



Substitute House Bill No. 5003

Public Act No. 23-208

AN ACT MAKING CERTAIN REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES.

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

Section 1. Section 10-15c of the general statutes, as amended by section 3 of public act 23-159, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2024*):

(a) The public schools shall be open to all children five years of age and over who reach age five on or before the first day of September of any school year, and each such child shall have, and shall be so advised by the appropriate school authorities, an equal opportunity to participate in the activities, programs and courses of study offered in such public schools, at such time as the child becomes eligible to participate in such activities, programs and courses of study, without discrimination on account of race, as defined in section 46a-51, color, sex, gender identity or expression, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability; provided [boards of education may, by vote at a meeting duly called, admit to any school children under five years of age] a child who has not reached the age of five on or before the first day of September of the school year may be admitted (1) upon a written request by the parent or guardian of such child to the principal of the school in which such child would be enrolled, and (2) following an

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assessment of such child, conducted by such principal and an appropriate certified staff member of the school, to ensure that admitting such child is developmentally appropriate.

(b) Nothing in subsection (a) of this section shall be deemed to amend other provisions of the general statutes with respect to curricula, facilities or extracurricular activities.

Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2023*) (a) The Commissioner of Education shall develop a report of the effectiveness of the alliance district program, described in section 10-262u of the general statutes, as amended by this act, and recommendations for reforming such program.

(b) (1) Such report shall include, but need not be limited to, (A) an analysis of the effectiveness of the alliance district program for improving student academic achievement and school district performance, (B) the oversight and accountability metrics and standards used to measure such student academic achievement and school district performance, as well as the metrics and standards used to conduct such analysis of the program, (C) a financial accounting of the program that examines the amount of funding provided to each alliance district during the existence of the program, how such funds have been expended, and whether (i) such funds have been expended in accordance with the improvement plans described in subsection (d) of section 10-262u of the general statutes, and (ii) there is a causal link between the expenditure of such funds in accordance with such improvement plans and an improvement of student academic achievement and school district performance.

(2) Such recommendations shall include, but need not be limited to, an implementation plan, developed in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, for decreasing the total number of alliance districts on or before July 1, 2027, that will receive oversight and assistance from the

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Department of Education under the program and how resources and funding may best be expended to assist alliance districts in improving student academic achievement and school district performance.

(c) Not later than January 1, 2026, the commissioner shall submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education and appropriations and the budgets of state agencies, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

Sec. 3. Subdivision (2) of subsection (c) of section 10-262u of the general statutes, as amended by section 4 of public act 23-167, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2023*):

(2) Upon receipt of an application pursuant to subsection (d) of this section or section 10-156gg, as amended by public act 23-167 and this act, the Commissioner of Education may pay such funds to the town designated as an alliance district and such town shall pay all such funds to the local or regional board of education for such town on the condition that such funds shall be expended in accordance with (A) the improvement plan described in subsection (d) of this section, (B) the minority candidate certification, retention or residency year program pursuant to section 10-156gg, as amended by public act 23-167 and this act, (C) [the family resource center program, pursuant to section 10-4o, to establish a family resource center in each elementary school under the jurisdiction of such board, (D)] the provisions of subsection (c) of section 10-262i, and [(E)] (D) any guidelines developed by the State Board of Education for such funds. Such funds shall be used to improve student achievement and recruit and retain minority teachers in such alliance district and to offset any other local education costs approved by the commissioner.

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Sec. 4. (*Effective July 1, 2023*) Not later than February 1, 2024, the local or regional board of education for a town designated as an alliance district, pursuant to section 10-262u of the general statutes, as amended by this act, shall submit a report to the Department of Education on the costs associated with implementing a family resource center program, in accordance with the provisions of section 10-4o of the general statutes, at each elementary school under the jurisdiction of such board.

Sec. 5. Subdivision (2) of subsection (c) of section 10-156gg of the general statutes, as amended by section 41 of public act 23-167, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2023*):

(2) For the fiscal year ending June 30, [2024] 2025, the Commissioner of Education shall withhold from an alliance district, from the funds transferred by the Comptroller pursuant to subsection (c) of section 10-262u, as amended by public act 23-167 and this act, an amount equal to ten per cent of any increase in such funds that such alliance district received for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, over the amount of such funds that it received for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020. The department shall use such funds to make a payment to such alliance district and such alliance district shall expend such payment for any of the costs described in subsection (e) of this section.

