



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education *Dianna R. Wentzell*

DATE: July 15, 2016

SUBJECT: Summary of Education-Related Legislation Enacted in the 2016 Regular and Special Sessions of the Connecticut General Assembly

The Connecticut General Assembly has adjourned its 2016 Regular and Special Sessions. The State Department of Education (SDE) is hereby providing you with a comprehensive summary of the public acts passed during the regular and special sessions that appear to be of applicability and interest to school districts.

In reviewing this summary, please keep the following in mind:

1. This document does not describe every 2016 public act affecting the operation of a school district or provide every detail of the summarized acts. This is a summary of new legislation, therefore, each superintendent or designated district leader should review the actual text of any act that may impact his or her district.
2. If you are viewing this document electronically, clicking the Public Act number on the index page or clicking the full Public Act title in the summary section will allow you to view the full act. Clicking the title of the act in the content page will bring you to that section of this document.
3. The summaries are organized by Public Act number.
4. Following the index is a summary of each enacted bill, including the effective date. In some cases where only portions of a public act relate to education, only those sections of the act have been included in this summary.

If you have any questions, please contact Laura J. Stefon, Legislative Liaison, at 860-713-6493 or laura.stefon@ct.gov.

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Public Acts Affecting Education

Public Act Number	Public Act Title	Page
<u>SA 16-9</u>	<u>An Act Establishing A Task Force To Study Issues Relating To The Recruitment Of Manufacturing Teachers And Establishing A Task Force To Study Professional Development And In-Service Training Requirements For Educators</u>	2
<u>SA 16-10</u>	<u>An Act Establishing A Pilot Program For Minority Students In High School To Pursue A College Degree In Education</u>	2
<u>SA 16-22</u>	<u>An Act Concerning Teacher Preparation Programs</u>	2
<u>16-37</u>	<u>An Act Concerning Connecticut's Farm To School Program</u>	3
<u>16-41</u>	<u>An Act Concerning The Recommendations Of The Minority Teacher Recruitment Task Force</u>	3-4
<u>16-42</u>	<u>An Act Concerning The Technical High School System</u>	4
<u>16-67</u>	<u>An Act Concerning The Disclosure Of Certain Education Personnel Records, Criminal Penalties For Threatening In Educational Settings And The Exclusion Of A Minor's Name From Summary Process Complaints</u>	4-5
<u>16-91</u>	<u>An Act Making Changes To The Teachers' Retirement System Concerning Retention Of The Plan D Co-Participant Option After Divorce, Crediting Interest On Certain Inactive, Non-Vested Members, Reemployment Of Retired Teachers And Eliminating Certain Obsolete Language</u>	6-7
<u>16-92</u>	<u>An Act Concerning Dyslexia</u>	6
<u>16-114</u>	<u>An Act Encouraging Middle School And High School Students To Consider Careers In Manufacturing And Concerning Information Posted On The Labor Department's Apprenticeship Web Site</u>	6-7
<u>16-132</u>	<u>An Act Establishing A Red Ribbon Pass Program</u>	7
<u>16-139</u>	<u>An Act Concerning Magnet School Tuition</u>	7
<u>16-147</u>	<u>An Act Concerning The Recommendations Of The Juvenile Justice Policy And Oversight Committee</u>	8
<u>16-188</u>	<u>An Act Concerning Education Issues</u>	9
<u>16-189</u>	<u>An Act Concerning Student Data Privacy</u>	9-10
<u>May Special Session 16-2</u>	<u>An Act Adjusting The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2017</u>	10
<u>May Special Session 16-3</u>	<u>An Act Concerning Revenue And Other Items To Implement The Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2017</u>	10-12
<u>May Special Session 16-4</u>	<u>An Act Authorizing And Adjusting Bonds Of The State For Capital Improvements, Transportation And Other Purposes And Authorizing State Grant Commitments For School Building Projects</u>	12

[SA 16-9, An Act Establishing A Task Force To Study Issues Relating To The Recruitment Of Manufacturing Teachers And Establishing A Task Force To Study Professional Development And In-Service Training Requirements For Educators](#)

This Act creates a task force to study issues relating to the need for, and the recruitment of, manufacturing teachers. It will examine the need for manufacturing teachers at various grade levels in schools, the interest among persons employed in manufacturing to teach a manufacturing course or program in schools, what obstacles and constraints exist in the law and collective bargaining agreements, or at the technical high schools, Board of Regents and private education institutions, that inhibit the recruitment of persons to teach manufacturing in schools, and potential state actions to improve and increase the recruitment of manufacturing teachers.

