

Substitute Senate Bill No. 438

Public Act No. 10-111

AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATION REFORM IN CONNECTICUT.

Sec. 16. Section 10-221a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2010*):

(a) For classes graduating from 1988 to 2003, inclusive, no local or regional board of education shall permit any student to graduate from high school or grant a diploma to any student who has not satisfactorily completed a minimum of twenty credits, not fewer than four of which shall be in English, not fewer than three in mathematics, not fewer than three in social studies, not fewer than two in science, not fewer than one in the arts or vocational education and not fewer than one in physical education.

(b) Commencing with classes graduating in 2004, and for each graduating class thereafter] For classes graduating from 2004 to 2017, inclusive, no local or regional board of education shall permit any student to graduate from high school or grant a diploma to any student who has not satisfactorily completed a minimum of twenty credits, not fewer than four of which shall be in English, not fewer than three in mathematics, not fewer than three in social studies, including at least a one-half credit course on civics and American government, not fewer than two in science, not fewer than one in the arts or vocational education and not fewer than one in physical education.

(c) Commencing with classes graduating in 2018, and for each graduating class thereafter, no local or regional board of education shall permit any student to graduate from high school or grant a diploma to any student who has not satisfactorily completed (1) a minimum of twenty-five credits, including not fewer than: (A) Nine

credits in the humanities, including not fewer than (i) four credits in English, including composition; (ii) three credits in social studies, including at least one credit in American history and at least one-half credit in civics and American government; (iii) one credit in fine arts; and (iv) one credit in a humanities elective; (B) eight credits in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, including not fewer than (i) four credits in mathematics, including algebra I, geometry and algebra II or probability and statistics; (ii) three credits in science, including at least one credit in life science and at least one credit in physical science; and (iii) one credit in a science, technology, engineering and mathematics elective; (C) three and one-half credits in career and life skills, including not fewer than (i) one credit in physical education; (ii) one-half credit in health and safety education, as described in section 10-16b; and (iii) two credits in career and life skills electives, such as career and technical education, English as a second language, community service, personal finance, public speaking and nutrition and physical activity; (D) two credits in world languages, subject to the provisions of subsection (g) of this section; and (E) a one credit senior demonstration project or its equivalent, as approved by the State Board of Education; and (2) end of the school year examinations for the following courses: (A) Algebra I, (B) geometry, (C) biology, (D) American history, and (E) grade ten English.

(d) Commencing with classes graduating in 2018, and for each graduating class thereafter, local and regional boards of education shall provide adequate student support and remedial services for students beginning in grade seven. Such student support and remedial services shall provide alternate means for a student to complete any of the high school graduation requirements or end of the school year examinations described in subsection (c) of this section, if such student is unable to satisfactorily complete any of the required courses or exams. Such student support and remedial services shall include, but

not be limited to, (1) allowing students to retake courses in summer school or through an on-line course; (2) allowing students to enroll in a class offered at a constituent unit of the state system of higher education, as defined in section 10a-1, pursuant to subdivision (4) of subsection (g) of this section; (3) allowing students who received a failing score, as determined by the Commissioner of Education, on an end of the school year exam to take an alternate form of the exam; and (4) allowing those students whose individualized education plans state that such students are eligible for an alternate assessment to demonstrate competency on any of the five core courses through success on such alternate assessment.

(e) Any student who presents a certificate from a physician stating that, in the opinion of the physician, participation in physical education is medically contraindicated because of the physical condition of such student, shall be excused from the physical education requirement, provided the credit for physical education may be fulfilled by an elective.

(f) Determination of eligible credits shall be at the discretion of the local or regional board of education, provided the primary focus of the curriculum of eligible credits corresponds directly to the subject matter of the specified course requirements. The local or regional board of education may permit a student to graduate during a period of expulsion pursuant to section 10-233d, if the board determines the student has satisfactorily completed the necessary credits pursuant to this section. The requirements of this section shall apply to any student requiring special education pursuant to section 10-76a, except when the planning and placement team for such student determines the requirement not to be appropriate. For purposes of this section, a credit shall consist of not less than the equivalent of a forty-minute class period for each school day of a school year except for a credit or part of a credit toward high school graduation earned (1) at an

institution accredited by the Department of Higher Education or regionally accredited; or (2) through on-line coursework that is in accordance with a policy adopted pursuant to subsection (g) of this section.