Sec. 6. Section 46 of public act 23-167 is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2023*)

(a) As used in this section:

(1) "Alliance district" has the same meaning as provided in section 10-262u of the general statutes, as amended by public act 23-167 and this act;

(2) "Private entity" means any individual, corporation, general partnership, limited partnership, limited liability partnership, joint

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venture, nonprofit organization or other business entity;

(3) "Public-private partnership" means the relationship established between the local or regional board of education for a town designated as an alliance district, a community college and a private entity for the purpose of implementing a pathways in technology early college high school program; and

(4) "Pathways in technology early college high school program" means a program of instruction in which students in grades nine to twelve, inclusive, complete high school and college-level coursework while simultaneously engaging in industry-guided workforce development.

(b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, [2024] 2025, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Department of Education shall annually issue a request for proposals to local and regional boards of education for towns designated as alliance districts for the establishment of a new public-private partnership or the enhancement of an existing pathways in technology early college high school program. The department shall review such proposals and award a grant to two such boards for the costs associated with the establishment of a new public-private partnership or enhancement of a pathways in technology early college high school program.

Sec. 7. Section 10-276a of the general statutes, as amended by section 341 of public act 23-204, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2023*):

(a) Commencing with the fiscal year ending June 30, 2002, if a school district that received a priority school district grant pursuant to subsection (a) of section 10-266p for the prior fiscal year is no longer eligible to receive such a grant, such school district shall receive a priority school district phase-out grant for each of the three fiscal years

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following the fiscal year such school district received its final priority school district grant. The amount of such phase-out grants shall be determined in accordance with subsection (b) of this section.

(b) (1) For the first fiscal year following the fiscal year such school district received its final priority school district grant, in an amount equal to the difference between (A) the amount of such final grant, and (B) an amount equal to twenty-five per cent of the difference between (i) the amount of such final grant, and (ii) the greater of two hundred fifty thousand dollars or the amount of the grants received by transitional school districts pursuant to section 10-263c. (2) For the second fiscal year following the fiscal year such school district received its final priority school district grant, in an amount equal to the difference between (A) the amount of such final grant, and (B) an amount equal to fifty per cent of the difference between (i) the amount of such final grant, and (ii) the greater of two hundred fifty thousand dollars or the amount of the grants received by transitional school districts pursuant to section 10-263c. (3) For the third fiscal year following the fiscal year such school district received its final priority school district grant, in an amount equal to the difference between (A) the amount of such final grant, and (B) an amount equal to seventy-five per cent of the difference between (i) the amount of such final grant, and (ii) the greater of two hundred fifty thousand dollars or the amount of the grants received by transitional school districts pursuant to section 10-263c.

(c) Commencing with the fiscal year ending June 30, 2004, if a school district that was not eligible to receive a priority school district grant pursuant to subsection (a) of said section 10-266p, for the prior fiscal year becomes eligible to receive such a grant, the amount of the grant such town receives pursuant to said section for the first year of such eligibility shall be reduced by fifty per cent.

(d) [Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, any school district that received a priority school district phase-out grant in the

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third fiscal year following the fiscal year such school district received its final priority school district grant during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, such school district shall be eligible to receive a priority school district phase-out grant in an amount equal to the amount described in subdivision (3) of subsection (b) of this section in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024.] Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, any school district that would have been in the first fiscal year following the fiscal year such school district received its final priority school district grant, shall receive a grant equal to the amount it received for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023.

Sec. 8. (*Effective from passage*) Notwithstanding the provisions of part III of chapter 164 of the general statutes, the elections for and terms of membership of the regional board of education for Regional School District 20 shall be as follows: (1) On and after June 1, 2024, but prior to June 30, 2024, each member town shall elect one member and such elected member shall serve a term of four years; (2) on and after June 1, 2025, but prior to June 30, 2025, each member town shall elect one member and such elected member shall serve a term of four years; and (3) on and after June 1, 2026, but prior to June 30, 2026, each member town shall elect one member and such elected member shall serve a term of four years.

