Proposed Legislation Impacting K-12 Education

School + State Finance Project

April 8, 2025

As we reach the midpoint of the 2025 legislative session, the School and State Finance Project is pleased to provide this update to our stakeholders. This document summarizes key pieces of legislation that were voted out of the Education Committee, prior to its deadline to advance legislation, and impact K-12 education funding and policy in Connecticut.

We continue to advocate for a more equitable and transparent K-12 education finance system and are committed to keeping our stakeholders informed of any legislative developments.

<u>Referred to Appropriations Committee</u> <u>Reported Favorably to House or Senate Floor</u>

Bills Referred to the Appropriations Committee

The following table includes bills that have been voted out of the Education Committee and referred to the Appropriations Committee. Bills are referred to Appropriations when they are expected to carry a fiscal impact and would require funding in the state budget. The Appropriations Committee must act on these bills and release its budget proposal by **April 25, 2025**.

Bill No.	Title	Summary
<u>H.B. 6866</u>	An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations for Education	• The Education Committee referred the bill to Appropriations with <u>substitute language</u> that makes several key revisions to the governor's original proposal.
		• Eliminates the governor's reporting requirements for ECS increases of \$100K or more over FY 2025 levels.
		• Does not continue student-centered funding at the governor's proposed 42% rate, which would conflict with H.B. 7167.
		• Eliminates proposed inflation adjustments to magnet and AgriScience tuition starting FY 2028.
		Removes consolidation of student support

Bill No.	Title	Summary
		programs into a single competitive grant.
		• Creates the <u>Universal Preschool Endowment</u> as proposed by the governor.
	An Act Creating the Universal Preschool Endowment	• The endowment will be funded with \$300 million from the FY 2025 surplus and then with the unappropriated surpluses in FY 2026 and thereafter.
<u>H.B. 6867</u>		• The Commissioner of Early Childhood may expend up to 10% of the balance of the endowment, on an annual basis, for the purposes of creating sufficient capacity for universal preschool.
		 In year one (FY 2026), up to \$30 million may be used to jumpstart implementation.
<u>H.B. 7010</u>	An Act Concerning Paraeducators	• Extends through FY 2026 the comptroller's subsidy program to support paraeducators with the cost of health savings accounts or health coverage, including coverage under high-deductible plans.
		• Requires boards of education to cover the full employee contribution for paraeducators in the Municipal Employees' Retirement System (MERS), up to the statutory maximum.
		• Requires the comptroller to reimburse boards annually for at least 50% of the retirement contributions made on behalf of paraeducators.
<u>H.B. 7013</u>	An Act Concerning Enhancements to the Local Food for Schools Incentive Program and the CT Grown for CT Kids Grant Program	• Strengthens the Local Food for Schools Incentive Program by expanding eligibility beyond school districts to include child care providers, adjusting reimbursement tiers (50% for local, 33% for regional food purchases), and requiring at least 20% of program funds to be used for supplemental services like outreach, training, and technical assistance.
		 Allocates new funding and staffing to support farm-to-school efforts, including a full-time coordinator at the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and \$3.5 million over two years for administration of both the Local Food for Schools and CT

Bill No.	Title	Summary
		Grown for CT Kids programs.
		• Continues implementation of a weighted funding model for magnet schools, charter schools, and AgriScience programs based on student need (e.g., eligibility for free/reduced price meals, multilingual learner status) and phased in over the next four years.
<u>H.B. 7167</u>	An Act Concerning Education Funding	 Holds phase-out towns harmless for the next biennium. Resumes ECS phase-out in FY 2028.
		 Codifies a temporary adjustment for Mansfield's population for FY 2026 and FY 2027 for ECS purposes.
		 Maintains general education tuition cap at 58% of what an operator charged in FY 2024.
<u>H.B. 7216</u>	An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Technical Education and Career System	• Expands the TECS executive director's authority over system operations, staffing, cooperative agreements, and funding acceptance, including quarterly reporting on gifts and donations.
		• Allows adult learners in TECS programs to qualify for the state's "debt-free college" program (Mary Ann Handley Award), aligning TECS adult education with community college financial aid policies.
		• Requires the Board of Regents to administer aid to TECS adult learners and submit expanded data reports starting in fall 2025, including enrollment, aid amounts, and completion rates.
<u>S.B. 1244</u>	An Act Making Investments in In- District Special Education	• Requires the CSDE, by July 1, 2026, to develop a methodology for calculating the maximum tuition and fee rates that private providers of special education services may charge local and regional boards of education.
		• Requires that, beginning July 1, 2027, any new or amended contract between a board of education and a private special education provider must comply with the tuition rate schedule established by CSDE.