This Act also creates a task force to study issues relating to the professional development requirements and the in-service training requirements for educators. This task force will be looking at how the professional development and in-service training requirements required by law are being implemented locally, whether there are any duplicative requirements, the frequency with which educators are completing the same training or instruction, the time required to complete the training each year, and the direct and indirect costs to the districts. The task force will make recommendations for streamlining the requirements, and combining or eliminating any that are duplicative. The Department of Education is charged with chairing this taskforce.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon Passage

[SA 16-10, An Act Establishing A Pilot Program For Minority Students In High School To Pursue A College Degree In Education](#)

This Act establishes an educator pathways pilot program for minority students in grades 11 and 12 in specified districts to take college courses in the field of education at participating universities outlined in the statute. Not later than June 30, 2017 the partnering school district and the state university are required to enter into an agreement regarding the implementation of the pilot program. The school districts outlined in the statute (New Haven, West Haven, New Britain, Windham and Danbury) may, as a part of their Alliance District plan, seek to use Alliance District funds for the purpose of enrolling students in college courses through this pilot program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon Passage

[SA 16-22, An Act Concerning Teacher Preparation Programs](#)

This Act requires the Department of Education and the Office of Higher Education to enter into an agreement with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation for the purposes of accrediting and establishing standards for teacher preparation programs in the state.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon Passage

PA 16-37, An Act Concerning Connecticut's Farm To School Program

This Act requires a food service management company to include in its response to a board of education's request for proposal (RFP) or bid solicitation for a school nutrition program how the RFP or bid is consistent with the state's farm to school program and how it facilitates the purchase of products from local farmers. The requirement applies to RFPs and bids posted to the state contracting portal, which the Department of Administrative Services maintains. When awarding a contract, which must be done in accordance with any applicable laws, regulations, or rules, the bill requires the board of education to give a preference to the RFP or bid that promotes the purchase of local farm products, all other factors being equal.

The Act also requires the State Board of Education (SBE), by October 1, 2017, to amend state regulations on nutrition standards for school breakfasts and lunches. The amended regulations must encourage boards of education to purchase food from local farmers to support the state's farm to school program. SBE must adopt the regulations in consultation with the Department of Public Health, the School Food Service Association, and the Connecticut Dietetic Association.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2016, except for the regulations provision, which is effective upon passage.

PA 16-41, An Act Concerning The Recommendations Of The Minority Teacher Recruitment Task Force

This Act:

1. extends, from February 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017, the report deadline for the minority teacher recruitment task force, expands its mission to include an analysis of the causes of minority teacher shortages in Connecticut, adds the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission executive director, or her designee, to the task force, and extends the task force's duration until January 1, 2026 (§ 1);
2. establishes the Minority Teacher Recruitment Policy Oversight Council within the State Department of Education (SDE) (§ 2);
3. requires SDE to conduct an annual survey of students on the effectiveness of minority teacher recruitment programs in the state (§ 3);
4. eliminates a satisfactory score on the Praxis competency exam for reading, writing, and math as a licensure requirement for educators and instead requires the score to be used for the purposes of determining remedial needs of prospective candidates for teacher preparation programs (§§ 4 & 5);
5. requires SDE to report annually on the effectiveness of minority teacher recruitment programs using results-based accountability methods (§ 6);
6. requires SDE to review and approve proposals to create alternative route to certification (ARC) programs for school support staff and to award educator certificates to qualified applicants who successfully complete the programs (§ 7);

7. modifies the criteria for awarding an educator certificate to out-of-state teachers and makes the certification awarded a provisional rather than a professional certification (§ 8); and

8. modifies the criteria for teacher certification interstate agreements (§ 9).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage for the task force changes and the new SBE teacher preparation remedial guidelines and July 1, 2016 for the other provisions.

PA 16-42, An Act Concerning The Technical High School System

This Act makes changes to the budgetary process for the Connecticut Technical High School System. By law, the system board must submit a proposed operating budget, including a statement of staffing needs, to the State Board of Education (SBE). The Act specifies that SBE must review, but cannot amend, the system's proposed operating budget. It also allows SBE to attach comments or recommendations for revisions to the budget when submitting it to the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) secretary.

