



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Series: 2019-2020
Circular Letter: C-1

TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Desi D. Nesmith, Interim Commissioner of Education *Desi Nesmith*

DATE: July 16, 2019

SUBJECT: Summary of Education-Related Legislation Enacted in the 2019 Regular Session of the Connecticut General Assembly

The Connecticut General Assembly has adjourned its 2019 Regular Session. The State Department of Education (SDE) is hereby providing you with a summary of the public acts passed during the regular session that appear to be of applicability and interest to school districts, and were signed by the Governor.

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

1. This document does not describe every 2019 Public Act affecting the operation of a school district or provide every detail of the summarized acts. This is a summary of new legislation that was being tracked by the Department, therefore, each superintendent or designated district leader should review the actual text of any act that may affect his or her district.
2. If you are viewing this document electronically, clicking the Public Act title appearing above each summary will allow you to view the full language of that act. Clicking the title of the act in the contents page will bring you to that section of the document.
3. The summaries are organized by Public Act number.
4. Following the table of contents 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, Chief of Staff and Legislative Liaison, at 860-713-6493 or laura.stefon@ct.gov.

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[An Act Establishing A Workforce Pipeline And Job Creation Task Force](#)

The bill establishes a workforce pipeline and job creation task force to study and prepare the state's future workforce for well-paying manufacturing and technical jobs located in Connecticut, and to study the availability and location of apprenticeships in Connecticut. The task force shall submit its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly's Labor and Public Employees Committee by January 1, 2020.

EFFECTIVE DATE: From Passage

[An Act Establishing A Task Force To Analyze The Implementation Of Laws Governing Dyslexia Instruction And Training](#)

The bill establishes a task force to analyze and make recommendations on the implementation of the laws governing dyslexia instruction and training in the State. The task force shall submit its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly's Education and Higher Education and Employment Committees by January 1, 2021.

EFFECTIVE DATE: From Passage

[An Act Concerning The Safe Storage Of Firearms In The Home And Firearm Safety Programs In Public Schools](#)

Sections 4 & 5 of the bill:

- 1) require the State Board of Education (SBE), within available appropriations, to develop guides to aid local and regional boards of education to develop firearm safety programs for public students in kindergarten through grade twelve; and
- 2) allow the SBE to consult with the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association when developing the guides.

The bill also allows local or regional boards of education to offer firearm safety programs to K-12 public school students. Current law allows the boards to offer such programs to public school students in kindergarten to grade eight. The law prohibits local or regional boards of education from requiring students to participate in a firearm safety program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

[An Act Concerning The Inclusion Of Black And Latino Studies In The Public School Curriculum](#)

This bill adds African-American and black studies and Puerto Rican and Latino studies to the required programs of study for public schools and requires all local and regional boards of education ("boards") to include these topics in their curriculum beginning with the 2021-22 school year. As with other courses required under existing law, the State Board of Education (SBE) must make curriculum materials available to help boards develop their instructional programs. The bill also requires SBE to review and approve, by January 1, 2021, a black and Latino studies high school course.

Under the bill:

- 1) the State Education Resource Center (SERC) must develop the course;
- 2) the SBE must make course curriculum material available;
- 3) the SBE must submit a description of the course and a report on its development to the General Assembly's Education Committee by January 15, 2021;
- 4) boards may offer the course beginning with the 2021-22 school year; and
- 5) boards must offer the course beginning with the 2022-23 school year.

For the school years 2022-23 to 2024-25, SDE must conduct an annual audit to ensure that the black and Latino studies course approved under the bill is being offered by each board of education. SDE must annually submit a report on the audit to the General Assembly's Education Committee.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019, except (1) the requirements that SBE approve, and SERC develop, the course are effective upon passage, and (2) the addition of African-American and black and Puerto Rican and Latino studies to the required courses of study is effective July 1, 2021.