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		• Requires each local and regional board of education, by June 30, 2026 and every five years thereafter, to conduct a comprehensive review of all special education and related services spending, submit the report to the CSDE, and post it publicly on the district's website.
		• Establishes a competitive grant program beginning in FY 2027 to support the development or enhancement of in-district or regionalized special education programming, with priority for collaborative proposals and those serving students currently placed out-of-district.
		• Establishes a Statewide Office of School Choice within the CSDE, led by a chief with experience in charter school authorization, interdistrict magnet school programs, enrollment practices, funding, infrastructure planning, and Sheff v. O'Neill compliance.
<u>S.B. 1349</u>	An Act Concerning the Charter School Approval Process	• Grants the Office authority, in coordination with the CSDE commissioner, to oversee the charter school request for proposal and renewal processes, manage and publish a centralized repository of information on interdistrict magnet and charter governance, and assist the Regional School Choice Office in Sheff v. O'Neill implementation.
		• Requires the Office to develop a report by July 1, 2026, with recommendations for improving transparency in the charter approval and funding process, including national comparisons and stakeholder consultation with families, educators, and advocacy organizations.
		• Replaces "initial certificate of approval" with "certificate of approval" for charter schools and allows such schools to open using available federal, state, or private funds, regardless of whether the General Assembly has appropriated specific state funding for them.
		 Updates the charter school approval, application, and renewal processes with new criteria focused on student need,

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		racial and economic diversity, and academic improvement; also enhances requirements for transparency, public input, governance documentation, and equity in admissions.
<u>S.B. 1350</u>	An Act Concerning the Availability of Automated External Defibrillators and Requiring Cardiac Emergency Response Plans in Public Schools	• Establishes a grant program, to be administered by the CSDE by January 1, 2026, to help local and regional boards of education cover the costs of implementing cardiac emergency response plans, including purchasing and maintaining automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and training staff in their use.
		 Appropriates \$521,000 from the General Fund in FY 2026 to support the grant program.
<u>S.B. 1459</u>	An Act Concerning Teacher Salaries	 Beginning July 1, 2025, requires all collective bargaining agreements between boards of education and certified employee unions to set a minimum teacher salary equal to 300% of the federal poverty level for a family of two.
		 Requires the comptroller to establish a teacher retention grant program by August 1, 2025, with municipalities receiving grants based on their proportional share of statewide ECS funding.
		 Requires the comptroller to distribute at least \$600 million in FY 2026, and in FY 2027 distribute no less than 20% of the previous year's unappropriated General Fund surplus as teacher retention grants.
		• Requires municipalities to divide retention grants equally among students counted in their ECS allocation and allocate funds to boards of education proportionally based on enrollment.
		 Requires boards of education to use 100% of retention grants solely for increasing salaries of certified teachers in the bargaining unit, with at least 75% directed to teachers below the salary schedule maximum and allows payments to teachers at the maximum step only if that step is no