Additionally, the Act requires the system superintendent to provide additional information at an annual legislative meeting about technical high school and state workforce issues.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2016

16-67, An Act Concerning The Disclosure Of Certain Education Personnel Records, Criminal Penalties For Threatening In Educational Settings And The Exclusion Of A Minor's Name From Summary Process Complaints

This Act adds new requirements to the hiring processes of local or regional boards of education, state or local charter school governing councils, and inter-district magnet school operators (“education employers”) for positions that would place applicants in direct contact with students. Specifically, it requires applicants for such positions, education employers, and the State Department of Education (SDE) to participate in additional investigative measures to determine, prior to employment, whether an applicant has a history of sexual misconduct or abuse or neglect involving children. Existing law requires education employers to submit new hires for state and federal criminal history record checks within 30 days of their starting date.

Among other things, the Act also does the following:

1. requires charter school governing councils and magnet school operators to require applicants to disclose criminal convictions and charges and requires applicants to submit to a state and national background check;
2. removes the requirement for boards of education, when dismissing a noncertified employee for failure to disclose a prior criminal conviction, to give the employee an opportunity to file a written answer;
3. allows charter school governing councils and magnet school operators to conduct fingerprinting of certain applicants by regional education service centers (RESCs) and limits charges for this service;

4. expands criminal history record checks of substitute teachers and employees of contractors and allows temporary hires that are subject to a check at least once every 5 years;
5. prohibits education employers from offering employment to any applicant who was previously terminated or resigned from employment because of certain convictions;
6. establishes punitive measures for applicants who knowingly provide false information about their history; and
7. allows criminal history and child abuse and neglect registry record checks for individuals holding drivers' licenses bearing a school or public passenger endorsement for operating a student transportation vehicle. (Under existing law, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) commissioner requires these individuals to undergo such checks.)

The Act also amends criminal statutes by increasing the penalty for certain school-related threats and establishes (1) conditions under which the Board of Pardons and Paroles must grant an absolute pardon and (2) an absolute defense to a civil action for reporting certain threats.

It requires the court to remove a minor's name from certain eviction-related records.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2016, except (1) the provision on the SDE standardized employment form takes effect upon passage and (2) the provisions on threatening crimes and minor's name on eviction-related records are effective October 1, 2016.

[PA 16-91, An Act Making Changes To The Teachers' Retirement System Concerning Retention Of The Plan D Co-Participant Option After Divorce, Crediting Interest On Certain Inactive, Non-Vested Members, Reemployment Of Retired Teachers And Eliminating Certain Obsolete Language](#)

This Act:

1. allows members of the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) to maintain the co-participant retirement payment option after divorce. Since all retirement payment options are actuarially equal, allowing members to maintain the co-participant option after divorce has no fiscal impact.
2. reduces the period of time the TRS credits interest on non-vested members' contributions from 25 years to ten years.
3. adds two provisions to the reemployment of teachers section of the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) statutes and specifies that all reemployed teachers are eligible for the same health insurance coverage provided to active teachers. The first provision states that the limitation on compensation does not apply to teachers with 34 or more years of service who are reemployed in an Alliance District and were serving in that district on July 1, 2015. The second provision states that a teacher may be employed and receive compensation, health and other benefits if such teacher does not receive retirement income during such employment.

4. allows reemployed teachers, meeting certain criteria, to exceed the current 45% reemployed retiree salary limit for FY 17 and FY 18 and to be eligible for active health insurance benefits.

5. allows reemployed teachers to suspend their retirement income and receive salaries equal to that of similarly qualified active teachers, active teacher health insurance and other benefits.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2016

[PA 16-92, An Act Concerning Dyslexia](#)

This Act establishes additional requirements for applicants seeking a teacher certification endorsement as a remedial reading, remedial language arts, or reading consultant. Beginning July 1, 2017, it requires that they complete a reading and language diagnosis and remediation program that includes supervised practicum hours and instruction in the detection of, and evidence-based structured literacy interventions for, students with dyslexia. This requirement applies to initial applicants for any of the three levels of teacher certification (initial, provisional, or professional) as well as certified teachers seeking the endorsement.

