



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Series: 2023-2024
Circular Letter: C-1

TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Commissioner of Education

DATE: August 15, 2023

SUBJECT: Summary of Education-Related Legislation Enacted in the 2023 Regular Session

The Connecticut General Assembly has adjourned its 2023 Regular Session. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is hereby providing you with a summary of the public acts passed during the regular session, and signed by the Governor, that appear to be of applicability and interest to school districts.

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

1. This document does not describe every 2023 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 their district.
2. If you are viewing this document electronically, clicking the title of the act in the table of contents page will bring you to that section of the document; clicking the title appearing above each summary in the body of this report will allow you to view the full language of that act.
3. The summaries are organized by bill number.
4. Following the table of contents is a summary of each enacted bill. In some cases where only portions of a public act relate to K-12 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.

2023 Public Acts Affecting Education

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SB 1, An Act Concerning Transparency in Education

PA 23-167

This Public Act makes various changes to the state education laws. **Please note, HB 5003 made several revisions to sections of this Act. Please review that summary for a list of changes.

**Please see the [Office of Fiscal Analysis Report](#) for a complete summarization of this Act.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Various

SB 2, An Act Concerning the Mental, Physical and Emotional Wellness of Children

PA 23-101

§§ 7-8 — MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS DAY – The Public Act requires employers to allow service workers, as that term is defined in the law, to use accrued paid sick leave for a “mental health wellness day” to attend to their emotional or psychological well-being. Existing law already allows service workers to use paid sick leave for their, or their spouse’s or child’s, (1) illness, injury, or health condition; (2) medical diagnosis, care, or treatment of a physical or mental illness, injury, or health condition; or (3) preventive care. The Act applies to specified service worker occupations covered by existing law (e.g., certain food, health care, hospitality, retail, and sanitation industry workers).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2023

§ 9 — MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT FOR SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENTS – The Act requires the DSS commissioner, to the extent allowed under federal law, to provide Medicaid reimbursement for suicide risk assessments and other mental health evaluations and services provided at a school-based health center or public school. Under the law, the commissioner must also (1) amend the Medicaid state plan if necessary to provide the reimbursement and (2) set the reimbursement at a level that ensures an adequate pool of providers to provide the assessments, evaluations, and services.

§ 17 — SERVICES FOR AT-RISK TEENAGE STUDENTS – For FY 24, the Act requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to award a grant to, and collaborate with, a nonprofit organization specializing in identifying and providing services for at-risk teenage students with depression, anxiety, substance abuse struggles, and trauma and conflict-related stresses. The organization must use the grant to train school behavioral health providers to provide them services. The law allows SDE, within available appropriations, to hire one full-time employee who is responsible for implementing the Act’s provisions.

§ 20 — PLAY-BASED LEARNING – The Act requires each school board to provide play-based learning during the instructional time of each regular school day for students in kindergarten and preschool. The play-based learning must (1) be incorporated and integrated into daily practice; (2) allow for the students’ needs to be met through free play, guided play, and games; and (3) predominantly not involve using mobile electronic devices.

Additionally, the law requires each school board to permit a teacher to use play-based learning during the instructional time of a regular school day for students in grades one to five, inclusive. The play-based learning may be incorporated and integrated into daily practice, and, as with kindergarten and preschool, must (1) allow for the students’ needs to be met through free play, guided play, and games and (2) predominantly not involve using mobile electronic devices.

Under the Act, “play-based learning” means a pedagogical approach that emphasizes play in promoting learning and includes developmentally appropriate strategies that can be integrated with existing learning standards. It does not mean time spent in recess or as part of a physical education course or instruction.