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		 more than 30% above the first step. For FYs 2026–2028, mandates payments to teachers earning below the minimum salary to make up the full difference between their reported salary and the established minimum salary.
<u>S.B. 1510</u>	An Act Concerning Assorted Revisions to the Education Statutes	 Requires EASTCONN to implement a pilot program, in consultation with its member districts, to establish a uniform system of accounting for school revenues and expenditures and a standardized chart of accounts, with a report due to the Education Committee by January 1, 2027. Increases the retirement benefit multiplier from 2.0% to 2.2% for years of full-time credited service in Alliance Districts and reduces the early retirement penalty by waiving actuarial reduction for the first six months of early retirement in these districts. Requires funds appropriated for the After-School Program grant to include a grant-inaid to an organization providing support services to grant recipients and sets aside 10% of total grant funds for municipalities with populations between 75,000 and 120,000.
<u>S.B. 1511</u>	An Act Concerning Disconnected Youth	 Increases the ECS formula foundation amount to \$12,488 starting in FY 2026 and for all future years. Increases the ECS economically disadvantaged student weight from 30% to 40%, the concentrated poverty weight from 15% to 20%, and the multilingual learner weight from 25% to 35%. Adds a new 50% weight for students with disabilities in the ECS formula. Adds the Department of Correction and Court Support Services Division as participating agencies in P20 WIN and requires data sharing related to disconnected youth. Requires the creation of a youth success oversight board within each regional council of governments to coordinate and

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		 support services for disconnected youth. Establishes a school-based telehealth mental health services program, led by the Department of Public Health, to serve students in regions lacking adequate in- person care. Requires the distribution of youth employment funds to regional workforce boards based on the percentage of disadvantaged youth in each region, beginning in FY 2026.
<u>H.B. 5001</u>	An Act Concerning the Quality and Delivery of Special Education Services in Connecticut	 House Priority Bill. This remains a placeholder bill in Appropriations.
<u>H.B. 6899</u>	An Act Concerning Early Educator Pay Equity	 Establishes the Early Childhood Care and Education Salary Enhancement Grant Program to increase the salaries of early childhood educators beginning in FY 2026, with funding distributed to eligible programs based on compensation gaps defined in a state-developed schedule. Requires the Office of Early Childhood to develop and implement a compensation schedule and related grant policy by October 1, 2025, and to ensure all early childhood educators are paid in accordance with that schedule by July 1, 2025, unless they already earn more. Provides direct grants to family child care homes based on staffing structure — \$20,000 for licensees, \$6,000 for full-time assistants, and \$3,000 for part-time staff.

Bills Reported Favorably to the Floor

The following table includes bills that have been voted favorably out of the Education Committee and reported directly to the House or Senate floor (depending on the chamber of origin). These bills may be referred to additional committees of cognizance, such as Appropriations, or may proceed to a vote in either chamber at any time.

The General Assembly is scheduled to adjourn on **June 4**, **2025**, meaning any legislative action on these bills must occur before that date.

Bill No.	Title	Summary
	An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Office of Early Childhood	• Updates qualifications for early childhood educators in state-funded programs, phasing in stricter degree requirements through 2035. By then, family child care providers must hold an associate degree or higher in early childhood education.
		• Clarifies supervision rules for staff working toward degrees, allowing for off-site supervision in family child care settings under certain conditions.
<u>H.B. 6921</u>		• Revises licensing definitions for youth camps and expands the age range to include children as young as age three. Also redefines "resident" and "day camp" to reflect modern operational practices.
		• Modifies Early Start CT governance structure and funding, including administrative set-asides and sliding fee scale requirements to support local or regional early education governance partners.
		• Makes technical and structural changes to the State Interagency Birth-to-Three Coordinating Council, Early Childhood Cabinet duties, and grant oversight — all aligning statutory language with current operations and federal compliance.
<u>H.B. 6922</u>	An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Department of Administrative Services Regarding the School Building Projects Statutes	 Merges the HVAC grant program with the existing DAS school construction non- priority list project process.
		• Repeals requirement that superintendents make certain affirmations in their application (maximizing natural light, wireless connectivity, school safety).
		• Expands legislative forgiveness for grant

