Connecticut Association of Public
27 School Superintendents, or the executive director's designee;
- 28 (8) The executive director of the Connecticut Association of Boards of
29 Education, or the executive director's designee;
- 30 (9) The executive director of the Connecticut Association of School-
31 Based Health Centers, or the executive director's designee;
- 32 (10) The chief executive officer of the United Way of Connecticut, or
33 the chief executive officer's designee;
- 34 (11) The chief executive officer of the Connecticut Hospital
35 Association, or the chief executive officer's designee;
- 36 (12) A member of the Transforming Children's Behavioral Health
37 Policy and Planning Committee, established pursuant to section 2-137
38 of the general statutes, appointed jointly by the chairpersons of the
39 committee; and
- 40 (13) Any additional members with expertise in eating disorder
41 prevention, screening and early identification or any related services, as
42 appointed by the executive director of the Commission on Women,
43 Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity.

44 (c) Any member of the task force appointed under subdivisions (7) to
45 (13), inclusive, of subsection (b) of this section may be a member of the
46 General Assembly.

47 (d) All initial appointments to the task force shall be made not later
48 than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall
49 be filled by the appointing authority.

50 (e) The chairperson of the task force shall be the executive director of
51 the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and
52 Opportunity, or the executive director's designee. Such chairperson
53 shall schedule the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held not
54 later than sixty days after the effective date of this section.

55 (f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the
56 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education
57 shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

58 (g) Not later than January 1, 2028, the task force shall submit a report
59 on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committees
60 of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to
61 education and public health, in accordance with the provisions of
62 section 11-4a of the general statutes. The task force shall terminate on
63 the date that it submits such report or January 1, 2028, whichever is later.

64 Sec. 3. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a Holistic Food
65 Education Working Group to develop a state-wide food education
66 roadmap and a model school nutrition curriculum that includes, but is
67 not limited to, developmentally appropriate evidence-based education
68 programs on disordered eating behaviors, nutrition, culinary skills,
69 growing food, food safety and food systems.

70 (b) The working group shall consist of the following members:

71 (1) The executive director of the Commission on Women, Children,
72 Seniors, Equity and Opportunity, or the executive director's designee;

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

74 (3) The Commissioner of Public Health, or the commissioner's
75 designee;

76 (4) The Commissioner of Aging and Disability Services, or the
77 commissioner's designee;

78 (5) The Commissioner of Social Services, or the commissioner's
79 designee;

80 (6) The Commissioner of Agriculture, or the commissioner's
81 designee;

82 (7) The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection, or
83 the commissioner's designee;

84 (8) At least one representative representing each of the following
85 extension programs at The University of Connecticut, appointed by the
86 president of the university: Community nutrition, sustainable food
87 systems, 4-H, master gardeners and food safety;

88 (9) The executive director of the Connecticut Association of Public
89 School Superintendents, or the executive director's designee;

90 (10) The executive director of the Connecticut Association of Boards
91 of Education, or the executive director's designee;

92 (11) The president of the School Nutrition Association of Connecticut,
93 or the president's designee;

94 (12) The president of the Connecticut Academy of Nutrition and
95 Dietetics, or the president's designee;

96 (13) The chief executive officer of the Area Agencies on Aging, or the
97 chief executive officer's designee;

98 (14) At least one each of the following, appointed by the executive
99 director of the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and
100 Opportunity: (A) Public school educator in the state, (B) student in
101 grades nine to twelve, inclusive, in the state, (C) representative from a

102 community-based nonprofit that provides food or nutrition education,
103 (D) representative from a medical school in the state who teaches
104 nutrition, and (E) parent of a public school student in the state; and

105 (15) Any additional members with expertise in eating disorder
106 prevention and nutrition education or any related services, as appointed
107 by the executive director of the Commission on Women, Children,
108 Seniors, Equity and Opportunity.

109 (c) Any member of the working group appointed under subdivisions
110 (8) to (15), inclusive, of subsection (b) of this section may be a member
111 of the General Assembly.

