



Substitute Senate Bill No. 1058

Public Act No. 15-225

AN ACT CONCERNING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM.

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

Section 1. Section 45a-8c of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2015*):

(a) The Probate Court Administrator may, within available appropriations, establish a [pilot] truancy clinic within [the] (1) any Regional Children's Probate [Courts for Waterbury and New Haven] Court that serves a town designated as an alliance district pursuant to section 10-262u, or (2) any Probate Court that serves a town designated as an alliance district that is not served by a Regional Children's Probate Court. The administrative judge of [each] the Regional Children's Probate Court or the judge of the Probate Court, as the case may be, or the [administrative judge's designee] designee of such administrative judge or such judge, shall administer the truancy clinic for [the] such administrative judge's or such judge's respective court.

(b) [The] If the Probate Court Administrator establishes truancy clinics pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, the principal of any elementary or middle school located in [the Waterbury or New Haven school district, as the case may be] a town designated as an alliance district, or the principal's designee, may refer to [the] a truancy clinic a

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parent or guardian with a child enrolled in such school who is a truant, as defined in section 10-198a, as amended by this act, or at risk of becoming a truant. Upon receiving such referral, the truancy clinic shall prepare a citation and summons for the parent or guardian of the child to appear at the clinic. An attendance officer authorized pursuant to section 10-199, or a police officer authorized pursuant to section 10-200, shall deliver the citation and summons and a copy of the referral to the parent or guardian.

(c) The administrative judge of the Regional Children's Probate Court [for Waterbury or New Haven] that serves a town designated as an alliance district or the judge of the Probate Court that serves a town designated as an alliance district, as the case may be, may refer any matter referred to [the] a truancy clinic to a probate magistrate or attorney probate referee assigned by the Probate Court Administrator pursuant to section 45a-123a to hear the matter.

(d) The truancy clinics shall operate for the purpose of identifying and resolving the cause of a child's truancy using nonpunitive procedures. After the initial appearance made pursuant to the summons described in subsection (b) of this section, the participation of a parent or guardian in the truancy clinic shall be voluntary. The truancy clinics shall establish protocols for clinic participation and shall establish programs and relationships with schools, individuals, public and private agencies, and other organizations to provide services and support for parents, guardians and children participating in the clinics.

(e) The Probate Court Administrator shall establish policies and procedures to implement the truancy clinics and measure the effectiveness of the truancy clinics.

(f) Not later than September 1, [2014] 2015, and annually thereafter, [the] each administrative judge of [the] a Regional Children's Probate

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Court [for Waterbury] that serves a town designated as an alliance district in which a truancy clinic has been established and [the] each [administrative] judge of [the Regional Children's] a Probate Court [for New Haven] that serves a town designated as an alliance district in which a truancy clinic has been established shall [each] file a report with the Probate Court Administrator assessing the effectiveness of [the] each truancy clinic in [the] such administrative judge's or such judge's respective court.

(g) Not later than January 1, 2016, the Probate Court Administrator shall submit, in accordance with section 11-4a, a report assessing the effectiveness of the truancy clinics to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the judiciary and education.

Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2015*) (a) As used in this section:

(1) "Chronically absent child" means a child who is enrolled in a school under the jurisdiction of a local or regional board of education and whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than ten per cent of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during such school year;

(2) "Absence" means (A) an excused absence, unexcused absence or disciplinary absence, as those terms are defined by the State Board of Education pursuant to section 10-198b of the general statutes, as amended by this act, or (B) an in-school suspension, as defined in section 10-233a of the general statutes, that is greater than or equal to one-half of a school day;

(3) "District chronic absenteeism rate" means the total number of chronically absent children under the jurisdiction of a local or regional board of education in the previous school year divided by the total number of children under the jurisdiction of such board for such

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school year; and

(4) "School chronic absenteeism rate" means the total number of chronically absent children for a school in the previous school year divided by the total number of children enrolled in such school for such school year.

(b) (1) Each local and regional board of education that (A) has a district chronic absenteeism rate of ten per cent or higher shall establish an attendance review team for the school district, (B) has a school under the jurisdiction of the board with a school chronic absenteeism rate of fifteen per cent or higher shall establish an attendance review team at such school, (C) has more than one school under the jurisdiction of the board with a school chronic absenteeism rate of fifteen per cent or higher shall establish an attendance review team for the school district or at each such school, or (D) has a district chronic absenteeism rate of ten per cent or higher and one or more schools under the jurisdiction of the board with a school chronic absenteeism rate of fifteen per cent or higher shall establish an attendance review team for the school district or at each such school. Such attendance review teams shall be established to address chronic absenteeism in the school district or at the school or schools.

