



General Assembly

**Amendment**

February Session, 2026

LCO No. 4641



Offered by:

SEN. MCCRORY, 2<sup>nd</sup> Dist.

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To: Subst. Senate Bill No. 220

File No. 650

Cal. No. 412

**"AN ACT CONCERNING STUDENT LITERACY."**

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and substitute the  
2 following in lieu thereof:

3 "Section 1. Section 10-14t of the general statutes is repealed and the  
4 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

5 (a) The Department of Education, in consultation with the Center for  
6 Literacy Research and Reading Success [,] established pursuant to  
7 section 10-14gg, shall [compile] adopt a list of required reading  
8 assessments, with consideration given to the recommendations set forth  
9 in appendix g of the final report of the task force established pursuant  
10 to special act 19-8, [for use] to be administered by local and regional  
11 boards of education, in accordance with the provisions of subsection (b)  
12 of this section and the guidance provided pursuant to subsection (c) of  
13 this section, for the school year commencing July 1, [2023] 2026, and each  
14 school year thereafter, to identify students in kindergarten to grade

15 three, inclusive, who are below proficiency in reading, provided any  
16 such reading assessments include frequent screening and progress  
17 monitoring of students. Such reading assessments shall (1) be brief, (2)  
18 be evidence-based, as defined in 20 USC 7801(21), with proven  
19 psychometrics for validity, (3) measure oral language, phonemic  
20 awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, rapid automatic name or letter  
21 name fluency and reading comprehension, (4) provide opportunities for  
22 formative assessments at least three times, in the fall, winter and spring,  
23 during each school year, (5) produce data that is useful for informing  
24 individual and classroom instruction, including the grouping of  
25 students based on such data and the selection of instructional activities  
26 based on data of individual student response patterns during such  
27 progress monitoring, (6) be compatible with best practices in reading  
28 instruction and research, and (7) assist in identifying, in whole or in part,  
29 students at risk for dyslexia, as defined in section 10-3d, or other  
30 reading-related learning disabilities.

31 (b) For the school year commencing July 1, 2026, and each school year  
32 thereafter, each local and regional board of education shall administer  
33 one or more of the reading assessments adopted pursuant to subsection  
34 (a) of this section to students in kindergarten to grade three, inclusive.  
35 Such reading assessments shall be administered at least three times  
36 during the school year and shall be used for the purpose of identifying  
37 students who are below grade level in reading and are in need of  
38 additional supports.

39 [(b)] (c) On or before January 1, 2023, the department shall provide  
40 guidance to local and regional boards of education for administering the  
41 approved reading assessments, including, but not limited to, (1)  
42 specifying the appropriate grade levels for each reading assessment; (2)  
43 allowing approved reading assessments to be combined to ensure each  
44 ability specified in subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of this section is  
45 measured during each school year using one or more reading  
46 assessments appropriate for a student's grade level; (3) advising how  
47 each board's goals, student body characteristics and resources should

48 inform the choice of reading assessments used by such board; (4)  
49 advising how aggregate data derived from reading assessments should  
50 guide each board's prevention and early intervention initiatives; and (5)  
51 requiring the administration of approved reading assessments in both  
52 English and a student's native language, if available, for any student  
53 being instructed in literacy in his or her native language.

54 [(c)] (d) Not later than February 1, 2023, the Commissioner of  
55 Education shall submit the reading assessments and guidance  
56 developed or approved under this section to the joint standing  
57 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
58 relating to education, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a.

59 [(d)] (e) The Department of Education may, in partnership with a  
60 public institution of higher education, establish a data center to guide  
61 the department and local and regional boards of education in the use  
62 and effectiveness of reading assessments. Such data center may include,  
63 but need not be limited to, tracking (1) which reading assessments are  
64 used by each regional or local board of education, and (2) student  
65 information, disaggregated by categories including, but not limited to,  
66 a student's demographic background, school district, reading  
67 assessment dates and scores on reading assessments, provided such  
68 disaggregation keeps such student information personally  
69 nonidentifiable.

70 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) (a) The Department of Education  
71 shall develop and disseminate guidance to local and regional boards of  
72 education regarding the implementation of multitiered systems of  
73 support or response to intervention frameworks for students who are  
74 identified as struggling in reading. Such guidance shall be based on data  
75 collected from the results of approved reading assessments, as  
76 described in section 10-14t of the general statutes, as amended by this  
77 act.

78 (b) Not later than January 1, 2028, the Commissioner of Education  
79 shall submit a report on the guidance developed pursuant to subsection

80 (a) of this section and any recommendations for legislation to the joint  
81 standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
82 matters relating to education, in accordance with the provisions of  
83 section 11-4a of the general statutes.