112 (d) All initial appointments to the working group shall be made not
113 later than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy
114 shall be filled by the appointing authority.

115 (e) The executive director of the Commission on Women, Children,
116 Seniors, Equity and Opportunity shall select cochairpersons of the
117 working group from among the members of the working group. Such
118 cochairpersons shall schedule the first meeting of the working group,
119 which shall be held not later than sixty days after the effective date of
120 this section.

121 (f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the
122 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education
123 shall serve as administrative staff of the working group.

124 (g) Not later than January 1, 2028, the working group shall submit a
125 report on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing
126 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
127 relating to education, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a
128 of the general statutes. The working group shall terminate on the date
129 that it submits such report or January 1, 2028, whichever is later.

130 Sec. 4. (*Effective from passage*) (a) Notwithstanding any provision of
131 the general statutes or any public or special act, the Auditors of Public

132 Accounts shall conduct an audit of the financial operations of the
133 dissolved regional board of education for the former regional school
134 district six for the school year ending June 30, 2024, and for any expenses
135 incurred by or in the name of such regional board of education
136 thereafter. Not later than October 1, 2026, the Auditors of Public
137 Accounts shall submit such audit report to the chief executive officer of
138 each of the three member towns of former regional school district six.

139 (b) The chief executive officer of each member town of former
140 regional school district six shall pay any outstanding expenses owed by
141 such regional board of education, and such expenses shall be allocated
142 in accordance with the provisions of subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of
143 section 10-51 of the general statutes, except such chief executive officers
144 may agree to divide such expenses in any alternate manner.

145 Sec. 5. (*Effective from passage*) Notwithstanding any provision of the
146 general statutes or any public or special act, the Auditors of Public
147 Accounts shall conduct an audit of the financial operations of the
148 dissolved local board of education for the town of Litchfield for the
149 school year ending June 30, 2024, and for any expenses incurred by or
150 in the name of such local board of education thereafter. Not later than
151 October 1, 2026, the Auditors of Public Accounts shall submit such audit
152 report to the chief executive officer of the town of Litchfield.

153 Sec. 6. Section 10-244a of the general statutes is repealed and the
154 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

155 (a) For the school year commencing July 1, 2013, and each school year
156 thereafter, no municipality or local or regional board of education may
157 employ or enter into an agreement, as described in subdivision (2) of
158 subsection (b) of section 53a-217b, with any person, other than a sworn
159 member of an organized local police department or a retired [police]
160 officer as provided in subsection (b) of this section, to provide security
161 services in a public school if such person will possess a firearm, as
162 defined in section 53a-3, while in the performance of his or her duties.

163 (b) A municipality or a local or regional board of education may

164 employ or enter into an agreement with a retired [police] officer to
165 provide security services in a public school if such retired [police] officer
166 is a (1) qualified retired law enforcement officer, as defined in 18 USC
167 926C, as amended from time to time, or (2) parole officer who (A) served
168 as a parole officer for an aggregate of ten years or more, or separated
169 from such service, after completing any applicable probationary period,
170 due to a service-connected disability, as determined by the Department
171 of Correction, (B) during the most recent twelve-month period, has met,
172 at the expense of such parole officer, the standards for qualification in
173 firearms training for active parole officers, as determined by the
174 Department of Correction, (C) has not been found by a qualified medical
175 professional to be unqualified, for reasons relating to mental health, to
176 meet the active duty standards for qualification in firearms training, as
177 established by the Department of Correction, to carry a firearm and has
178 not entered an agreement with the department acknowledging that such
179 parole officer does not meet such qualification, (D) is not under the
180 influence of alcohol or another intoxicating or hallucinatory drug or
181 substance, and (E) is not prohibited by law from receiving a firearm.
182 Such retired [police] officer shall receive annual training pursuant to
183 section 7-294x and shall successfully complete annual firearms training
184 provided by a certified firearms instructor that meets or exceeds the
185 standards of the Police Officer Standards and Training Council or 18
186 USC 926C, as amended from time to time. Such retired [police] officer
187 shall not be subject to the licensing requirements of part II of chapter
188 534.

