



Agency Legislative Proposal - 2021 Session

Document Name (e.g. OPM1015Budget.doc; OTG1015Policy.doc):

(If submitting an electronically, please label with date, agency, and title of proposal – 092611_SDE_TechRevisions)

State Agency: Connecticut State Department of Education

Liaison: Laura Stefon
Phone: (860) 713-6493
E-mail: Laura.Stefon@ct.gov

Lead agency division requesting this proposal: **Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification, Talent Office**

Agency Analyst/Drafter of Proposal: **Shuana Tucker, Chief Talent Officer; Christopher M. Todd, Bureau Chief; Wendy Harwin and Megan Alubicki, Education Consultant; Gladys Labas, Equity and Language Services Consultant**

Title of Proposal **An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to Bilingual Education Certification**

Statutory Reference **Sec. 10-145h. Requirements for certification as a bilingual education teacher.**

Proposal Summary: This Act proposes to:

- 1) **Revise testing requirements for bilingual educator certification; and**
- 2) **Clarify the grade levels authorized under bilingual certification endorsements.**
- 3) **Create two new secondary bilingual endorsements.**

• PROPOSAL BACKGROUND

Reason for Proposal

Bilingual certification authorizes educators to teach academic content in two languages. Educators must be fully proficient in both languages of instruction. Eligibility for a bilingual endorsement requires educators to demonstrate oral proficiency in English and oral and written proficiency in the second language of instruction, by passing national proficiency tests. However, most educators have demonstrated oral and written proficiency in at least one of these languages by earning a degree from an institution that provides instruction in that language. Accepting an earned degree from an institution where the language of instruction is English to demonstrate written English proficiency, and an earned degree from an institution where the language of instruction is the second language sought, to demonstrate oral and written proficiency in that language would eliminate time consuming, expensive testing without lowering standards.

English learners may come to our classrooms from areas of strife or poverty, resulting in limited or interrupted access to academic instruction. Some of these students, placed in age-appropriate grades, may need elementary level instruction to catch up to their peers. Authorizing elementary bilingual teachers to serve students in grades K through 9 and middle grades bilingual teachers in grades 4 through 9 improves district flexibility to create multi-age groups that better serve the academic needs of these students. Over 92% of students in mandated bilingual education programs are in grades K-9.

Eligibility for secondary bilingual certification requires teachers to meet coursework requirements for a specific content area, as well as coursework and testing for bilingual certification. This is an expensive and time-consuming burden, which creates a barrier. Many bilingual certified educators could teach additional secondary subject areas, but are not able to complete the number of courses required in the content area. Similarly, there are special subjects and world language teachers who have the language skills, but cannot earn a bilingual endorsement without completing many additional content courses in an academic area. This proposal addresses the severe shortage of bilingual teachers by reducing the the number of credits required to teach in secondary bilingual programs. It seeks to create secondary level bilingual STEM and bilingual humanities endorsements, aligned with the new High School graduation requirements. These



bilingual STEM and humanities endorsements would permit the holders to teach any bilingual content that falls within these broader content area categories, allowing more flexibility for districts and reducing barriers for teachers while maintaining content knowledge standards, so that bilingual students would continue to be served by competent and knowledgeable teachers.

- Origin of Proposal **New Proposal** **Resubmission**

PROPOSAL IMPACT

- **Agencies Affected** (please list for each affected agency) *Please only complete this section if you have already been working with another agency. If not, I will reach out to the appropriate agency’s legislative liaison upon approval from the Commissioner.*

Agency Name: Agency Contact (name, title, phone): Date Contacted: Approve of Proposal <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> Talks Ongoing
Summary of Affected Agency’s Comments
Will there need to be further negotiation? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

- **Fiscal Impact** (please include the proposal section that causes the fiscal impact and the anticipated impact)

Municipal (please include any municipal mandate that can be found within legislation) <i>Impact on LEAs or municipalities – cost or savings.</i> None
State <i>In addition to costs to the State/Department, please include additional staffing needs to implement, if any.</i> None
Federal <i>Please note if any federal funds are received, used, etc. as a result of this proposal.</i> None
Additional notes on fiscal impact Reducing the number of tests and courses required for certification reduces the financial burden on educators. Extending the grade levels elementary and middle grades bilingual teachers are authorized to teach may reduce the fiscal burden on some districts by allowing greater flexibility to assign existing teachers to meet the changing grade levels of their mandated bilingual programs.

