



General Assembly

February Session, 2026

Committee Bill No. 7

LCO No. 1251



Referred to Committee on EDUCATION

Introduced by:
(ED)

AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL EQUITY.

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

1 Section 1. Subdivision (9) of section 10-262f of the general statutes is
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
3 *2026*):

4 (9) "Foundation" means [(A) for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1990,
5 three thousand nine hundred eighteen dollars, (B) for the fiscal year
6 ending June 30, 1991, four thousand one hundred ninety-two dollars,
7 (C) for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1992, four thousand four hundred
8 eighty-six dollars, (D) for the fiscal years ending June 30, 1993, June 30,
9 1994, and June 30, 1995, four thousand eight hundred dollars, (E) for the
10 fiscal years ending June 30, 1996, June 30, 1997, and June 30, 1998, five
11 thousand seven hundred eleven dollars, (F) for the fiscal year ending
12 June 30, 1999, five thousand seven hundred seventy-five dollars, (G) for
13 the fiscal years ending June 30, 2000, to June 30, 2007, inclusive, five
14 thousand eight hundred ninety-one dollars, (H) for the fiscal years
15 ending June 30, 2008, to June 30, 2013, inclusive, nine thousand six
16 hundred eighty-seven dollars, and (I)] (A) for the fiscal [year] years
17 ending June 30, 2014, [and each fiscal year thereafter] to June 30, 2026,

18 inclusive, eleven thousand five hundred twenty-five dollars, (B) for the
19 fiscal year ending June 30, 2027, twelve thousand five hundred dollars,
20 (C) for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2028, thirteen thousand five
21 hundred dollars, (D) for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2029, fourteen
22 thousand five hundred dollars, (E) for the fiscal year ending June 30,
23 2030, fifteen thousand five hundred dollars, and (F) for the fiscal year
24 ending June 30, 2031, and each fiscal year thereafter, fifteen thousand
25 five hundred dollars adjusted by the percentage increase in personal
26 income, as defined in section 2-33a, or the percentage increase in
27 inflation, as defined in section 2-33a, whichever is greater.

28 Sec. 2. Subdivision (19) of section 10-262f of the general statutes is
29 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
30 *2026*):

31 (19) "Regional bonus" means, (A) for any town which is a member of
32 a regional school district and has students who attend such regional
33 school district, an amount equal to one hundred dollars for each such
34 student enrolled in the regional school district on October first or the
35 full school day immediately preceding such date for the school year
36 prior to the fiscal year in which the grant is to be paid multiplied by the
37 number of grades, kindergarten to grade twelve, inclusive, in the
38 regional school district, [and] (B) for any town which pays tuition for its
39 students to attend an incorporated or endowed high school or academy
40 approved by the State Board of Education pursuant to section 10-34, an
41 amount equal to one hundred dollars for each such student enrolled in
42 an incorporated or endowed high school or academy on October first or
43 the full school day immediately preceding such date for the school year
44 prior to the fiscal year in which the grant is to be paid multiplied by the
45 number of grades for which students attend an incorporated or
46 endowed high school or academy, and (C) for any town which has a
47 school district that does not maintain a high school and pays tuition to
48 another school district pursuant to section 10-33 for its resident students
49 to attend high school in such other school district, an amount equal to
50 one hundred dollars for each such resident student attending a high

51 school in such other school district on October first or the first full school
52 day immediately preceding such date for the school year prior to the
53 fiscal year in which the grant is to be paid multiplied by the number of
54 grades for which such resident students attend high school in such other
55 school district.

56 Sec. 3. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a working group
57 force to study the formula of the equalization aid grant, described in
58 section 10-262h of the general statutes, and other state funding for public
59 education. Such study shall include, but need not be limited to, an
60 examination of all components of such formula and funding and any
61 recommendations for improvements, additions or modifications to
62 make such formula and funding more equitable and fiscally sound.