[An Act Prohibiting The Sale Of Cigarettes, Tobacco Products, Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems And Vapor Products To Persons Under Age Twenty-One](#)

Section 17 of this bill makes changes to current statutory language regarding smoking within a school and on school property. This language makes it clear that the ban on smoking or vaping is not limited to only when school is in session or there is a school-related event.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2019

[An Act Concerning A Green Economy And Environmental Protection](#)

Sections 19 and 20 of the bill require the Office of Workforce Competitiveness, in consultation with the Office of Higher Education (OHE), the Department of Education (SDE), the Department of Labor (DOL), Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP), regional workforce development boards, and employers establish a career ladder for jobs in the green technology industry by January 1, 2020 and require the DOL and OHE to publish it on their websites.

Under the bill, the career ladder must list:

- 1) careers at each level of the green technology industry and the requisite level of education and salary offered for each career;
- 2) all course, certificate, and degree programs in green jobs offered by technical education and career schools within the Technical Education and Career System and higher education institutions in Connecticut; and
- 3) green technology industry jobs available in Connecticut.

The bill makes a corresponding change by requiring OHE and the DOL, by July 1, 2020, to publish the green jobs career ladder on their respective websites, instead of requiring OHE in consultation with the SDE to annually publish green jobs courses and degree and certificate programs offered by technical education and career schools and public higher education institutions on OHE's website.

The bill also requires OHE and DOL to each publish on their respective websites by July 1, 2020 an inventory of green jobs related equipment used by technical education and career schools and higher education institutions. Current law requires just OHE, in consultation with SDE, to publish such inventory on its website.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

[An Act Concerning School Security](#)

This bill requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to (1) in consultation with the State Department of Education (SDE), update state school security and safety plan standards, (2) simplify certain school security reporting requirements and school security infrastructure grant applications, and (3) develop criteria to identify qualified school security consultants and limit the existing registry to such individuals only. It also adds related duties for the SDE and the School Safety Infrastructure Council.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except the requirements concerning the school security consultants' registry are effective October 1, 2019.

[An Act Promoting Careers In Manufacturing To Public School Students And Establishing A Task Force To Study The Demand For Career And Technical Education Teachers](#)

This bill requires local and regional school boards, as part of the annual student success plans they must create for each student starting in grade six, to provide evidence of career exploration in each grade, including manufacturing careers. It requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to revise and issue guidance to school boards regarding these changes to student success plans. The bill also requires local and regional boards of education to develop career placement goals for students choosing not to pursue an advanced degree and include those goals in their statements of educational goals. The bill requires the SDE Commissioner to (1) study the demand for career and technical education teachers in the state's technical high schools, traditional public high schools, and community college advanced manufacturing technology centers, and (2) recommend ways to expand opportunities for experienced manufacturing professionals to become teachers.

The SDE Commissioner must (1) consult with the Office of Higher Education executive director and Technical Education and Career System board chairperson in conducting the study, and (2) by February 1, 2020, report their findings and recommendations to the General Assembly's Commerce Committee. Lastly, the bill explicitly authorizes guidance and school counselors to provide students with materials about manufacturing, military, and law enforcement careers when discussing career options.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019, except the study provision is effective upon passage.

[An Act Allowing Students To Apply Sunscreen Prior To Engaging In Outdoor Activities](#)

This bill allows students age six or older to possess and self-apply over-the-counter sunscreen in schools before outdoor activities, if the parent or guardian gave written authorization to the school nurse. The bill allows local and regional school boards to adopt policies and procedures they determine necessary to implement these provisions. If a board adopts such policies and procedures, a student's self-application of sunscreen must be in accordance with them.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

[An Act Concerning Veteran Enrollment In Certain Alternate Route To Certification Programs](#)