(2) Any attendance review team established under this subsection may consist of school administrators, guidance counselors, school social workers, teachers and representatives from community-based programs who address issues related to student attendance by providing programs and services to truants, as defined in section 10-198a of the general statutes, as amended by this act, and chronically absent children and their parents or guardians. Each attendance review team shall be responsible for reviewing the cases of truants and chronically absent children, discussing school interventions and community referrals for such truants and chronically absent children and making any additional recommendations for such truants and

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chronically absent children and their parents or guardians. Each attendance review team shall meet at least monthly.

Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2015*) (a) Not later than January 1, 2016, the Department of Education, in consultation with the Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement Gap established pursuant to section 10-16nn of the general statutes, shall develop a chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan for use by local and regional boards of education to reduce chronic absenteeism in the school district.

(b) (1) The chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan shall include, but need not be limited to, the following: (A) Information that describes (i) chronic absenteeism, including, but not limited to, the definition of a chronically absent child under section 2 of this act, and the causes of chronic absenteeism, such as poverty, violence, poor health and lack of access to transportation, (ii) the effect of chronic absenteeism on a student's academic performance, and (iii) how family and school partnerships with community resources, including, but not limited to, family resource centers and youth service bureaus, can reduce chronic absenteeism and improve student attendance, and (B) a means of collecting and analyzing data relating to student attendance, truancy and chronic absenteeism for the purpose of (i) disaggregating such data by school district, school, grade and subgroups, such as race, ethnicity, gender, eligibility for free or reduced priced lunches and students whose primary language is not English, and (ii) assisting local and regional boards of education in (I) tracking chronic absenteeism over multiple years and for the current school year, (II) developing indicators to identify students who are at risk of being chronically absent children, (III) monitoring students' attendance over time, and (IV) making adjustments to interventions as they are being implemented.

(2) The chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan may

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include, but need not be limited to, the following: (A) A research-based and data-driven mentorship model that addresses and attempts to reduce chronic absenteeism through the use of mentors, such as students, teachers, administrators, intramural and interscholastic athletic coaches, school resource officers and community partners, and (B) incentives and rewards that recognize schools and students that improve attendance and reduce the school chronic absenteeism rate.

Sec. 4. Subsection (c) of section 10-220 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2015*):

(c) Annually, each local and regional board of education shall submit to the Commissioner of Education a strategic school profile report for each school under its jurisdiction and for the school district as a whole. The superintendent of each local and regional school district shall present the profile report at the next regularly scheduled public meeting of the board of education after each November first. The profile report shall provide information on measures of (1) student needs, (2) school resources, including technological resources and utilization of such resources and infrastructure, (3) student and school performance, including [truancy] the number of truants, as defined in section 10-198a, as amended by this act, and chronically absent children, as defined in section 2 of this act, (4) the number of students enrolled in an adult high school credit diploma program, pursuant to section 10-69, operated by a local or regional board of education or a regional educational service center, (5) equitable allocation of resources among its schools, (6) reduction of racial, ethnic and economic isolation, and (7) special education. For purposes of this subsection, measures of special education include (A) special education identification rates by disability, (B) rates at which special education students are exempted from mastery testing pursuant to section 10-14q, (C) expenditures for special education, including such

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expenditures as a percentage of total expenditures, (D) achievement data for special education students, (E) rates at which students identified as requiring special education are no longer identified as requiring special education, (F) the availability of supplemental educational services for students lacking basic educational skills, (G) the amount of special education student instructional time with nondisabled peers, (H) the number of students placed out-of-district, and (I) the actions taken by the school district to improve special education programs, as indicated by analyses of the local data provided in subparagraphs (A) to (H), inclusive, of this subdivision. The superintendent shall include in the narrative portion of the report information about parental involvement and if the district has taken measures to improve parental involvement, including, but not limited to, employment of methods to engage parents in the planning and improvement of school programs and methods to increase support to parents working at home with their children on learning activities. For purposes of this subsection, measures of truancy include the type of data that is required to be collected by the Department of Education regarding attendance and unexcused absences in order for the department to comply with federal reporting requirements and the actions taken by the local or regional board of education to reduce truancy in the school district. Such truancy data shall be considered a public record for purposes of chapter 14.

Sec. 5. Section 10-198b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2015*):

On or before July 1, 2012, the State Board of Education shall define "excused absence" and "unexcused absence", and on or before January 1, 2016, the State Board of Education shall define "disciplinary absence" for use by local and regional boards of education for the [purpose] purposes of carrying out the provisions of section 10-198a, as amended by this act, [and for the purpose of] reporting truancy, pursuant to

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subsection (c) of section 10-220, as amended by this act, and calculating the district chronic absenteeism rate and the school chronic absenteeism rate pursuant to section 2 of this act.

Sec. 6. Subsection (a) of section 10-198a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2015*):

(a) For purposes of this section, section 10-220, as amended by this act, and section 2 of this act, "truant" means a child age five to eighteen, inclusive, who is enrolled in a public or private school and has four unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten unexcused absences from school in any school year.

Approved July 7, 2015