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		 repayments if school buildings are repurposed for public use. Repeals the requirement that consultant services contracts must have prior approval from DAS to be eligible for state grant reimbursement. Removes CTECS from the school construction grant program to be consistent with all state-owned buildings.
<u>H.B. 6923</u>	An Act Concerning the Use of Smart Devices in Schools	 Beginning with the 2025–26 school year, each local and regional board of education must adopt a policy limiting student use of smart devices in schools, using guidance developed by the CSDE. Maintains existing law allowing boards of education to restrict cell phone use, while requiring them to consider the special needs of parents and students when establishing such restrictions.
<u>H.B. 6924</u>	An Act Concerning Public Education in the State	This is a placeholder bill.
<u>H.B. 7009</u>	An Act Concerning The Establishment of the Connecticut State Seal of Civics Education and Engagement	 Creates a new civics recognition seal that can be placed on the diplomas and transcripts of high school graduates who demonstrate high proficiency in civics education and engagement. Requires completion of at least two years of history/social science, participation in a civic engagement project, and demonstrated civics knowledge via assessment or portfolio. Local and regional boards may begin awarding the seal with the Class of 2026, and participation is optional for districts.
<u>H.B. 7011</u>	An Act Concerning Student State-Wide Assessments	 Reduces the number of required state standardized tests in reading, writing, and math by eliminating assessments in grades 3, 5, and 7 — students would instead be tested in grades 4, 6, 8, and 11 beginning in the 2025–26 school year. Maintains current science testing in grades 5, 8, and 11, and keeps the requirement for

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		 grade 11 students to take a nationally recognized college readiness assessment. Requires local and regional boards of education to notify parents or guardians of their child's scores by October 1 of each year, and continues protections for multilingual learners in accountability calculations.
<u>H.B. 7012</u>	An Act Establishing a Working Group to Address Antisemitism in Schools	 Establishes a working group to support schools in addressing antisemitism by providing assistance, training, and curriculum resources related to Jewish heritage, the Holocaust, and genocide education. The group will include educators, nonprofit leaders, curriculum specialists, and legislators, and is charged with recommending school policy improvements to ensure safety and inclusion for students and staff. A report with recommendations is due by February 1, 2026, to the Education Committee, with the option to submit additional reports as needed.
<u>H.B. 7014</u>	An Act Concerning Public School Libraries	 Requires each local and regional boards of education to adopt a formal policy, by January 1, 2026, for reviewing school library materials in response to qualified complaints from students or parents. Policies must establish a review committee and outline procedures for evaluating challenged materials, ensuring transparency and fairness. Boards must publicly post final decisions on removal or access restrictions. Prohibits removal or restriction of library materials based on political or religious views, race, gender identity, or topics such as sexual health, unless content is deemed age inappropriate.
<u>H.B. 7075</u>	An Act Concerning the Availability of Islamic and Arab Studies Curriculum Material for School Districts	• Requires the State Board of Education to make Islamic and Arab studies curriculum materials available to local and regional school districts, alongside other culturally and historically inclusive content areas.

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		• The bill adds Islamic and Arab studies to the list of recommended instructional topics that already includes African American, Latino, Native American, and Asian American studies, as well as financial literacy, CPR, labor history, and climate change education.
<u>H.B. 7076</u>	An Act Providing Education Mandate Relief	• Delays enforcement of the state's racial imbalance laws until July 1, 2029, including reporting requirements and State Board of Education action on local plans to address imbalance.
		 Aligns special education exit age with federal standards, ending eligibility at age 21 (instead of through age 22) for students receiving special education services, effective July 1, 2026.
		 Authorizes early kindergarten admissions for children under age 5 if local boards adopt a policy and conduct a developmental assessment.
		• Repeals a student data privacy statute (Sec. 10-234gg), removing certain compliance burdens on districts related to contracts with tech providers.
<u>H.B. 7077</u>	An Act Concerning Crisis Response Drills	• Establishes statewide standards for school crisis response drills, requiring the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, in collaboration with WCSU's School Safety Center, to define terms, develop protocols, and create evaluation tools by April 1, 2026.
		• Requires all crisis response drills to be trauma-informed starting in the 2026–27 school year, with mental health professional involvement, advance notice to students and families, and accommodations for students with disabilities.
		 Prohibits active assailant simulations involving students during school hours; such simulations are allowed only outside school hours and only for school personnel and emergency responders.