Sec. 9. Section 10-233m of the general statutes, as amended by section 72 of public act 23-167, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2023*):

Each local or regional board of education that assigns a school resource officer to any school under the jurisdiction of such board shall enter into a memorandum of understanding with a local law enforcement agency regarding the role and responsibility of such school resource officer. Such memorandum of understanding shall (1) be maintained in a central location in the school district and posted on the Internet web site of the school district and each school in which such

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school resource officer is assigned, (2) include provisions addressing daily interactions between students and school personnel with school resource officers, and (3) include a graduated response model for student discipline. Any such memorandum of understanding entered into, extended, updated or amended (A) on or after July 1, 2021, shall include a provision that requires all school resource officers to complete, while in the performance of their duties as school resource officers and during periods when such school resource officers are assigned to be at the school, any separate training specifically related to social-emotional learning and restorative practices provided to certified employees of the school pursuant to sections 10-148a and 10-220a, as amended by [this act] public act 23-167, and (B) on or after July 1, 2023, shall include provisions specifying a school resource officer's duties concerning, and procedures for, the restraint of students, use of firearms, school-based arrests and reporting of any investigations and behavioral interventions of challenging behavior or conflict that escalates to violence or constitutes a crime, pursuant to the provisions of section 73 of [this act] public act 23-167, as amended by this act, provided such provisions are in accordance with any laws or policies concerning the duties of police officers. For the purposes of this section, "school resource officer" means a sworn police officer of a local law enforcement agency who has been assigned to a school pursuant to an agreement between the local or regional board of education and the chief of police of a local law enforcement agency.

Sec. 10. Section 73 of public act 23-167 is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2023*):

Each school resource officer, as defined in section 10-233m of the general statutes, as amended by section 72 of public act 23-167 and this act, shall submit to the chief of police of such school resource officer's local law enforcement agency a report for each investigation or behavioral intervention of challenging behavior or conflict that escalates

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to violence or constitutes a crime conducted by such school resource officer not later than five school days after conducting such investigation or behavioral intervention. The chief of police shall submit such report to the superintendent of schools for the school district in which such investigation or behavioral intervention occurred in accordance with the provisions of the memorandum of understanding entered into pursuant to section 10-233m of the general statutes, as amended by section 72 of public act 23-167 and this act, but shall be not less frequently than monthly. Such superintendent shall submit such report to the local or regional board of education of the school district. Such report shall include, but need not be limited to, (1) the date, time and location of such investigation or behavioral intervention, (2) the name and badge number of such school resource officer, (3) the race, ethnicity, gender, age and disability status for each student involved in such investigation or behavioral intervention, (4) the reason for and nature of such investigation or behavioral intervention, (5) the disposition of such investigation or behavioral intervention, and (6) whether any student involved in such investigation or behavioral intervention was (A) searched, (B) apprised of such student's constitutional rights, (C) issued a citation or a summons, (D) arrested, or (E) detained, including the amount of time such student was detained. For purposes of this section, "investigation or behavioral intervention" means a circumstance in which a school resource officer is conducting (i) a fact-finding inquiry concerning student behavior or school safety, including, but not limited to, emergency circumstances, or (ii) an intervention to resolve violent or nonviolent student behavior or conflicts.

Sec. 11. Section 10a-173 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2023*):

(a) For the purposes of this section:

(1) "Family contribution" means the expected family contribution for

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educational costs as computed from [the] a student's Free Application for Federal Student Aid;

(2) "Student aid index" means the index used to determine eligibility for financial aid as computed from a student's Free Application for Federal Student Aid;

[(2) "Full-time or part-time undergraduate student"] (3) "Eligible student" means a student who is (A) a resident of the state, (B) enrolled at an institution of higher education in a course of study leading to such student's first associate or bachelor's degree, and [who is] (C) carrying, for a full-time student, twelve or more semester credit hours, or, for a part-time student, between six and eleven semester credit hours at such institution of higher education;

[(3)] (4) "Independent institution of higher education" means a nonprofit institution established in this state (A) that has degree-granting authority in this state; (B) that has its main campus located in this state; (C) that is not included in the Connecticut system of public higher education; and (D) whose primary function is not the preparation of students for religious vocation;

[(4)] (5) "Public institution of higher education" means the constituent units of the state system of higher education identified in subdivisions (1) and (2) of section 10a-1, except the regional community-technical colleges;

[(5)] (6) "Eligible educational costs" means the tuition and required fees for an individual student that are published by each public or independent institution of higher education participating in the grant program established under this section, plus a fixed amount for required books and educational supplies as determined by the Office of Higher Education.