This bill requires existing alternate route to certification (ARC) programs to reserve 10% of available seats for veterans. Under the bill, a veteran is anyone honorably discharged, or released under honorable conditions, from active service in the U.S. Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, Air Force, or any reserve component, including the National Guard performing duty under Title 32 of the United States Code. The reserved seats in such approved programs that are not filled by veterans must be made available for all persons from an alternate profession as defined in the Act. The bill also makes technical changes to the statute. Under existing law, C.G.S. Section 10-145p, veterans applying to these programs must hold at least a bachelor's degree from an institution of higher education accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education, or that is regionally accredited.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

[An Act Concerning Guidelines For A Comprehensive School Counselor Program](#)

This bill requires the State Board of Education (SBE), in collaboration with a state-wide school counselors association, to adopt guidelines for a comprehensive school counseling program by July 1, 2020. The guidelines must ensure that all students have access to a comprehensive school counseling program that provides academic, social-emotional, and post-secondary and career-readiness programming by an adequately trained, certified school counselor. The SBE must make the guidelines available to local and regional boards of education and publish them on the State Department of Education's website.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

[An Act Establishing The Connecticut Apprenticeship And Education Committee](#)

This bill modifies the education commissioner's committee to coordinate education for public school students on manufacturing careers by:

1. renaming the committee the "Connecticut Apprenticeship and Education Committee;"
2. broadening the committee's scope to include consulting with and providing information on fields and industries beyond manufacturing, including insurance, health care, financial technology, biotechnology, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), construction trades, hospitality industries, and other appropriate industries;

3. modifying the committee’s membership to include the Connecticut Manufacturers Cooperative, principals and superintendents; and
4. modifying the information included in the committee’s required annual report to focus on pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training programs and workforce needs. The bill extends the first reporting date to July 1, 2020.

The bill makes corresponding changes to statutes requiring the (1) education commissioner to introduce students, families, and school counselors to careers in manufacturing, and (2) State Department of Education, in consultation with representatives from an expanded list of industries, to produce a best practices guide for school districts to use in the middle and high school curricula regarding trade/technical industries. The bill also makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

[An Act Concerning Minority Teacher Recruitment And Retention](#)

This bill requires the State Department of Education’s (SDE) Minority Teacher Recruitment Policy Oversight Council to develop and implement strategies and use existing resources to ensure that local and regional boards of education annually hire and employ at least 250 new minority teachers and administrators, of which at least thirty percent are men.

It also includes provisions related to:

- 1) expanding teacher certification reciprocity with other states;
- 2) mortgage assistance for teachers who graduated from a public high school in an educational reform district, or graduated from colleges and universities that traditionally serve minority students;
- 3) re-employment of retired teachers who graduated from colleges and universities that traditionally serve minority students;
- 4) flexibility in certain teacher certification requirements; and
- 5) removing subject-matter assessment requirements for teachers seeking to be recertified after their certification expires in certain cases.

It also makes conforming and technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019, except the annual minority hiring goal is effective upon passage.

[An Act Concerning A Two-Generational Initiative](#)

This bill makes several changes to the two-generational initiative to advance family economic self-sufficiency. Most notably, it replaces the initiative’s current advisory council with a board of similar composition, but which requires that parent or family leaders representing low-income households

selected by the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors constitute one-fourth of the board and provides for compensation for parent and family participants for time and travel related to board meetings and certain other activities. It also makes minor changes to the members' duties and the initiative's objectives and purpose.

The bill also makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

[An Act Concerning Various Revisions And Additions To The Education Statutes](#)

This bill makes changes to laws governing criminal history checks for school personnel. Specifically, it establishes separate but analogous criminal history check requirements, similar to those required under current law, for school personnel employed by "eligible school operators" and "nongovernmental school operators." These changes were necessary to bring state law into compliance with federal law, which treats public and non-public schools differently.

The bill also makes the following related changes, it:

- 1) creates separate criminal history check requirements for teacher preparation program participants fulfilling student teaching requirements in schools ("student teachers"), and requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to waive the fees for its criminal history records checks;
- 2) establishes separate criminal history check provisions for all other individuals performing services that cause them to have direct contact with students, replacing several other distinct classifications of school personnel (e.g., public assistance employment program workers and supplemental service providers); and
- 3) makes changes relating to the dissemination of criminal history results.

