

Latest Developments from the Connecticut General Assembly: The Education Committee Begins to Speak

Education Law Notes

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The General Assembly's **Education Committee** is beginning the process of approving bills. The following is a listing (with a brief description) of the proposed bills that Education Committee voted favorably on and advanced out of committee at its March 8, 2017 meeting:

H.B. No. 7157 AN ACT CONCERNING ONLINE AND BLENDED EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS. This bill would expressly authorize school districts to “offer blended educational opportunities for students and teachers that provide a proven and effective mix of online course work and direct classroom learning.”

S.B. No. 911 AN ACT CONCERNING SERVICES FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS. This bill would require the State Department of Education to have an employee be responsible for providing information and assistance related to awareness about and identification of, and the provision of services to, gifted and talented students to local and regional boards of education and the parents or guardians of students. This bill would also require the Department of Education to develop guidelines regarding the provision of services to gifted and talented students in schools. Such guidelines must include best practices for (1) addressing the intellectual, social and emotional needs of gifted and talented students in schools, (2) using technology to extend and advance curriculum materials to provide instruction to gifted and talented students without promoting such students to higher grade levels, and (3) providing educator training and professional development relating to gifted and talented students.

H.B. No. 7159 AN ACT CONCERNING CONNECTICUT'S SEAL OF BILITERACY. This bill would require the State Board of Education to establish criteria by which a local or regional board of education may affix the “Connecticut State Seal of Biliteracy” on a diploma awarded to a student who has achieved a high level of proficiency in English and one or more foreign languages.

H.B. No. 7156 AN ACT CONCERNING ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS FOR CERTAIN UNACCOMPANIED YOUTHS. This bill would entitle “unaccompanied” homeless youth to have access to all of his or her educational, medical or “similar” records in a school district’s cumulative record.

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S.B. No. 908 AN ACT CONCERNING THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSIONERS' RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TECHNICAL REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD STATUTES. This bill makes two technical changes to the statutes.

In addition to the Education Committee passing more bills before its **March 27, 2017** deadline, bills affecting the schools may also emerge from other committees (such as the Labor and Public Employees and Judiciary Committees). For example, the Labor and Public Employees Committee approved legislation that would make school tutors and non-certified school “instructors” (and arguably and perhaps unintentionally, substitute teachers) eligible for paid sick leave provided to “service workers” under Connecticut law. H.B. No. 6215

The 2017 session of the General Assembly is scheduled to adjourn on **June 7, 2017**, so stay tuned to see if any of the above bills will be passed by the full legislature and enacted into law.

PLEASE NOTE: Please visit *Working Together* for updates on labor and employment related legislation.

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