(b) [The state, acting through the] The Office of Higher Education [,]

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shall establish the [Governor's] Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program to annually make need-based financial aid available for eligible educational costs [for Connecticut residents] to eligible students enrolled at Connecticut's public and independent institutions of higher education. [as full-time or part-time undergraduate students beginning with new or transfer students in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014. On and after July 1, 2016, said program shall be known as the "Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program". Any award made to a student in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, under the capitol scholarship grant program, established under section 10a-169 of the general statutes, revision of 1958, revised to January 1, 2013, the Connecticut aid to public college students grant program, established under section 10a-164a of the general statutes, revision of 1958, revised to January 1, 2013, Connecticut aid to Charter Oak, established under subsection (c) of section 10a-164a of the general statutes, revision of 1958, revised to January 1, 2013, or the Connecticut independent college student grant program, established under section 10a-36 of the general statutes, revision of 1958, revised to January 1, 2013, shall be offered under the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program and be renewable for the life of the original award, provided such student meets and continues to meet the need and academic standards established for purposes of the program under which such student received the original award.]

[(c)] Within available [appropriations] funds, the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program shall include a need and merit-based grant, a need-based grant and a Charter Oak grant. The need and merit-based grant shall be funded at not less than twenty per cent but not more than thirty per cent of available [appropriations] funds or ten million dollars, whichever is greater. The need-based grant shall be funded at up to eighty per cent of available [appropriations] funds. The Charter Oak grant shall be not less than one hundred thousand dollars of available [appropriations] funds. There shall be an administrative allowance based on one-quarter of one per cent of the available [appropriations]

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funds, but [(1) for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, not less than three hundred fifty thousand dollars, and (2) for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, and each fiscal year thereafter,] not less than one hundred thousand dollars annually. [In addition to the amount of the annual appropriation allocated to the regional community-technical colleges under subsection (e) of this section, and to regional community-technical college students under subsection (d) of this section, not less than two and one-half per cent of the annual appropriation shall be allocated to the regional community-technical colleges to be used for financial aid purposes.] The Office of Higher Education shall use the funds appropriated or allocated for the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, to make awards pursuant to subsection (c) of this section and allocate funds pursuant to subsections (d) and (f) of this section for the academic years commencing July 1, 2023, and July 1, 2024, provided the office shall use all funds allocated for the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program from the federal funds designated for the state pursuant to the provisions of Section 602 of Subtitle M of Title IX of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, P.L. 117-2, as amended from time to time, on or before December 31, 2024.

[(d)] (c) The Roberta B. Willis Scholarship need and merit-based grant shall be available to any [Connecticut resident who is a full-time or part-time undergraduate] eligible student at any public or independent institution of higher education. The Office of Higher Education shall determine [eligibility by] qualification for financial need based on family contribution prior to July 1, 2024, and, on and after July 1, 2024, based on student aid index and [eligibility by] qualification for merit based on either previous high school academic achievement or performance on standardized academic aptitude tests. The Office of Higher Education shall make awards according to a sliding scale, annually determined by said office, up to a maximum family contribution or student aid index and based on available

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[appropriations and] funds and the number of eligible students who qualify for an award. The Roberta B. Willis Scholarship need and merit-based grant shall be awarded in a higher amount than the need-based grant awarded pursuant to subsection [(e)] (d) of this section. Recipients of the need and merit-based grant shall not be eligible to receive an additional need-based award. The order of institutions of higher education provided by [a] an eligible student on [the] such student's Free Application for Federal Student Aid shall not affect the student's [eligibility] qualification for an award under this subsection. The [accepting] institution of higher education in which an eligible student enrolls shall disburse sums awarded under the need and merit-based grant for payment of [the] such student's eligible educational costs.