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	An Act Concerning Teacher Recruitment and Retention	 Creates a tuition assistance program for eligible students enrolled in teacher preparation programs at public colleges in Connecticut, covering remaining tuition costs after financial aid, in exchange for a 5-year teaching commitment in a public school.
<u>H.B. 7168</u>		• Establishes a new scholarship program for teachers certified through alternative routes who enroll in a master's degree program in the state, awarded on a first- come, first-served basis.
		• Appropriates \$5 million in FY 2026 to fund the tuition assistance program.
<u>H.B. 7169</u>	An Act Establishing a Working Group to Study the Incorporation of Connecticut's Cultural Resources with Project-Based Learning	 Creates a working group to study how Connecticut's cultural and artistic institutions can be integrated into project- based learning for students in grades K–5.
		• The group will examine curriculum alignment, potential lesson plan development by the State Education Resource Center, costs for school visits, and funding options.
		• A report is due by January 1, 2026, to the Education Committee, after which the working group will dissolve.
<u>H.B. 7217</u>	An Act Concerning Various Revisions to the Education Statutes	• Improves transparency in school budgeting by requiring boards of education to include original, current, and actual amounts for each line item across three fiscal years when presenting budget estimates.
		• Expands and clarifies health assessment, screening, and reporting requirements, including asthma tracking, vision screenings, and required use of state- provided forms.
		• Updates requirements for school resource officer (SRO) agreements, mandating more comprehensive memoranda of understanding, including trauma-informed training and school safety communication protocols.

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		• Modifies discipline statutes to reduce the maximum out-of-school suspension for grades PK-2 to two days, requires trauma- informed supports, and mandates evaluations for special education needs post-suspension.
		• Makes technical and policy updates to statutes governing Open Choice expansion, reserve fund usage, executive session rules, and teacher contract negotiations (e.g., requiring board member participation in bargaining).
	An Act Concerning Special Education	• A placeholder bill for special education.
<u>H.B. 7218</u>		 Adds a comma to 10-76a(4) after "State Board of Education."
<u>H.B. 7219</u>	An Act Protecting 504 Plan Accommodations for Students in Connecticut	• Would codify in state statute the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and relevant accompanying regulations.
<u>S.B. 1</u>	An Act Increasing Resources for Students, Schools and Special Education	• Eliminates the Alliance District program and all related statutory references, replaces Alliance District references in the ECS formula with Priority School Districts, repeals the Commissioner's Network, and cancels the pending Alliance District program report from the CSDE.
		• Establishes "literacy districts" identified by the CSDE based on reading performance and replaces references to Alliance Districts in the intensive reading instruction program with these new literacy districts.
		• Creates a Universal Preschool Trust funded by surplus dollars (up to \$300M from FY 2025 and future annual surpluses if the Budget Reserve Fund is full), to cover preschool tuition and support expansion of early care and education slots; overseen by a new Universal Preschool Trust Board.
		• Establishes a statewide Tri-Share Child Care Matching Program under which participating employers cover at least one- third of childcare costs, employees pay no more than 7% of their household income,

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		 and the Trust covers the remaining amount. Requires new transparency and reporting from school districts, including public board presentations on partnerships, internships, classroom sizes, staffing attrition, and budget savings, as well as quarterly website postings and annual updates on reserve and non-lapsing funds; the CSDE must post statewide data by January 1, 2027. Creates regional education accountability review boards for each planning region to oversee spending, provide intensive assistance, and submit annual expenditure reports for Priority School Districts. Requires the CSDE to update the chronic absenteeism plan biannually using disconnected youth data and establishes a student success coach pilot program in eight high-need districts using evidence-based supports for at-risk students.
<u>S.B. 1286</u>	An Act Concerning the Legislative Commissioners' Recommendations for Technical Revisions to the Education and Early Childhood Statutes	 This bill makes technical changes to the education and early childhood statutes.
<u>S.B. 1287</u>	An Act Concerning Schools	This is a placeholder bill.
<u>S.B. 1288</u>	An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Department of Education	 Eliminates the proposal to make the lottery algorithm and placement protocols used by the Regional School Choice Office confidential and exempt from FOIA disclosure. Removes the proposal to eliminate the annual review of new charter school applications and replace it with a review schedule determined by the CSDE commissioner tied to the biennial state budget. Eliminates the proposal to codify a Connecticut State Seal of Civics Education and Engagement, which is already advancing in separate legislation (HB 7009).