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

64 (1) Three appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, one
65 of whom is an elected official of a municipality, one of whom is a
66 principal of a public school and one of whom is a representative of the
67 Connecticut Association of School Business Officials;

68 (2) Three appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives,
69 one of whom is an elected official of a municipality, one of whom is a
70 principal of a public school and one of whom is a student enrolled in a
71 public school;

72 (3) Two appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, one of whom
73 is a representative of the American Federation of Teachers-Connecticut
74 and one of whom has expertise in issues concerning students with needs
75 that require additional school investment;

76 (4) Two appointed by the majority leader of the House of
77 Representatives, one of whom is a representative of the Connecticut
78 Education Association and one of whom is a representative of the School
79 and State Finance Project;

80 (5) Two appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, one of whom

81 is an elected official of a municipality and one of whom is a
82 representative of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education;

83 (6) Two appointed by the minority leader of the House of
84 Representatives, one of whom is an elected official of a municipality and
85 one of whom is a representative of the Connecticut Association of Public
86 School Superintendents; and

87 (7) The chairpersons of the joint standing committee of the General
88 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education.

89 (c) Any member of the working group appointed under subdivision
90 (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6) or (7) of subsection (b) of this section may be a
91 member of the General Assembly.

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

95 (e) In making appointments to the working group, the appointing
96 authorities shall use best efforts to select individuals for such
97 appointment who are representative of the full geographic diversity of
98 the communities in the state.

99 (f) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro
100 tempore of the Senate shall select the chairpersons of the working group
101 from among the members of the working group. Such chairpersons shall
102 schedule the first meeting of the working group, which shall be held not
103 later than sixty days after the effective date of this section.

104 (g) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the
105 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education
106 shall serve as administrative staff of the working group.

107 (h) Not later than January 1, 2027, the working group shall submit a
108 report on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing
109 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters

110 relating to education, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a
111 of the general statutes. The working group shall terminate on the date
112 that it submits such report or January 1, 2026, whichever is later.

113 Sec. 4. Section 10-198a of the general statutes is repealed and the
114 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

115 (a) For purposes of this section and sections 10-198c and 10-220,
116 "truant" means a child age five to eighteen, inclusive, who is enrolled in
117 a public or private school and has four unexcused absences from school
118 in any one month or ten unexcused absences from school in any school
119 year.

120 (b) Each local and regional board of education shall adopt and
121 implement policies and procedures concerning truants who are enrolled
122 in schools under the jurisdiction of such board of education. Such
123 policies and procedures shall include, but need not be limited to, the
124 following: (1) The holding of a meeting with the parent of each child
125 who is a truant, or other person having control of such child, and
126 appropriate school personnel to review and evaluate the reasons for the
127 child being a truant, provided such meeting shall be held not later than
128 ten school days after the child's fourth unexcused absence in a month or
129 tenth unexcused absence in a school year, (2) coordinating services with
130 and referrals of children to community agencies providing child and
131 family services, (3) annually at the beginning of the school year and
132 upon any enrollment during the school year, notifying the parent or
133 other person having control of each child enrolled in a grade from
134 kindergarten to eight, inclusive, in the public schools in writing of the
135 obligations of the parent or such other person pursuant to section 10-
136 184, (4) annually at the beginning of the school year and upon any
137 enrollment during the school year, obtaining from the parent or other
138 person having control of each child in a grade from kindergarten to
139 eight, inclusive, a telephone number or other means of contacting such
140 parent or such other person during the school day, (5) (A) on or before
141 August 15, 2018, the implementation of a truancy intervention model

142 identified by the Department of Education pursuant to subsection (a) of
143 section 10-198e for any school under its jurisdiction that has a
144 disproportionately high rate of truancy, as determined by the
145 Commissioner of Education, and (B) on or before September 1, 2023, the
146 adoption and implementation of a truancy intervention model
147 developed by the Department of Education pursuant to subsection (b)
148 of section 10-198e that accounts for mental and behavioral health, or a
149 similar truancy intervention plan that meets all of the requirements for
150 a truancy intervention model set forth in subsection (b) of said section,
151 (6) a system of monitoring individual unexcused absences of children in
152 grades kindergarten to eight, inclusive, which shall provide that
153 whenever a child enrolled in school in any such grade fails to report to
154 school on a regularly scheduled school day and no indication has been
155 received by school personnel that the child's parent or other person
156 having control of the child is aware of the pupil's absence, a reasonable
157 effort to notify, by telephone and by mail, the parent or such other
158 person shall be made by school personnel or volunteers under the
159 direction of school personnel, (7) providing notice to the parent or
160 guardian of a child who is a truant of the information concerning the
161 existence and availability of the 2-1-1 Infoline program, and other
162 pediatric mental and behavioral health screening services and tools
163 described in section 17a-22rt, and (8) on and after July 1, 2023, a
164 requirement that an appropriate school mental health specialist, as
165 defined in section 12 of public act 22-47, conduct an evaluation of each
166 child who is a truant to determine if additional behavioral health
167 interventions are necessary for the well-being of the child. Any person
168 who, in good faith, gives or fails to give notice pursuant to subdivision
169 (6) of this subsection shall be immune from any liability, civil or
170 criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have
171 the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding which
172 results from such notice or failure to give such notice.

173 (c) Nothing in subsections (a) and (b) of this section shall preclude a
174 local or regional board of education from adopting policies and
175 procedures pursuant to this section which exceed the requirements of

176 said subsections.

177 (d) The provisions of this section shall not apply to any child
178 receiving equivalent instruction pursuant to section 10-184.

179 (e) A child, age five to eighteen, inclusive, who is enrolled in a public
180 or private school and whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty
181 member of the armed forces, as defined in section 27-103, and has been
182 called to duty for, is on leave from or has immediately returned from
183 deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be
184 granted ten days of excused absences in any school year and, at the
185 discretion of the local or regional board of education, additional excused
186 absences to visit such child's parent or legal guardian with respect to
187 such leave or deployment of the parent or legal guardian. In the case of
188 excused absences pursuant to this subsection, such child and parent or
189 legal guardian shall be responsible for obtaining assignments from the
190 student's teacher prior to any period of excused absence, and for
191 ensuring that such assignments are completed by such child prior to his
192 or her return to school from such period of excused absence.

193 (f) A child, age five to eighteen, inclusive, who is enrolled in a public
194 school shall be granted an excused absence, as such term is defined by
195 the State Board of Education pursuant to section 10-198b, as amended
196 by this act, during the school year to observe a religious holiday. In the
197 case of an excused absence granted pursuant to this subsection, such
198 child and the parent or guardian of such child shall be responsible for
199 obtaining assignments from such child's teacher prior to such excused
200 absence, and for ensuring that such assignments are completed by such
201 child upon such child's return to school from such excused absence.

202 Sec. 5. Section 10-198b of the general statutes is repealed and the
203 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

204 The State Board of Education shall define "excused absence",
205 "unexcused absence" and "disciplinary absence" for use by local and
206 regional boards of education for the purposes of carrying out the

207 provisions of section 10-198a, as amended by this act, reporting truancy,
208 pursuant to subsection (c) of section 10-220, and calculating the district
209 chronic absenteeism rate and the school chronic absenteeism rate
210 pursuant to section 10-198c. On or before July 1, 2021, the State Board of
211 Education shall amend the definitions of "excused absence" and
212 "unexcused absence" to exclude a student's engagement in (1) virtual
213 classes, (2) virtual meetings, (3) activities on time-logged electronic
214 systems, and (4) the completion and submission of assignments, if such
215 engagement accounts for not less than one-half of the school day during
216 remote learning authorized pursuant to section 10-4w. On or before
217 October 1, 2026, the State Board of Education shall amend the definition
218 of "excused absence" to include a student's religious observance of Three
219 Kings Day, or the Epiphany, Good Friday, Rosh Hashanah, Yom
220 Kippur, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, Diwali and Lunar New Year. As used
221 in this section, "remote learning" means instruction by means of one or
222 more Internet-based software platforms as part of a remote learning
223 model.

224 Sec. 6. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) The Department of Education
225 shall establish a program to be known as the "Student Teacher
226 Investment and Professional Educator Network for Development" or
227 "STIPEND" program. For the fall semester of 2026, and each semester
228 thereafter, the department shall provide funds to each teacher
229 preparation program, as defined in section 10-10a of the general
230 statutes, for each student teacher enrolled in such program who is
231 participating in a student teaching experience, pursuant to subsection
232 (i) of section 10-145a of the general statutes, at a public school in a town
233 that is a distressed municipality, as defined in section 32-9p of the
234 general statutes, for such semester. Such funds shall be in an amount
235 equal to one thousand dollars per week of such student teaching
236 experience for each such student teacher. The department shall request
237 reimbursement, on a pro rata basis, from any teacher preparation
238 program that reports, pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of
239 this section, any such student teaching experience as uncompleted.

240 (b) (1) Each teacher preparation program shall report to the
241 Department of Education, in the form and manner prescribed by the
242 department (A) not later than August 1, 2026, and December 1, 2026, and
243 each August first and December first thereafter, the estimated number
244 of student teachers who are enrolled in such program and will
245 participate in a student teaching experience at a public school in a town
246 that is a distressed municipality during the following semester, and (B)
247 not later than January 1, 2027, and July 1, 2027, and each January first
248 and July first thereafter, whether any such student teachers did not
249 complete such student teaching experience during the prior semester,
250 specifying the number of weeks that were not completed.

251 (2) Upon receipt of the funds pursuant to subsection (a) of this
252 section, each teacher preparation program shall disburse stipends to
253 each student teacher who is participating in a student teaching
254 experience at a public school in a town that is a distressed municipality
255 for such semester in the amount specified in subsection (a) of this
256 section, provided such student teacher shall return such stipend, on a
257 pro rata basis, for any uncompleted weeks of such student teaching
258 experience.

259 (c) The Department of Education shall monitor the employment
260 status of each student teacher who received a stipend under the
261 STIPEND program for not fewer than five years after such student
262 teacher graduates from the teacher preparation program. The
263 department shall request reimbursement from any such student teacher
264 who is not employed as a certified teacher in a public school in a town
265 that is a distressed municipality for at least five years after graduation
266 from the teacher preparation program, in an amount equal to the total
267 amount paid to such student teacher under the STIPEND program.

268 (d) Not later than January 1, 2028, and annually thereafter, the
269 Department of Education shall submit, in accordance with the
270 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing
271 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters

272 relating to education a report, on a disaggregated basis, on the
273 employment rate at public schools in towns that are distressed
274 municipalities of student teachers who received stipends under the
275 STIPEND program.

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|---|---------------------|-------------|
| This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections: | | |
| Section 1 | <i>July 1, 2026</i> | 10-262f(9) |
| Sec. 2 | <i>July 1, 2026</i> | 10-262f(19) |
| Sec. 3 | <i>from passage</i> | New section |
| Sec. 4 | <i>July 1, 2026</i> | 10-198a |
| Sec. 5 | <i>July 1, 2026</i> | 10-198b |
| Sec. 6 | <i>July 1, 2026</i> | New section |

Statement of Purpose:

To increase funding for public schools.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]

Co-Sponsors: SEN. LOONEY, 11th Dist.; SEN. DUFF, 25th Dist.
SEN. ANWAR, 3rd Dist.; SEN. CABRERA, 17th Dist.
SEN. COHEN, 12th Dist.; SEN. FLEXER, 29th Dist.
SEN. GADKAR-WILCOX, 22nd Dist.; SEN. GASTON, 23rd Dist.
SEN. HARTLEY, 15th Dist.; SEN. HOCHADEL, 13th Dist.
SEN. HONIG, 8th Dist.; SEN. KUSHNER, 24th Dist.
SEN. LESSER, 9th Dist.; SEN. LOPES, 6th Dist.
SEN. MAHER, 26th Dist.; SEN. MARONEY, 14th Dist.
SEN. MARX, 20th Dist.; SEN. MCCRORY, 2nd Dist.
SEN. MILLER P., 27th Dist.; SEN. NEEDLEMAN, 33rd Dist.
SEN. OSTEN, 19th Dist.; SEN. RAHMAN, 4th Dist.
SEN. SLAP, 5th Dist.

S.B. 7