[(e)] (d) The Roberta B. Willis Scholarship need-based grant shall be available to any [Connecticut resident who is a full-time or part-time undergraduate] eligible student at any public or independent institution of higher education. The amount of the annual [appropriation] funds to be allocated to each institution of higher education shall be determined by its actual full-time equivalent enrollment of [undergraduate students who are Connecticut residents] eligible students with a family contribution or student aid index during the fall semester of the fiscal year two years prior to the grant year of an amount not greater than two hundred per cent of the maximum family contribution or student aid index eligible for a federal Pell grant award for the academic year one year prior to the grant year. Not later than July first, annually, each institution of higher education shall report such enrollment data to the Office of Higher Education. Not later than October first, annually, the Office of Higher Education shall (1) publish such enrollment data on its Internet web site, [and] (2) notify each institution of higher education of the proportion of the annual [appropriation] funds that such institution of higher education will receive the following fiscal year, and (3) publish the proportions for each institution of higher education on its Internet web site. Participating institutions of higher education shall make

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awards (A) to eligible full-time students in an amount up to four thousand five hundred dollars, and (B) to eligible part-time students in an amount that is prorated according to the number of credits each student will earn for completing the course or courses in which such student is enrolled, such that a student enrolled in a course or courses earning (i) at least nine but less than twelve credits is eligible for up to seventy-five per cent of the maximum award, and (ii) at least six but less than nine credits is eligible for up to fifty per cent of the maximum award. Each participating institution of higher education shall expend all of the moneys received under the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program as direct financial assistance only for eligible educational costs.

[(f)] (e) Participating institutions of higher education shall annually provide the Office of Higher Education with data and reports on all [Connecticut] eligible students who applied for financial aid, including, but not limited to, students receiving a Roberta B. Willis Scholarship grant, in a form and at a time determined by said office. If an institution of higher education fails to submit information to the Office of Higher Education as directed, such institution shall be prohibited from participating in the scholarship program in the fiscal year following the fiscal year in which such institution failed to submit such information. Each participating institution of higher education shall maintain, for a period of not less than three years, records substantiating the reported number of [Connecticut] eligible students and documentation utilized by the institution of higher education in determining [eligibility] qualification of the student grant recipients. Such records shall be subject to audit or review. Funds not obligated by an institution of higher education shall be returned by May first in the fiscal year the grant was made to the Office of Higher Education for reallocation. Financial aid provided to [Connecticut residents] eligible students under this program shall be designated as a grant from the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program.

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[[g]] (f) The Roberta B. Willis Scholarship Charter Oak grant shall be available to any [full-time or part-time undergraduate] eligible student enrolled in Charter Oak State College. The Office of Higher Education shall allocate any [appropriation] funds to Charter Oak State College to be used to provide grants for eligible educational costs to [residents of this state] eligible students who demonstrate substantial financial need and who are matriculated in a degree program at Charter Oak State College. Individual awards shall not exceed a student's calculated eligible educational costs. Financial aid provided to [Connecticut residents] eligible students under this program shall be designated as a grant from the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program.

[[h]] (g) In administering the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program, the Office of Higher Education shall develop and utilize fiscal procedures designed to ensure accountability of the public funds expended. Such procedures shall include provisions for compliance reviews that shall be conducted by the Office of Higher Education on any institution of higher education that participates in the program. Commencing with the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015, and biennially thereafter, each such institution of higher education shall submit the results of an audit done by an independent certified public accountant for each year of participation in the program. Any institution of higher education determined by the Office of Higher Education not to be in substantial compliance with the provisions of the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program shall be ineligible to receive funds under the program for the fiscal year following the fiscal year in which the institution of higher education was determined not to be in substantial compliance. Funding shall be restored when the Office of Higher Education determines that the institution of higher education has returned to substantial compliance.

Sec. 12. Sections 38 to 40, inclusive, of public act 23-167 are repealed.
(Effective July 1, 2023)

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Sec. 13. Sections 138, 327 and 328 of public act 23-204 are repealed.
(*Effective July 1, 2023*)