The Act requires that any play-based learning comply with a student’s individualized education program under special education law or an accommodation plan under Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Under the law, a school employee may only prevent or otherwise restrict a student’s participation in play-based learning if it is in accord with the school board’s policy addressing recess restrictions as a form of discipline.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

SB 9, An Act Concerning Health and Wellness for Connecticut Residents

PA 23-97

§ 7 — SDE HEALTH CARE CAREER PROMOTION – Existing law required the Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS), in consultation with various stakeholders, to develop a plan to work with high schools in the state to encourage students to pursue high demand health care professions (e.g., nursing and behavioral and mental health care).

The Act requires the education commissioner, in collaboration with the chief workforce officer, to use this plan in (1) promoting health care professions as career options to middle and high school students and (2) health care job shadowing and internship experiences for high school students.

The commissioner must promote these professions through (1) career day presentations; (2) developing partnerships with in-state health care career education programs; and (3) creating counseling programs to inform high school students about, and recruit them for, health care professions.

By September 1, 2023, the education commissioner must (1) provide the OWS plan to each local and regional school board and (2) through the Governor’s Workforce Council Education Committee, support the plan’s implementation.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 38 — HEALTH CARE MAGNET SCHOOL STUDY – The Act requires the education commissioner, in consultation with the labor and DPH commissioners, to study the feasibility of creating an interdistrict magnet school program to educate and train students interested in health care professions. This must include pathways for students to (1) graduate with a certification, license, or registration allowing them to practice in a health care field and (2) complete a curriculum designed to prepare them for pre-medicine or nursing higher education programs. By February 1, 2024, the education commissioner must report on the study to the Public Health Committee.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

SB 1165, An Act Concerning Financial Literacy Instruction

PA 23-21

This Act adds a half-credit of personal financial management and financial literacy to the high school graduation requirements beginning with the graduating class of 2027. The Act also adds personal financial management and financial literacy to the state's required program of instruction for public schools. It also makes completion of a one-credit, mastery-based diploma assessment (i.e., a "capstone") an optional, rather than mandatory, graduation requirement at each board of education's discretion. By law, a school board cannot grant a high school diploma unless the student has completed at least 25 credits total. By making the completion of one-credit capstone a local option and allowing students to fulfill the half-credit financial literacy requirement either as a humanities credit or as an elective credit, the law reduces the state prescribed credit requirements from 22 to 21 credits, thereby increasing the potential credits available for electives to a range of three to four. (The exact number of elective credits depends upon the (1) local decision to require a capstone and (2) student's decision to count financial literacy towards the humanities requirement or as an elective.)

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023.

HB 5001, An Act Concerning Resources and Support Services for Persons with An Intellectual or Developmental Disability

PA 23-137

This bill makes various changes to the laws pertaining to persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

**Please see the [Office of Fiscal Analysis Report](#) for a complete summarization of this law.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Various

HB 5003, An Act Concerning Certain Revisions to the Education Statutes

PA 23-208

§ 1 - Changes a provision in HB 6880, as amended by House "A" (PA 23-159), related to the process by which a child under the age of five (5) can start public school.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§ 2 - Requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to develop a report on the effectiveness of the Alliance District program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 3 - Strikes a provision of SB 1, as amended by Senate "A," (PA 23-167). This eliminates a requirement that Alliance Districts must establish a Family Resource Center (FRC) in each elementary school. The amendment removes this cost to Alliance Districts, which would have varied among districts based on the number of such schools that lacked an FRC and the level of services provided by each new FRC. This Section additionally retains current law regarding the use of Alliance District funding.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 4 – Requires every Alliance District to submit a report to the SDE on the costs associated with implementing an FRC at each elementary school.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 5 – Changes the timing of a provision in SB 1, as amended by Senate “A” (PA 23-167), that lowers the amount of Alliance District funding that must be used for minority teacher recruitment.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 6 - Delays costs, from FY 24 to FY 25, of a provision of SB 1, as amended by Senate "A" (PA 23-167). The provision requires SDE to provide grants beginning in FY 24 to two (2) districts designated as Alliance Districts that choose to provide or enhance a pathways to technology early college high school program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 7 - Increases the cost of fully funding the Priority School District grant and precludes revenue losses to certain school districts by specifying that certain districts will receive the same funding in FY 24 as they received in FY 23. This grant is proportionately reduced if the appropriation is insufficient to fully fund.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§§ 9 & 10 – Make changes regarding what must be included in a memorandum of understanding regarding a school resource officer and the reporting requirements of school resource officers.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