189 (c) For the purposes of subsection (b) of this section, ["retired police
190 officer"] (1) "retired officer" means [(1)] (A) a sworn member of an
191 organized local police department who was certified by the Police
192 Officer Standards and Training Council and retired or separated in good
193 standing from such department or a sworn member of the Division of
194 State Police within the Department of Emergency Services and Public
195 Protection who retired or separated in good standing from said division,
196 [(2)] (B) a sworn federal law enforcement agent who retired or separated
197 in good standing from such federal law enforcement service and who

198 meets or exceeds the standards of the Police Officer Standards and
199 Training Council for certification in this state, [or (3)] (C) a sworn officer
200 of an organized police department in another state who was certified
201 under standards that meet or exceed the standards of the Police Officer
202 Standards and Training Council for certification in this state and who
203 retired or separated in good standing from such department, or (D) a
204 parole officer who retired or separated in good standing from the
205 Department of Correction, and (2) "good standing" means the status of
206 a police officer whose employment in a law enforcement unit, as defined
207 in section 7-294a, or a parole officer whose employment with the
208 Department of Correction, terminated for a reason other than as a result
209 of disciplinary action or during a period other than when such police
210 officer or parole officer was under investigation or disciplinary action
211 was pending.

212 Sec. 7. (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) The Connecticut Advisory Council for
213 School Administrator Professional Standards, established pursuant to
214 section 10-144e of the general statutes, in consultation with the
215 Connecticut Association of Schools, shall establish a pilot program for a
216 new school administrator mentorship program. Such pilot program
217 shall include, but need not be limited to, supports, training and
218 professional development for new school administrators. Not later than
219 July 1, 2027, the council shall report the plan for implementation of the
220 pilot program to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly
221 having cognizance of matters relating to education, in accordance with
222 the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

223 (b) For the school year commencing July 1, 2027, the Connecticut
224 Advisory Council for School Administrator Professional Standards shall
225 implement the pilot program in school districts identified in the plan
226 developed pursuant to subsection (a) of this section. Not later than
227 January 1, 2029, the council shall report on the results of the pilot
228 program, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the
229 general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General
230 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education. Such
231 report shall include, but need not be limited to, recommendations for

232 improvement to and requirements for the further implementation of the
233 pilot program.

234 Sec. 8. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) Not later than July 1, 2027, each
235 local or regional board of education shall require students in grades nine
236 to twelve, inclusive, who participate in any extracurricular activity,
237 including, but not limited to, after-school clubs, student publications or
238 intramural and interscholastic athletics, to meet the academic eligibility
239 standards established by the Connecticut Association of Schools and the
240 Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference.

241 Sec. 9. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) The Department of Education
242 shall, within available appropriations, establish a grant program for the
243 provision of a therapeutic arts program in public schools for the school
244 year commencing July 1, 2027, and each school year thereafter. Such
245 grant shall be in an amount determined by the Commissioner of
246 Education and available to any local or regional board of education or
247 regional educational service center interested in providing a therapeutic
248 arts program, but the department shall prioritize boards of education or
249 regional educational service centers serving school districts with a high
250 rate of exclusionary discipline, lack of access to behavioral health
251 services and supports and an existing social-emotional learning
252 program. Not later than January 1, 2027, the department shall post in a
253 conspicuous location on its Internet web site information about the
254 grant program, including, but not limited to, eligibility criteria,
255 application forms and the amount of grant funds available to applicants.

256 (b) Not later than July 1 2028, and annually thereafter, the
257 Department of Education shall submit a report, in accordance with the
258 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing
259 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
260 relating to education. Such report shall include the number of grants
261 awarded and recipients of such grants.

262 Sec. 10. Section 10-150b of the general statutes is repealed and the
263 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

264 (a) There is established the Connecticut Educator Preparation and
265 Certification Board. The board shall be responsible for modernizing and
266 aligning educator preparation and certification to ensure that policies
267 are optimized to attract and retain effective and diverse professionals
268 for employment in the state's public schools.