84 Sec. 3. Section 10-156ii of the general statutes is repealed and the  
85 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

86 (a) There is established an aspiring educators [diversity] scholarship  
87 program administered by the Department of Education. The program  
88 shall provide an annual scholarship to [diverse students] aspiring  
89 educators who (1) graduated from a public high school in [an alliance  
90 district, as defined in section 10-262u] this state, and (2) are enrolled in  
91 a teacher preparation program at any four-year institution of higher  
92 education. [A diverse student] An aspiring educator may receive an  
93 annual scholarship in an amount up to ten thousand dollars for each  
94 year such [diverse student] aspiring educator is enrolled and in good  
95 standing in a teacher preparation program. As used in this section,  
96 ["diverse" has the same meaning as provided in section 10-156bb]  
97 "aspiring educator" means an individual who is in a population  
98 subgroup that is underrepresented in the teaching profession in this  
99 state and for which such population subgroup has been identified as a  
100 teacher shortage area by the Commissioner of Education pursuant to  
101 section 10-8b, as amended by this act.

102 (b) Not later than January 1, [2023] 2027, the department shall, in  
103 consultation with the chairpersons of the joint standing committee of the  
104 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education,  
105 develop a policy concerning the administration of the scholarship. Such  
106 policy shall include, but need not be limited to, provisions regarding (1)  
107 any additional eligibility criteria, (2) payment and distribution of the  
108 scholarships to [diverse students] aspiring educators through the  
109 teacher preparation programs in which they are enrolled, and (3) the  
110 notification of students in high school [in alliance districts] of the  
111 scholarship program, including the opportunity to apply for a  
112 scholarship under the program while enrolled in high school and prior

113 to graduation if such student will be enrolled in a teacher preparation  
114 program during the following fall semester at a four-year institution of  
115 higher education.

116 (c) For the fiscal years ending June 30, [2024] 2027, and each fiscal year  
117 thereafter, the department shall annually award scholarships in  
118 accordance with the provisions of this section and the guidelines  
119 developed pursuant to subsection (b) of this section.

120 (d) The Commissioner of Education shall develop scholarship  
121 repayment criteria for recipients who are not employed as a certified  
122 teacher by a local or regional board of education in [the] this state  
123 following graduation from a teacher preparation program. Any  
124 amounts repaid to the department shall be deposited in the General  
125 Fund.

126 (e) On or before March first of each year, the commissioner shall  
127 determine if there are any unexpended funds appropriated for purposes  
128 of this section for the fiscal year. If the commissioner determines that  
129 there are unexpended funds, the commissioner may expend up to two  
130 hundred fifty thousand dollars of such unexpended funds for the  
131 purpose of implementing the plan to promote the teaching profession  
132 developed pursuant to section 10-155m.

133 [(e)] (f) The department may accept gifts, grants and donations, from  
134 any source, public or private, for the aspiring educators [diversity]  
135 scholarship program.

136 [(f)] (g) Not later than January 1, [2024] 2028, and annually thereafter,  
137 the department shall develop a report that includes annual data on the  
138 [race and ethnicity of the diverse] population subgroups of students  
139 who receive a scholarship under the program and the teacher  
140 preparation program in which they are enrolled. The department shall  
141 submit such report to the joint standing committee of the General  
142 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, in  
143 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a.

144 Sec. 4. Section 10-8b of the general statutes is repealed and the  
145 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

146 (a) The Commissioner of Education shall annually, by December first,  
147 [determine subject and geographic] identify the following areas in  
148 which a teacher shortage exists: [and] (1) Subject, (2) geographic, and (3)  
149 population subgroups that are underrepresented in the teaching  
150 profession in this state. The commissioner shall certify such [shortages]  
151 teacher shortage areas to the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority  
152 for purposes of section 8-265pp. In [determining] identifying such  
153 teacher [shortages] shortage areas, the commissioner shall consider the  
154 following: [(1)] (A) The number of teacher vacancies in a particular  
155 subject area or geographic area; [(2)] (B) the number of new certificates  
156 in such subject areas and geographic areas or population subgroups  
157 issued by the Department of Education during the preceding year; [and  
158 (3)] (C) the number and types of classes being taught by persons whose  
159 training is not specific to the field in which they are teaching; and (D)  
160 those population subgroups that are underrepresented in the teaching  
161 profession in this state using data collected in the state-wide public  
162 school information system pursuant to section 10-10a.

163 (b) The Department of Education shall annually, by March first,  
164 electronically distribute to the president of every institution of higher  
165 education in this state offering a teacher preparatory program  
166 information concerning teacher shortage areas, [determined] identified  
167 pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, for at least the prior five years.

168 Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective January 1, 2027*) (a) The Department of  
169 Education shall establish an American Sign Language education  
170 working group that consists of (1) a representative from each of the  
171 following: The Departments of Education and Aging and Disability  
172 Services, the Labor Department, the Office of Higher Education, the  
173 Connecticut Council of Language Teachers, the American School for the  
174 Deaf and the Connecticut Association of the Deaf, and (2) at least one  
175 American Sign Language instructor who teaches in a public school in  
176 the state.