[HB 5917, An Act Implementing the Recommendations of The Vision Zero Council](#)

PA 23-116

§ 3 — The Act requires the Department of Transportation (DOT), in consultation with the State Board of Education (SBE) and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), to award an exemplary “Vision Zero” program distinction to local and regional boards of education offering programs that give students in grades six (6) to twelve (12) opportunities to learn about the importance of practicing safe driving habits, pedestrian safety skills, and the Vision Zero Council’s mission. These opportunities may include classes, extracurricular activities, presentations, symposiums, peer-to-peer education, parent involvement, and parenting education and outreach. The DOT must award this distinction upon a school board’s request, which a board may submit by providing the DOT with details about its program at a time and in the way the DOT prescribes. The DOT must also make information about the distinction available on its website.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

HB 6642, An Act Concerning a Title IX Compliance Toolkit for School Districts

PA 23-66

This Act requires the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity (CWCSEO) to convene and lead a working group to identify or develop a Title IX compliance toolkit for use by local and regional boards of education, students, and their parents and guardians.¹ Under the Act, each local and regional board of education must annually, (1) beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, implement the toolkit in their efforts to prevent, identify, and respond to reports of child sexual abuse, harassment, and discrimination, and (2) beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, submit a report to the SDE on their Title IX compliance.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

HB 6762, An Act Concerning Early Childhood Education, An Audit of the State-Wide Mastery Examination, the Establishment of the Connecticut Civics Education and Media Literacy Task Force, the Provision of Special Education, and a Bill of Rights for Multilingual Learner Students

PA 23-150

Several sections of this Public Act pertain to local and regional boards of education and/or the CSDE, including but not limited to:

§ 5 — STATEWIDE MASTERY TEST AUDIT - The Public Act requires the education commissioner, by January 1, 2025, and within available appropriations, to audit state and local testing requirements and administration. The commissioner must submit a report on the audit to the Appropriations and Education committees by this date. The audit must focus on the following: 1. the statewide mastery examination (see Background) and local standardized assessments used to monitor student and district academic progress and achievement; 2. the amount of time devoted to student preparation or educator instruction for the statewide mastery exam and the local assessments, including the amount of time taken away from regular instruction; and 3. recommendations about any limitations on the amount of time that may be devoted to administering these exams and assessments. Additionally, the Public Act specifies that if there is a federal grant that will pay for the audit, then the Commissioner shall apply for such grant and shall ensure that the audit complies with the requirements in the cited federal statutes. (20 U.S.C. §§ 6361 to -6363).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§§ 6 & 7 — CIVICS AND MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION - The Public Act creates the 18-member Connecticut Civics Education, Civics Engagement, and Media Literacy Task Force (“task force”) to study and develop strategies to improve and promote “civic engagement,” which the Public Act defines as participation in improving a community’s quality of life and developing the knowledge and skills to enable this participation. The task force must study and develop strategies to improve instruction on civics, citizenship, media literacy, and American government. Under the Public Act, (1) “civics” is the study of citizens’ rights and obligations and (2) “media literacy” is the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and participate with media in all forms by understanding the media’s role in society and building inquiry and self-expression skills that are essential to participating and collaborating in a democratic

¹ Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex-based discrimination in education programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance.

society. Specifically, the task force’s study must at least include the following: 1. reviewing existing state and national curricula and standards, classroom practices, and high school and college graduation requirements to identify and publicize best practices in instruction on civics, citizenship, media literacy, and American government; 2. receiving recommendations from educators, administrators, government entities, nongovernmental organizations, and the public; 3. reviewing existing civics, citizenship, media literacy, and American government educational opportunities provided throughout Connecticut by governmental and nongovernmental entities and organizations; and 4. exploring the feasibility of establishing public and private partnerships to fund, coordinate, promote, and support enhancements to engagement and instruction.