Additionally, the bill makes the following unrelated changes, it:

- 1) requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to study authorizing towns and cooperative arrangements to be considered a "local education agency" (LEA) for regional cooperation purposes;
- 2) requires SDE to update the comprehensive school health education component of the Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework by January 1, 2020, to include sexual harassment and assault, adolescent relationship abuse and intimate partner violence, and human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation;
- 3) increases the term limit for school governance council voting members from two to four terms; and
- 4) narrows the student expulsion criteria for conduct on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019, except the provisions relating to SDE’s cooperative arrangement study and health curriculum update take effect upon passage.

[An Act Concerning The Inclusion Of Instruction In Culturally Responsive Pedagogy And Practice In The Preservice Training, Professional Development And In-Service Training Provided To Teachers](#)

This bill changes the term “cultural competency” to “culturally responsive pedagogy and practice” in laws addressing required:

- 1) teacher preparation training;
- 2) special education coursework necessary to qualify for an initial educator certification; and
- 3) instruction in an Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) program.

It also adds culturally responsive pedagogy and practice to the teacher professional development and in-service training that boards of education are required to provide for their teachers. The bill does not define culturally responsive pedagogy and practice. The term has been interpreted in some settings to include understanding students' cultural references and including them in all aspects of learning.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

[An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2021, And Making Appropriations Therefor, And Provisions Related To Revenue And Other Items To Implement The State Budget](#)

**Please see the [Office of Legislative Research Report](#) for a full summary of this bill.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Various

[An Act Concerning An Exemption From The Licensing Requirements For Child Care Services](#)

The law exempts certain child care services from state licensing requirements if they are administered by a public school system, a municipality, or one of a number of organizations or arrangements specified in statute. The bill adds services provided by Leadership, Education, and Athletics in Partnership, Inc. (LEAP), a New Haven-based nonprofit youth development organization, to the list of exempted services. By law, all license-exempt child care programs must notify participating children’s parents or guardians that the program is not licensed by Office of Early Childhood.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

[An Act Concerning Computer Science Instruction In Public Schools](#)

This bill adds computer science to the list of subjects that must be taught in public schools. It makes computer programming a required component of computer science instruction, rather than a stand-alone instruction topic as under current law.

The bill also makes the following changes in teacher preparation and certification laws relating to computer science or subject shortage areas, it:

- 1) requires teacher preparation programs leading to include, as a part of the curriculum, computer science and instruction in information technology skills as applied to student learning and classroom instruction that are grade-level and subject area appropriate;
- 2) requires the Office of Higher Education (OHE), in consultation with the State Department of Education (SDE), to develop an Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) program for computer science teachers, which must include mentored apprenticeships and program admission criteria;
- 3) requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt regulations by July 1, 2020, that provide computer science teaching certification standards, which must (a) create a computer science endorsement, and (b) allow applicants to fulfill certification requirements by completing prescribed courses of study or other experience that SBE deems appropriate;
- 4) requires the SBE to approve and adopt, by January 1, 2020, a computer science subject area assessment for teacher certification;
- 5) requires the SBE, beginning July 1, 2020, to allow applicants for teacher certification in a subject shortage area who receive a “satisfactory” rather than “excellent” score on the subject area assessment to substitute the score for the subject area certification requirements in law;
- 6) requires the SBE, beginning July 1, 2020, to allow computer science certificate applicants or currently certified teachers in other subject areas seeking to teach computer science to substitute a satisfactory score on the assessment for the subject area certification requirements in law; and
- 7) establishes the “computer science education account” in the General Fund.