In addition to completing the diagnosis and remediation program the applicant must also achieve a satisfactory score on the State Board of Education (SBE)-approved reading instruction exam or a comparable reading instruction exam with minimum standards equivalent to the SBE-approved exam.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2016

[PA 16-114, An Act Encouraging Middle School And High School Students To Consider Careers In Manufacturing And Concerning Information Posted On The Labor Department's Apprenticeship Web Site](#)

This Act requires the education commissioner, in collaboration with the Board of Regents, to establish a committee to coordinate efforts to educate middle and high school students about manufacturing careers.

Under the Act, the committee must annually (1) compile a catalog of manufacturing training programs at public and private educational institutions in the state and (2) analyze, in consultation with the manufacturing industry, whether current programs available to Connecticut students are meeting workforce needs. It must annually report its findings to the Commerce and Higher Education committees, with the first report due February 1, 2017.

The Act also requires the education commissioner to develop (1) a program, in consultation with the committee, to introduce middle and high school students to manufacturing careers and (2) a best practices guide, in consultation with representatives from the manufacturing industry and the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology (CCAT), to help local and regional boards of education incorporate relationships with the manufacturing industry in their middle school and high school curricula.

Finally, the Act requires the Department of Labor (DOL) to update its apprenticeship website, by March 1, 2017, with certain information, such as a list of occupations in which apprentices are employed and apprenticeship coursework and cost.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

16-132, An Act Establishing A Red Ribbon Pass Program

This Act requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to establish a Red Ribbon PASS Program recognizing school districts that qualify as “highly performing” or “improving” physically active school systems (PASS).

Under the Act, SDE must (1) develop or adopt existing standards to use to recognize school districts under the Red Ribbon PASS Program and (2) make information about the program available on the department's website. SDE may accept private donations for this program.

The Act allows local or regional boards of education to request Red Ribbon PASS Program recognition by providing SDE with (1) the school district's results on the Connecticut physical fitness assessment and (2) a demonstration of the district's satisfaction of PASS standards.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2016

16-139, An Act Concerning Magnet School Tuition

This Act prohibits local or regional boards of education that operate interdistrict magnet schools (“operating boards”) from charging tuition, under certain circumstances and with some exceptions, to other boards of education that send students to attend these magnet schools (“sending boards”).

Specifically, beginning in the current school year (2015-16) and continuing throughout subsequent years, the Act prohibits operating boards from charging tuition to sending boards that were not charged tuition for the 2014-15 school year. It allows operating boards to charge tuition, however, for each student attending their magnet schools that sending boards would otherwise have been responsible for educating, under the following conditions: (1) the education commissioner authorizes the proposed tuition charges and (2) upon such authorization, the operating board gives written notice of the charges to the sending board by September 1 of the school year prior to the school year in which tuition is to be charged.

Under the Act, the commissioner must consider the following when deciding whether to authorize an operating board to charge tuition: (1) the board's average per pupil expenditure for each magnet school under its control and (2) the amount of any per pupil state subsidy and any revenue from other sources received by the operator. The Act also allows the commissioner to conduct a comprehensive financial review of a magnet school's operating budget to verify that tuition is appropriate.

The Act does not apply to magnet schools (1) operated by regional education service centers (RESCs) or (2) assisting the state in meeting the integration goals of the *Sheff v. O'Neill* settlement (i.e., “*Sheff* magnet schools”). It also makes a technical change. EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

[PA 16-147, An Act Concerning The Recommendations Of The Juvenile Justice Policy And Oversight Committee](#)

This Act makes several changes affecting juvenile detention and other juvenile justice matters, children returning to school after a juvenile justice placement, and other school disciplinary and related matters. With regard to juvenile detention, it:

1. requires the Court Support Services Division (CSSD) to develop and implement a detention risk assessment instrument and adopt release policies and procedures (§§ 2 & 3);
2. limits the conditions under which a child may be detained and allows graduated sanctions as an alternative to detention; and
3. requires CSSD and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to develop and implement a plan to provide community-based services for children leaving juvenile detention (§5).

The Act prohibits state-operated juvenile justice residential facilities from imposing out-of-school suspensions.

It adds the victim advocate, or his designee, to the Juvenile Justice Oversight and Policy Committee (JJPOC). The bill eliminates some of the JJPOC's current reporting responsibilities and requires the committee to report on a plan for a community-based diversion system. It also requires the committee to establish a data integration working group.