(g) Only courses taken in grades nine through twelve, inclusive, shall satisfy this graduation requirement, except that a local or regional board of education may grant a student credit (1) toward meeting a specified course requirement upon the successful completion in grade seven or eight of any course, the primary focus of which corresponds directly to the subject matter of a specified course requirement in grades nine to twelve, inclusive; (2) toward meeting the high school graduation requirement upon the successful completion of a world language course (A) in grade six, seven or eight, (B) through on-line coursework, or (C) offered privately through a nonprofit provider, provided such student achieves a passing grade on an examination prescribed, within available appropriations, by the Commissioner of Education and such credits do not exceed four; (3) toward meeting the high school graduation requirement upon achievement of a passing grade on a subject area proficiency examination identified and approved, within available appropriations, by the Commissioner of Education, regardless of the number of hours the student spent in a public school classroom learning such subject matter; [or] (4) toward meeting the high school graduation requirement upon the successful completion of coursework at an institution accredited by the Department of Higher Education or regionally accredited. One three-credit semester course, or its equivalent, at such an institution shall equal one-half credit for purposes of this section; (5) toward meeting the high school graduation requirement upon the successful completion of on-line coursework, provided the local or regional board of education has adopted a policy in accordance with this subdivision for the granting

of credit for on-line coursework. Such a policy shall ensure, at a minimum, that (A) the workload required by the on-line course is equivalent to that of a similar course taught in a traditional classroom setting, (B) the content is rigorous and aligned with curriculum guidelines approved by the State Board of Education, where appropriate, (C) the course engages students and has interactive components, which may include, but are not limited to, required interactions between students and their teachers, participation in online demonstrations, discussion boards or virtual labs, (D) the program of instruction for such on-line coursework is planned, ongoing and systematic, and (E) the courses are (i) taught by teachers who are certified in the state or another state and have received training on teaching in an on-line environment, or (ii) offered by institutions of higher education that are accredited by the Department of Higher Education or regionally accredited; or (6) toward meeting the high school graduation requirement upon the successful completion of the board examination series pursuant to section 17 of this act.

(h) A local or regional board of education may offer one-half credit in community service which, if satisfactorily completed, shall qualify for high school graduation credit pursuant to this section, provided such community service is supervised by a certified school administrator or teacher and consists of not less than fifty hours of actual service that may be performed at times when school is not regularly in session and not less than ten hours of related classroom instruction. For purposes of this section, community service does not include partisan political activities. The State Board of Education shall assist local and regional boards of education in meeting the requirements of this section.

(i) A local or regional board of education may award a diploma to a veteran of World War II, pursuant to section 27-103, who left high

school prior to graduation in order to serve in the armed forces of the United States and did not receive a diploma as a consequence of such service.

(j) For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, a local or regional board of education shall collect information for each student enrolled in a public school, beginning in grade six, that records students' career and academic choices in grades six to twelve, inclusive.

Sec. 17. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2010*)

(a) The Department of Education may establish a board examination series pilot program to allow local and regional boards of education to permit students in grades nine to twelve, inclusive, to substitute achievement of a passing score on a series of examinations approved by the State Board of Education for the high school graduation requirements pursuant to section 10-221a of the general statutes, as amended by this act. The State Board of Education shall issue a board examination certificate to any student who has successfully completed such program. Such board examination certificate shall be considered in the same manner as a high school diploma for purposes of determining eligibility of a student for enrollment at a public institution of higher education in this state.

(b) Notwithstanding the high school graduation requirements pursuant to section 10-221a of the general statutes, as amended by this act, for the school year commencing July 1, 2011, and each school year thereafter, a local or regional board of education shall permit a student to graduate from high school upon the successful completion of the

board examination series program described in subsection (a) of this section.

Sec. 18. (*Effective July 1, 2010*)

(a) For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2013, to June 30, 2018, inclusive, the Department of Education shall, within available appropriations, provide grants to local and regional school districts to begin implementation of the provisions of subsections (c) and (d) of section 10-221a of the general statutes, as amended by this act.

(b) On or before November 1, 2012, and biennially thereafter, each local or regional board of education seeking grant assistance from the department pursuant to subsection (a) of this section shall report to the department on the status of the school district's implementation of the provisions of subsections (c) and (d) of section 10-221a of the general statutes, as amended by this act, and an explanation for the reasons why funds are necessary for the next biennium to implement the provisions of subsections (c) and (d) of said section 10-221a.

(c) On or before February 1, 2013, and biennially thereafter, the department shall report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education on the status of implementation of the provisions of subsections (c) and (d) of section 10-221a of the general statutes, as amended by this act, by local and regional boards of education in the state. Such report shall include, (1) an explanation of any existing state and federal funds currently available to assist in such implementation, (2) recommendations regarding the appropriation of additional state

funds to support local and regional boards of education in the implementation of subsections (c) and (d) of said section 10-221a, and (3) recommendations for any statutory changes that would facilitate implementation of subsections (c) and (d) of said section 10-221a by local and regional boards of education.

Sec. 19. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2010*)

On and after July 1, 2012, the Department of Education shall commence development or approval of the end of the school year examinations to be administered pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (c) of section 10-221a of the general statutes, as amended by this act. Such examinations shall be developed or approved on or before July 1, 2014.