Additionally, the bill makes the following changes to laws relating to job training and placement in technological industries:

- 1) allows the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) to (a) develop by July 1, 2020, and within available appropriations, a model internship program to help Connecticut businesses provide college internships in the fields of technology and advanced manufacturing, and (b) make the model available on its website;
- 2) adds computer science to the list of training and job placement areas in the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission’s (CETC) statewide plan for implementing, expanding, or improving upon career certificate, middle college, early college high school, and Early College Opportunity programs; and
- 3) allows DECD to identify and coordinate state resources to meet the needs of industries with anticipated job growth areas, in consultation with other state agencies; and
- 4) requires that student success plans for public school students in grades 6 –12 consider career and academic choices in computer science, science, technology, engineering, and math.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019, except the provisions on (1) the new teacher preparation program curriculum take effect July 1, 2020, and (2) SBE's development of the computer science subject area assessment and DECD's coordination of state resources for industry talent needs take effect upon passage.

[An Act Concerning The Opportunity Gap](#)

The bill adds numeracy instruction, scientifically-based reading research and instruction, and support for chronically absent children to the areas of focus for the priority school district grant. Priority school districts must expend twenty percent of the priority school grant on scientifically-based reading research and instruction. If a priority school district does show accountability index improvement for school years 2018-2019 through 2020-2021 by March 1, 2022, as determined by the Commissioner of Education, the bill authorizes the development of a three-year plan for school years 2022-23 through 2024-2025 for expanding the priority school grant on numeracy instruction, scientifically-based reading instruction, and/or chronic absenteeism. Priority school districts that demonstrate improvement in the accountability index must submit a three-year expenditure proposal for school years 2022-23 through 2024-25 to the Commissioner of Education to include spending on programs and initiatives identified in the statute. The bill also requires priority school districts to conduct an annual program evaluation of how priority school district grant funds are spent to ensure such expenditures are in line with the grant proposal or plan.

Additionally, the bill requires the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) board of education (Board) to consider the prevalence of underrepresented populations in various trade areas and the workforce training needs of students and graduates from alliance districts and priority school districts in adding new trade programs to the CTECS's educational offerings. The bill requires the CTECS Board, in conjunction with the Department of Labor, to identify and develop a list of career in critical construction trades that are essential to the needs of the state by October 1, 2019. The CTECS Board is also required to develop a plan to create or expand existing programs to meet the identified needs by July 1, 2020, and must post the list and programs in critical construction trades offered by CTECS on the CTECS website.

[An Act Concerning Education Issues](#)

This bill makes the following unrelated changes in the education statutes:

- 1) repeals an expedited teacher tenure provision for teachers or administrators who were previously tenured in one district and subsequently transfer into a priority school district;
- 2) establishes a working group to study issues related to implementing the pre-service teacher performance assessment known as "edTPA," which was adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE) and requires the working group to issue a report with its findings and recommendations to the Education Committee by January 1, 2020; and
- 3) allows non-Sheff magnet schools that are not in compliance with the state's magnet enrollment requirements to remain eligible for the magnet school operating grants for FYs 20 and 21 if the school submits a compliance plan to the education commissioner and it is approved.

The bill also makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019, except the pre-service performance assessment working group provisions take effect upon passage.

[An Act Requiring The Provision Of Information Concerning Domestic Violence Services And Resources To Students, Parents And Guardians](#)

This bill requires the Judicial Branch's Office of Victim Services (OVS), in consultation with the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence, to (1) compile information on domestic violence victim services and resources, and (2) provide the information to the State Department of Education (SDE) by December 1, 2019.

The bill requires SDE to publish the information it receives from OVS on its website by January 1, 2020. It also requires (1) OVS to review the information annually and inform SDE of any necessary revisions, and (2) SDE to revise the information on that basis.