The Act makes various changes affecting schools, such as:

1. requiring 5 days notice to parents or guardians before an expulsion hearing, including notification of legal rights and access to legal services and the right to postpone the hearing up to one week (§ 12);
2. requiring schools to offer an alternative educational opportunity to a larger category of expelled students;
3. eliminating a child's truancy as permissible grounds for a family with service needs complaint (§ 8);
4. requiring schools with a disproportionately high truancy rate to implement an approved intervention model; and
5. requiring the State Department of Education to identify effective truancy intervention models (§ 9);
6. requiring the State Department of Education (SDE), in collaboration with other agencies, to develop plans on certain matters, such as school-based diversion initiatives and addressing educational deficiencies among children in the juvenile justice system (§11).

The Act also includes provisions on, among other matters, police training, a recidivism reduction framework, and training on and monitoring of de-escalation efforts.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Various, see legislation.

[16-188, An Act Concerning Education Issues](#)

This Act makes the following changes to the education and human services statutes:

1. requires the State Board of Education (SBE), in consultation with the Department of Veterans' Affairs, to award an exemplary veterans education program distinction to deserving local and regional boards of education that offer a program concerning the contributions of veteran or that collaborate with local veterans organizations (§1);
2. requires boards of education to post the telephone number for the new Department of Children and Families' (DCF) child abuse "Careline" in a conspicuous school location for students to view (§§ 2 & 3);
3. requires public schools to add cancer awareness to their health and safety program of instruction, including age- and developmentally appropriate instruction in performing self-examinations to screen for breast cancer and testicular cancer (§ 4);
4. establishes a task force to review, streamline, and align state policies relating to school climate, bullying, school safety, and social-emotional learning (§ 5);

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2016, except the provisions about minor and technical DCF hotline changes, the school climate task force, and the Franklin special education reimbursement take effect upon passage.

[16-189, An Act Concerning Student Data Privacy](#)

This Act requires local or regional boards of education to enter into written contracts, as specified in the Act, with a contractor any time such local or regional boards of education shares or provides access to student information, student records or student-generated content with such contractor.

It requires an operator, as defined in the Act, to (1) implement and maintain security procedures and practices that meet or exceed industry standards and that are designed to protect student information, student records and student-generated content from unauthorized access, destruction, use, modification or disclosure, and (2) delete any student information, student records or student-generated content within a reasonable time if a student, parent or legal guardian of a student, or local or regional board of education who has the right to control such student information, requests its deletion.

The Act requires boards of education to notify parents within five business days of executing such a contract and outlines the ways in which an operator is allowed to, and is prohibited from, using student information.

Upon discovering a breach of security that results in the unauthorized release, disclosure or acquisition of student information, the Act establishes timelines for the notification of the breach to local and regional boards of education by the contractor, as well as notification by the local board of education to the students and the parents and guardians of the students whose information was involved in breach of security.

The Act establishes a task force to study issues relating to student data privacy.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2016

[16-2 MSS, An Act Adjusting The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2017](#)

Section 20 - Specifies the payment of approximately \$2.04 billion in Education Equalization grant (ECS) payments. This reflects a reduction, from the original FY 17 appropriation, of \$32.1 million in ECS funding to municipalities.

Sections 37-39 - Make technical changes to allow the SDE to release funds for specific subsections of the priority school district grant to eligible districts for FY 16 and FY 17. This section also allows districts to carry forward unspent FY 16 funds authorized pursuant to these subsections to FY 17.

[16-3 MSS, An Act Concerning Revenue And Other Items To Implement The Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2017](#)

Section 66 - Current law permits SDE to limit (1) per-student grant payments to an interdistrict magnet school to an amount the school was eligible to receive based on its enrollment level on October 1, 2013 and (2) funding for additional students based on certain criteria. The bill modifies this mechanism for FY 17.

First, instead of the October 1, 2013 baseline for calculating payments, the bill allows SDE to limit payments to the amount the school was eligible to receive based on its enrollment on October 1, 2013 or October 1, 2015, whichever is lower.

Second, it eliminates some of the criteria that permits additional funding for enrollment above the baseline for (1) a school moving into a permanent facility for the school year starting July 1, 2014 and (2) new enrollments for a new magnet school starting operation on or after July 1, 2014, to help meet the 2013 *Sheff* stipulation on school desegregation.