- **Policy and Programmatic Impacts** (Please specify the proposal section associated with the impact)



By section, what is the impact of this proposal?

Sec 10-145h: Ensure proficiency in all languages of instruction, without unnecessary testing. Extend bilingual elementary certification to authorize educators to serve in in grades K-9; and bilingual middle grades certification endorsements to authorize educators to serve in grades 4-9. Create new endorsements that offer additional educators a less burdensome pathway to secondary bilingual certification, while maintaining content mastery standards.



Insert fully drafted bill here

- New language should be underlined
- Language to be removed should be in **[bold brackets]**

Sec. 10-145h. Requirements for certification as a bilingual education teacher.

(a) On and after July 1, 20[15]21, the State Board of Education shall require an applicant for certification as a bilingual education teacher to demonstrate written competency in English and written and oral competency in the other language of instruction as a condition of certification. Written competency in English shall be demonstrated by successful passage of the essential skills test approved by the State Board of Education, except that an earned degree at a regionally accredited college or university where the language of instruction is English may be accepted in lieu. Written competency in the other language shall be demonstrated on an examination, if available, of comparable difficulty as specified by the Department of Education, except that an earned degree at a regionally accredited college or university where the language of instruction is the other language requested may be accepted in lieu. If such an examination is not available, competency shall be demonstrated by an appropriate alternative method as specified by the department. Oral competency in the other language shall be demonstrated by an appropriate method specified by the Department of Education.

(b) On and after July 1, 2015, the State Board of Education shall require persons seeking to become (1) elementary level bilingual education teachers to meet coursework requirements in elementary education and bilingual education, and (2) secondary level bilingual education teachers to meet coursework requirements in both the subject area they will teach and in bilingual education. The State Board of Education may issue an endorsement in bilingual education to an applicant who has (A) completed coursework requirements in (i) elementary education and bilingual education, or (ii) the subject area they will teach and bilingual education, and (B) successful passage of examination requirements for bilingual education, as approved by the State Board of Education.

(c) On and after July 1, 2000, the State Board of Education shall require bilingual education teachers holding provisional educator certificates to meet the requirements of this subsection in order to qualify for a professional educator certificate to teach bilingual education. (1) Such bilingual education teachers who teach on the elementary level shall take fifteen credit hours in bilingual education and fifteen credit hours in language arts, reading and mathematics. (2) Such bilingual education teachers who teach on the middle or secondary level shall take fifteen credit hours in bilingual education and fifteen credit hours in the subject matter that they teach. Such professional educator certificate shall be valid for bilingual education and the grade level and content area of preparation.

(d) Certification in elementary bilingual education shall be valid for grades kindergarten to nine, inclusive, and middle grades bilingual education certification shall be valid for grades four to nine, inclusive.

(e) Not later than July 1, 2021, the Commissioner of Education shall approve guidelines for unique endorsements to authorize teaching secondary bilingual humanities and secondary bilingual STEM courses. (1) Certified bilingual educators who have completed at least 15 semester hours of



credit in combined content coursework in the humanities shall be eligible to teach secondary humanities courses in the bilingual program; certified bilingual teachers who have completed at least 15 semester hours of credit in combined content coursework in STEM fields shall be eligible to teach secondary STEM courses in the bilingual program. (2) Certified educators who have completed at least 15 semester hours of credit in combined content coursework in the humanities and the required coursework and testing for a bilingual endorsement shall be eligible to teach secondary humanities courses in the bilingual program; Certified educators who have completed at least 15 semester hours of credit in combined content coursework in the STEM fields and the required coursework and testing for a bilingual endorsement shall be eligible to teach secondary STEM courses in the bilingual program;

Required Agency Approvals

Shuana Tucker, Ph.D.
Chief Talent Officer

Date

*Note: For CTHSS, this should be Board Chair and Superintendent.

*Note: Forms must have both signatures to be reviewed by Legal Director for consideration.

Legal Director

Date