Under the bill, SDE must also disseminate the above information to local and regional school boards each school year starting with the 2020-2021 school year. Each school board must in turn require that the information be provided to any (1) student or student's parent or guardian who expresses to a school employee that the student, parent, guardian, or a person residing in the home does not feel safe because of domestic violence, and (2) student's parent or guardian who authorizes the transfer of his or her education records to another school.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

[An Act Concerning Workforce Development](#)

Current law requires each technical education and career school director to meet with business community members in the school's geographic area to develop a plan to assess workforce needs and modify the school's curriculum to address the needs. This bill replaces the term "director" with "principal" and requires the principals to also meet with representatives from electric, gas, water, and wastewater utilities and state colleges and universities offering public utility management courses to access the community's and utilities' workforce needs and modify the curriculum accordingly.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2019

[An Act Concerning School Climates](#)

This bill makes numerous changes to the laws related to school bullying and safe school climate. Principally, it:

1. establishes a 33-member social and emotional learning and school climate advisory collaborative and tasks it with, among other things, developing a biennial state-wide school climate survey, model positive school climate policy, and student suicide risk assessment;
2. requires the State Department of Education (SDE), by August 1, 2021, to publish on its website the model policy and school climate survey the collaborative develops;

3. modifies the definition of bullying by, among other things, eliminating the requirement that the action occur between students;
4. (a) specifies that schools, when they contact parents and guardians whose children have been involved in bullying, must let the parents know the results of the investigation into the incident and (b) requires the schools to also notify the parents or guardians that they may refer to information on the board of education's website about rights and remedies under school law;
5. requires boards of education to publish such information in plain language on their websites by June 30, 2021; and
6. requires boards of education, in consultation with the collaborative and SDE, to provide on the department website certain training materials for school administrators regarding bullying prevention and intervention.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019, except the provisions related to the collaborative are effective upon passage.

[An Act Concerning In-State Student Status For Spouses And Children Of Certain Members Of The Armed Forces](#)

By law, members of the armed forces stationed in the state, and their spouses and dependents (i.e., unemancipated) children, are entitled to in-state student classification for tuition purposes at UConn, the Connecticut State Universities, the community colleges, and Charter Oak State College.

This bill allows the spouses and unemancipated children residing in the state to maintain their in-state student classification if the service member is transferred out of state on military orders after the student has been accepted for matriculation in a degree-granting program. By law, "reside" means continuous and permanent physical presence within the state (temporary absences for short periods do not affect the establishment of residence).

The law, unchanged by the bill, allows an unemancipated child to maintain in-state student classification if he or she had already started college and continues, as a full-time student, to pursue the degree for which he or she was enrolled at the time his or her parent (i.e. the service member) transferred out of state.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2019

[An Act Concerning The Inclusion Of Additional Time Devoted To Undirected Play To The Regular School Day](#)

This bill expressly allows local or regional boards of education to offer an additional amount of time for undirected play in public elementary schools beyond current law's required minimum of 20 minutes of daily physical exercise.

It also requires boards of education to adopt a policy, by October 1, 2019, to address any school employee who prevents an elementary school student from participating in the period of undirected play as a form of discipline during the regular school day. The law, unchanged by the bill, requires such a policy for employees who prevent an elementary school student from participating in the required period of physical activity as a form of discipline.

Additionally, the bill establishes a nine-member task force to study the issues relating to, and the feasibility of, including time devoted to undirected play during the regular school day in public elementary schools. It requires the task force to report its findings and recommendations to the Education Committee by January 1, 2020. The task force must terminate on the date it submits its report or January 1, 2020, whichever is later.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

[An Act Concerning Homeless Students' Access To Education](#)

Existing law establishes an appeals process when students are denied access to school accommodations, including transportation, to attend a local or regional public school.

This bill:

1. adds unaccompanied youth to existing law's appeals process, generally requiring boards of education to notify students of hearings and decisions;
2. modifies the burden of proof in cases where the child is claiming to be homeless/unaccompanied; and
3. establishes additional steps that boards must take in the case of a homeless child/unaccompanied youth.

The bill uses the definition of "unaccompanied youth" from federal law, which includes a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian (42 USC § 11434a).

As with the existing law regarding cases of questioned residency and school accommodation for other types of students, the bill specifically permits unaccompanied and homeless youth to continue attending or be allowed to enroll in the school of their choice while the appeals process takes place.