The bill keeps the remaining criteria for SDE to prioritize additional magnet school funding and adds a provision for planned new grade levels for the school year starting July 1, 2015 (number 3 below). The bill provides the following priority order:

1. increases in enrollment for a school adding planned new grade levels for school years beginning July 1, 2015 and July 1, 2016;
2. increases in enrollment for a school that added planned new grade levels for school years beginning July 1, 2014 and that was funded during FY 15;
3. increases in enrollment for a school that added planned new grade levels for school years beginning July 1, 2015 and that was funded during FY 16; and
4. increases in enrollment for a school to ensure compliance with the state magnet school law's requirements for racial and economic diversity, special curriculum, and at least a half-time educational program.

The bill also allows magnet school grants to be paid to each magnet school operator as an aggregate total of the amount each operator is eligible to receive under state law. It provides that each operator

may distribute the aggregate grant among its magnet schools according to a distribution plan that the education commissioner approves.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2016

Section 124 - Current law provides a formula for calculating whether a town has received an increase in ECS aid during a fiscal year: a town has received an ECS increase if the amount paid to the town in the current FY exceeds the amount paid in the prior FY.

This section specifies that the ECS increase formula is limited to FY 17, using FY 17 as the current ECS amount and FY 16 as the prior ECS amount. It also specifies that if the amount received in FY 17 is greater than the FY 16 amount, the FY 17 amount minus the FY 16 amount yields the ECS increase amount.

The section establishes a similar formula for calculating whether a town has received an ECS decrease in FY 17. Under the bill, a town has received an ECS decrease if the amount paid to the town in FY 16 exceeds the amount paid in FY 17. The FY 16 amount minus the FY 17 amount yields the ECS decrease amount.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2016

Section 125 - By law, a town is prohibited from budgeting less for education than it did in the previous FY, unless it can demonstrate specific achievements or changes within its school district. This prohibition is commonly referred to as the minimum budget requirement (MBR).

The bill allows a town to reduce its MBR when it experiences an ECS decrease in a fiscal year in an amount equal to the ECS decrease, as calculated under the bill and described above. By law and unchanged by the bill, alliance districts are prohibited from reducing their MBR in FYs 16 and 17.

MBR Exemptions

Current law allows towns to claim an MBR exemption for earning district performance index (DPI) scores among the top 10% of all districts; however, DPI has been eliminated from statute and replaced with other measures that the State Department of Education (SDE) uses to rank school districts. The bill specifies that accountability index scores instead be used to rank districts when determining MBR relief. By law, SDE may calculate accountability index scores for each public school district and school using multiple student, school, or district-level measures, as weighted by SDE. Such measures must include the performance index score and high school graduation rates and may include but are not limited to (1) academic growth over time, (2) attendance and chronic absenteeism, (3) postsecondary education and career readiness, (4) enrollment in and graduation from higher education institutions and postsecondary education programs, (5) civic and arts education, and (6) physical fitness. SDE has announced all the factors it now uses in the accountability index, and they include additional factors such as standardized testing participation rates.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2016

Section 126 - Current law requires the comptroller to hold back any ECS grant increase in FYs 14-17 over FY 12's amount that is payable to an alliance district (one of the 30 lowest performing districts). The

comptroller must transfer the money to the education commissioner, who can withhold it until the alliance district supplies her with a plan that addresses objectives and targets to improve student achievement.

The bill revises the alliance district holdback requirement for FY 17. It requires the comptroller to withhold from an alliance district any ECS grant increase received in FY 17 over FY 12's amount, minus any ECS decrease received in FY 17 compared with FY 16.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2016

[16-4 MSS, An Act Authorizing And Adjusting Bonds Of The State For Capital Improvements, Transportation And Other Purposes And Authorizing State Grant Commitments For School Building Projects](#)

Section 310 of the bill allows any town that has received a school construction grant from the state during the last 25 years to delay the implementation of the new high school graduation requirements until the 2018-19 school year.

Under current law, the new graduation requirements apply to the graduating class of 2021, which means such requirements would apply to freshman in the 2017-18 school year. The scheduled changes require students to, among other things, (1) earn 25 credits, rather than 20; (2) pass state exams for five specific courses; and (3) complete a senior project.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage