
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5147

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES REGARDING THE SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS STATUTES.

SUMMARY

The bill renames of the School Building Projects Advisory Council as the School Safety and Security Infrastructure Advisory Council and revises its responsibilities. It shifts the council's focus from school building projects in general to the safety and security aspects of projects including by changing (1) members and their qualifications and (2) the chairperson from the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) commissioner or her designee to the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) commissioner or his designee.

The DAS school construction grant program reimburses school districts for eligible school construction project costs. The bill caps the total reimbursement percentage a board of education may receive under this program at 100%. Under existing law, the top standard reimbursement rate is (1) 70% for new construction projects and (1) 80% for renovation projects. However, the law has additional provisions that allow for reimbursement rate bonuses, such as an additional (1) 15% for an early childhood care and education program in an elementary school or (2) 10% for cooperative arrangements between school districts. The bill prohibits combining any available bonuses in a way that leads to more than 100% reimbursement for a single project.

The bill also makes technical and conforming changes (§§ 3-7).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026, except the changes to the advisory council take effect upon passage.

SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY INFRASTRUCTURE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Responsibilities

Under current law, the council makes recommendations for improvements to the DAS school building projects process to the governor and the Appropriations, Education, and Finance Revenue and Bonding committees. The bill instead requires it to make recommendations for improvements to DESPP's school safety and security grant process, including eligibility criteria, to the governor and the Education and Public Safety committees.

The bill requires the council to develop recommendations for school safety and security infrastructure projects that meet relevant industry standards. This replaces the council's current requirement to develop model blueprints that meet certain safety criteria for new school building projects.

Under current law and the bill, the council must conduct studies, research, and analyses, but the bill requires that they be related to school safety and security infrastructure. Existing law, unchanged by the bill, also requires the council to periodically review and update, as necessary, the school safety infrastructure criteria.

Membership

The bill increases the council membership from 11 to 13 by (1) adding one representative each from a rural, suburban, and urban school district and (2) removing the current member with experience administering the State Building Code. Under current law and the bill, the council must include a member with construction and American with Disabilities Act accessibility experience and expertise for students with disabilities. The bill changes the qualifications for the remaining four members by requiring each to be a person with experience in one of the following: (1) school safety and security infrastructure, (2) school safety and security planning, (3) school physical infrastructure hardening, and (4) higher education campus safety. As under current law, the governor must appoint these members.

In addition to the governor's appointed members, the council consists of the Office of Policy and Management secretary, the DAS, education, and DESPP commissioners, and the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) board chair, or their designees, and six members appointed by the governor. The bill replaces the CTECS board chair with the CTECS executive director.

Terms

The bill ends the terms for all current council members on June 30, 2026, and requires the new members to be appointed by September 1, 2026. Under the bill, on the day it passes the DESPP commissioner, or the commissioner's designee, becomes council chairperson, and DESPP staff must serve as the council's administrative staff.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 46 Nay 0 (03/18/2026)