The bill also makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

[An Act Concerning The Provision Of Special Education](#)

This bill makes changes in education statutes relating to special education and nondiscrimination as summarized below. Among the changes, the bill does the following, it:

- 1) designates responsibility for providing services and paying costs for students with 504 plans;

- 2) prohibits boards of education from disciplining, suspending, terminating, or otherwise punishing their employees for making special education recommendations in planning and placement team (PPT) meetings;
- 3) modifies the requirements for the language and communication plans to be offered to students who are deaf or hard of hearing;
- 4) requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to establish a working group to study language skills assessment for students identified as deaf, hard of hearing or both blind or visually impaired and deaf;
- 5) requires various state entities to address “emergency communication plans” in the school safety guidance they issue to school districts and requires school districts to revise school security and safety plans for each school to include provisions relating to emergency communications plans;
- 6) requires the SDE to establish a working group to study language skills assessment for students whose primary disability is identified as deaf or hard of hearing or both blind or visually impaired and deaf;
- 7) establishes a working group to study issues related to student transitions between Birth to Three and kindergarten special education services;
- 8) requires local or regional boards of education to electronically notify parents or guardians if their child has been identified as gifted and talented;
- 9) requires SDE’s Individual Education Program (IEP) Advisory Council to study the authorization of private therapists to provide special education and related services directly to students at school during the regular school day; and
- 10) requires any private special education provider that has a contract with a local or regional board of education to inform the board about certain complaints against the provider.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019, except the provisions relating to school security and safety emergency communications plans, the Birth to Three working group, and the study of private therapist authorization take effect upon passage.

[An Act Concerning Municipal And Regional Opportunities And Efficiencies](#)

This bill modifies the membership of the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations and revises the date by which the Commission shall report to the General Assembly on state mandates and the potential impact on local governments during the prior legislative session, and also requires the Commission to make such report to municipal chief elected officials.

The bill also authorizes the Secretary of OPM to review each municipality’s and regional school district’s annual audit report and report findings after the review regarding corrective action to the Municipal Finance Advisory Board, the Auditors of Public Accounts, and the municipal chief executive officer/district superintendent if the audits were not done properly or reveal irregularities. The municipality or district must explain the findings and submit a plan to take corrective action. The bill

also authorizes the Secretary to identify a financially distressed municipality earlier and refer them to the Municipal Finance Advisory Council if the municipality has not been previously referred to the Commission. The referral is based upon the evaluation of certain fiscal indicators, including a low, negative, or declining fund balance, operating deficits, repetitive use of tax or bond anticipation notes to maintain cash flow, or a low bond rating.

The bill also authorizes two or more municipalities to jointly perform any function that they could perform separately, regardless of any charter, special act, home rule ordinance, local law or other statutory provision that may prevent two or more municipalities from entering into an agreement to join in the performance of certain services.

The bill provides that for any municipality referred to the Municipal Accountability Review Board (MARB) on or after January 1, 2018, the MARB shall have the same opportunity and authority to approve or reject collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) or amendments to existing CBAs negotiated pursuant to the Municipal Employee Relations Act (MERA) as the legislative body of the municipality. To effectuate this provision, boards of education must submit to the MARB proposed CBAs or amendments negotiated under MERA no later than fourteen days after any such agreement is reached. The MARB shall act upon such CBAs no later than thirty days after submission.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

[An Act Concerning The Establishment Of A Firm Graduation Date](#)

Under current law, a local or regional board of education must wait until at least April 1 to set a firm high school graduation date that provides at least 180 days of school (i.e., the minimum required number of days). Prior to April 1, the board may set a firm graduation date no earlier than the 185th day noted in the school calendar the board adopted for that year.

The bill allows a board to establish, at any time in the school year, a firm graduation date no earlier than the 180th day of the board-adopted school calendar for that year.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019