177 (b) The working group shall provide recommendations to the  
178 Department of Education regarding the following:

179 (1) Curriculum guidance for American Sign Language instruction  
180 that includes, but is not limited to, aligning such curriculum with  
181 nationally recognized proficiency frameworks;

182 (2) Teacher certification standards based on standards established by  
183 the American Sign Language Teachers Association and the American  
184 Sign Language Proficiency Interview that include, at a minimum, (A)  
185 establishment of a proficiency benchmark, (B) recognition of an  
186 alternative certification pathway for native American Sign Language  
187 users and interpreters, and (C) reciprocity with American Sign  
188 Language teaching certifications from other states; and

189 (3) Guidance to educator preparation programs in the state  
190 concerning, but not limited to, the (A) expansion of American Sign  
191 Language and interpretation education programs, (B) creation of  
192 educational incentives, such as tuition support, credit enhancement or  
193 alternative route programs, and (C) establishment of bridge,  
194 endorsement or alternative programs for native American Sign  
195 Language users and certified interpreters seeking teacher certification.

196 (c) Not later than January 1, 2028, and annually thereafter, the  
197 Department of Education shall submit a progress report, in accordance  
198 with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint  
199 standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
200 matters relating to education concerning the work of the American Sign  
201 Language education working group.

202 Sec. 6. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) Not later than July 1, 2030, the  
203 Department of Education shall issue to each local and regional board of  
204 education the guidance developed pursuant to subdivision (1) of  
205 subsection (b) of section 1 of this act to ensure consistent  
206 implementation of the American Sign Language portion of the world  
207 languages curriculum required pursuant to section 10-16b of the general

208 statutes.

209 Sec. 7. Section 203 of public act 23-204, as amended by section 124 of  
210 public act 24-81, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
211 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

212 (a) As used in this section:

213 (1) "Health benefit plan" has the same meaning as provided in section  
214 38a-1080 of the general statutes; [,] and

215 (2) "Partnership plan" has the same meaning as provided in section 3-  
216 123aaa of the general statutes.

217 (b) For the fiscal [years] year ending [~~June 30, 2024, and June 30, 2025~~]  
218 June 30, 2027, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Comptroller shall  
219 establish a program to provide a subsidy, within available  
220 appropriations, to each paraeducator who (1) opens a health savings  
221 account, pursuant to Section 223 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986,  
222 or any subsequent corresponding internal revenue code of the United  
223 States, as amended from time to time, or is eligible for Medicare and  
224 enrolls in a high deductible health plan, and (2) is employed [by a local  
225 or regional board of education] in a public school. Such subsidy shall be  
226 in an amount up to a certain percentage, as specified by the Comptroller,  
227 of the deductible for the health plan in which such paraeducator is  
228 enrolled, minus the amount of any employer contributions to a health  
229 savings account or health reimbursement account, and not exceeding an  
230 amount specified by the Comptroller. No paraeducator may receive  
231 more than one subsidy pursuant to this section. The Comptroller may  
232 work with the local or regional board of education that employs such  
233 paraeducator to distribute such subsidy.

234 (c) For the fiscal year ending [~~June 30, 2025~~] June 30, 2027, and each  
235 fiscal year thereafter, the Comptroller shall establish a program to  
236 provide a subsidy, from any funds appropriated for such purpose, to  
237 each local or regional board of education that provides coverage to  
238 paraeducators and their dependents under a health benefit plan or a

239 partnership plan for such fiscal year or any portion thereof. Such  
 240 subsidy shall be (1) in an amount not more than ten per cent of the  
 241 aggregate premium cost, inclusive of the employee and employer  
 242 shares, paid by such board of education for coverage under such health  
 243 benefit plan or partnership plan, divided by the number of  
 244 paraeducators employed by such board of education and enrolled in  
 245 health coverage, and (2) used to offset the employee's share of such  
 246 premium that is deducted from the payroll check of each paraeducator  
 247 employed by such board of education during any pay period during  
 248 such fiscal year. The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to a  
 249 local or regional board of education that provides coverage under a high  
 250 deductible health plan, as that term is used in subsection (f) of section  
 251 38a-520 of the general statutes. Pursuant to the provisions of subsection  
 252 (b) of section 10-66dd of the general statutes, the provisions of this  
 253 section shall apply to charter schools.

254 [(d) The Comptroller and the Commissioner of Education shall enter  
 255 into a memorandum of understanding, in accordance with the  
 256 provisions of section 4-97b of the general statutes, to allow the  
 257 Comptroller to utilize the sum of \$5,000,000 that is appropriated to the  
 258 Department of Education for assistance to paraeducators pursuant to  
 259 section 1 of public act 23-204 to implement the provisions of this  
 260 section.]"

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	10-14t
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	10-156ii
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	10-8b
Sec. 5	<i>January 1, 2027</i>	New section
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 7	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	PA 23-204, Sec. 203