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		• Strikes the proposal to codify the definition of "reasonable cost" for special education services for students attending charter schools.
<u>S.B. 1346</u>	An Act Requiring Boards of Education to Post Curriculum Online	• Requires each local and regional board of education to post all curriculum approved by its district curriculum committee on the board's website.
<u>S.B. 1391</u>	An Act Concerning the Transparency of Multilingual Learner Data	• Expands the Public School Information System (PSIS) to include mastery exam results and academic progress data for students in multilingual learner programs , to support program evaluation and monitoring.
		• Requires the CSDE to make multilingual learner program data publicly available in PSIS and adds access to this data as a right under the multilingual learner bill of rights for students and their families.
		• Takes effect January 1, 2026.
<u>S.B. 1392</u>	An Act Concerning Educator Certification	 Provides candidates for educator certification with alternative methods for satisfying the minimum content knowledge requirements, including a subject-area degree or a portfolio review, in addition to subject-area assessments.
		• Allows these alternative pathways to apply when seeking additional endorsements, cross endorsements in shortage areas, or certification in areas where a bachelor's degree is not required (e.g., skilled trades).
		• Applies these updated requirements to teacher preparation fellows programs and other recruitment pipelines designed to increase educator diversity, including provisions for waivers under certain conditions.
<u>S.B. 1393</u>	An Act Concerning Authorization of State Grant Commitments for School Building Projects and Revisions to the School Building Projects Statutes	• Authorizes \$171.8 million in state school construction grant commitments toward \$262.7 million in total project costs across eight districts and reauthorizes one project (Platt Technical High School) with revised

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		 scope and cost, increasing its state grant by \$50.7 million. Expands the 15-percentage-point bonus reimbursement rate for elementary school projects with early childhood education space to apply to the entire project cost, not just the early childhood portion. Creates a new 15-percentage-point bonus reimbursement rate for projects including space for special education programs, applicable to the full project; requires districts to maintain the space for 10 or 20 years depending on usage, and caps total reimbursement at 100%.
<u>S.B. 1458</u>	An Act Concerning Changes to the Commissioner's Network of Schools and Alliance District Programs	 Continues the Commissioner's Network of Schools through FY 2027 but prohibits any new schools from being added after July 1, 2025, and prevents currently participating schools from extending beyond their initial three-year term. Renames "Alliance Districts" as "Opportunity Districts" and reduces the total number from 33 to 15, while creating a new category called "Legacy Alliance Districts" for districts designated between FY 2013 and FY 2025. Requires the CSDE commissioner to designate 15 districts as Opportunity Districts for FY 2026, with designations lasting for two years. Requires the Comptroller to withhold ECS funds for Opportunity Districts in excess of their FY 2012 amounts, with funds only released upon application and approval by CSDE for targeted student achievement or equity initiatives. Allows boards of education in districts with one of the 50 lowest accountability index scores, but not designated as Opportunity Districts, to request technical assistance or specialized support services from CSDE. Continues ECS hold-harmless provisions for both Opportunity Districts and Legacy Alliance Districts through future fiscal years.

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<u>S.B. 1512</u>	An Act Establishing the School District Accountability Review Board	• Establishes a School District Accountability Review Board within the CSDE to assist districts identified as in need of improvement with fiscal management and accountability.
		• Authorizes the board to intervene in local or regional districts under State Board of Education oversight, including by directing financial management actions or, in severe cases, assuming control of financial operations.
		• Requires the Auditors of Public Accounts to conduct a forensic audit of Bridgeport Public Schools in FY 2026, including a comprehensive review of finances, processes, records, and the district budget.
		• Directs the Auditors to submit their findings to the Education Committee, which must then hold a public hearing to review the audit and report.