
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5148

AN ACT CONCERNING THE EXISTENCE OF AND METHODS OF ADDRESSING RACIAL IMBALANCE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the State Department of Education to (1) study the methods of addressing racial imbalance in the state's racial imbalance law and related regulations and (2) report the study findings to the Education Committee by January 1, 2028.

Under the bill, the study must include:

1. an examination of the long- and short-term effectiveness of different strategies implemented to correct racial imbalances;
2. a cost-benefit analysis of their implementation;
3. the strategies' impact on racial minorities, such as access to neighborhood schools and educational outcomes; and
4. suggestions for ways to correct racial imbalances.

The racial imbalance law requires the State Board of Education (SBE), when it finds a racial imbalance at a public school, to give the school's board of education written notification. In response, the notified school board must prepare a plan to correct the imbalance and submit it to SBE for approval.

PA 26-1, §§ 28-30, paused enforcement of this law until July 1, 2030, by prohibiting SBE from notifying a school board about a racial imbalance at one of its schools until July 1, 2030. The bill shortens this prohibition until July 1, 2028. It similarly shortens provisions (1) suspending the requirement for a notified board to prepare and file a correction plan and (2) prohibiting SBE from taking any action on any plan received on or after July 1, 2024.

By law a “racial imbalance” is a proportion of minority students enrolled in all grades in a public school that substantially exceeds, or substantially falls short of, the proportion of minority students in the same grades in all the district’s public schools (see BACKGROUND).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

BACKGROUND

Racial Imbalance Defined

Under state regulations a school is “racially imbalanced” if the percentage of minority students enrolled falls outside the range of 25 percentage points more or less than the district-wide percentage (Conn. Agencies Regs. § 10-226e-3(b)). For example, in a school district that has an overall minority enrollment of 50%, an individual school that has less than 25% or more than 75% minority enrollment in comparable grades across the district would be considered racially imbalanced.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 32 Nay 13 (03/16/2026)