269 (b) The board shall develop standards and proposals for regulations
270 or legislation relating to educator preparation and certification. Such
271 standards and proposals shall reflect the teaching profession and
272 respond to emerging understandings of effective, evidence-based
273 practices and address the following objectives: (1) Building streamlined,
274 flexible pathways in the educator profession that are grounded in a
275 commitment to educator effectiveness, (2) enabling educators to
276 broaden their scope of practice to meet more students' needs, (3)
277 ensuring educator preparation programs are accountable for both the
278 quality training experiences and outcomes for candidates, (4) creating a
279 system to help educators continuously improve their practice that
280 supports and rewards educators who demonstrate mastery, (5)
281 supporting improved data transparency regarding the state's
282 distribution of educators and educator vacancies and accountability for
283 remedying observed inequities, and (6) treating educators as
284 professionals and lifelong learners who need access to high-quality
285 professional learning and mentorships throughout their careers.

286 (c) The board shall consist of the following members:

287 (1) Four public school classroom teachers, who are classroom
288 teachers at the time of their appointment and throughout their term on
289 the board, as follows:

290 (A) Two appointed by the Connecticut Education Association, one of
291 whom is a teacher for students in grades kindergarten to grade six,
292 inclusive, and one of whom is a high school teacher;

293 (B) One appointed by the American Federation of Teachers-
294 Connecticut, one of whom is a special education teacher; and

295 (C) One appointed by the Connecticut Teacher of the Year Council.

296 (2) Three representatives from an educator preparation program
297 approved by the State Board of Education, as follows:

298 (A) One appointed by the American Association of Colleges for
299 Teacher Education Connecticut Chapter, who is a representative from
300 an educator preparation program offered by a public institution of
301 higher education;

302 (B) One appointed by the Connecticut Conference of Independent
303 Colleges; and

304 (C) One appointed by the Commissioner of Education, who is a
305 representative of an alternate route to certification program.

306 (3) Three administrators, who are employed by a local or regional
307 board of education, as follows:

308 (A) One appointed by the Connecticut Association of Public School
309 Superintendents, who is a superintendent of schools for an urban school
310 district;

311 (B) One appointed by the Connecticut Association of Schools, who
312 represents a rural school district; and

313 (C) One appointed by the Connecticut Federation of School
314 Administrators, who represents a suburban school district.

315 (4) One appointed by the Connecticut Association of Boards of
316 Education.

317 (5) One appointed by the Connecticut Business and Industry
318 Association, who is a representative from the education and workforce
319 affiliate of the association.

320 (6) A representative from the Increasing Educator Diversity Policy
321 Oversight Council, established pursuant to section 10-156bb, designated
322 by the council.

323 (7) The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee.

324 (8) The Commissioner of Early Childhood, or the commissioner's
325 designee.

326 (9) The superintendent of the Technical Education and Career
327 System, or the superintendent's designee.

328 (d) All initial appointments to the board shall be made not later than
329 August 1, 2024. Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority
330 not later than ten days following such vacancy. Members shall serve
331 three-year terms.

332 (e) The chairperson and vice chairperson of the board shall be elected
333 from among the voting members of the board. The board shall establish
334 bylaws for the operation and management of the board. An employee
335 of the Department of Education shall be designated by the
336 Commissioner of Education to serve as the administrator of the board.

337 (f) Not later than January 1, [2026] 2027, and annually thereafter, the
338 board shall develop an annual report that includes a detailed summary
339 of the substance and disposition of any standards and proposals for
340 regulations or legislation developed by the board or the State Board of
341 Education pursuant to section 10-150c. The board shall submit such
342 annual report to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly
343 having cognizance of matters relating to education, in accordance with
344 the provisions of section 11-4a.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 5	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	10-244a
Sec. 7	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section

Sec. 8	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 9	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 10	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	10-150b

ED *Joint Favorable Subst.*

APP *Joint Favorable*