Required Program of Instruction (§ 7) - Beginning in the 2025-26 school year, the Public Act requires public schools to add to their social studies program of instruction the topics of civics and media literacy. By law, public schools must offer courses of study in the arts; language arts; mathematics; physical education; science; social studies, including citizenship, economics, geography, government, and history. Also included are career education; consumer education; and health and safety.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except the provisions adding civics and media literacy to the required public school program of instruction (§ 7) take effect on July 1, 2025.

§ 9 EXCLUDING PANDEMIC RELIEF FUNDS FROM GRANT CALCULATIONS - By law, boards of education may receive reimbursement for excess special education costs, within available appropriations. The Excess Cost-Student Based grant provides state support for special education placements and selected regular education placements. The initial threshold for which a student is eligible for the Excess Cost grant is referred to as the "basic contributions". For placements initiated by a state agency, e.g., the Department of Children and Families, the basic contribution (or local share) is equal to the prior year’s Net Current Expenditures Per Pupil (NCEP). For local placements or students educated within the district the basic contribution is equal to the prior year’s NCEP x 4.5. Certain state agency placements are subject to 100 percent state funding. The Excess Cost grant is computed twice during the year: February and May.

Beginning in FY 24, the Public Act prohibits SDE from including federal COVID-19 relief funds when calculating a board’s NCEP for determining the amount of these special education grants. Specifically, SDE must exclude from the calculation any funds received by a board under the following federal acts: the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (P.L. 116-136); the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act (P.L. 116-260); and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) (P.L. 117-2).

§ 12 — REMOTE LEARNING USING DUAL INSTRUCTION - Existing law allows local and regional boards of education to authorize remote learning, limited by various conditions, for grades (1) 9-12 in the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years and (2) kindergarten through 12 in the 2024-25 school year and after. “Remote learning” is instruction using one or more internet-based software platforms as part of a remote learning model. Current law prohibits boards that authorize remote learning from providing dual instruction as part of such remote learning (or instruction). “Dual instruction” is simultaneous instruction by a teacher to students in-person in the classroom and students engaged in remote learning. The Public Act adds two exceptions to this prohibition. First, it allows dual instruction when required in, or necessary to implement, a student’s individualized education program (IEP) or 504 plan. Second, the Public Act allows dual instruction when part of an intradistrict or interdistrict cooperative learning program that provides remote learning opportunities to students present in a classroom on

school grounds during a regular school day. Also, the program must be implemented under an agreement between each local or regional board of education and the exclusive bargaining unit representatives for the certified employees chosen to participate in the cooperative learning program. **PLEASE NOTE: This amendment to Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-4w delineates the permissible parameters of remote learning, including the codification of the two exceptions to the dual instruction prohibition that were set forth in the CSDE’s September 27, 2022 Guidance. As such, that Guidance is superseded by Section 10-4w, as amended, and the CSDE considers the September 27, 2022, Guidance to be of no further force or effect.**

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 15 — SPECIAL EDUCATION COMPLAINTS FILED WITH SDE - Beginning July 1, 2023, the Public Act requires SDE to post on its website summaries of the (1) complaints filed with the department about a board of education’s or other entity’s provision of special education and related services to a student and (2) corrective actions required by the department. Before posting these decisions and documents online, SDE must redact any personally identifiable student information.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 16 — 504 PLANS AND SCHOOL EMPLOYEES - The Public Act prohibits local or regional boards of education from disciplining, suspending, terminating, or punishing any school employee who discusses or makes recommendations about the services or accommodations for a student’s 504 plan during any meeting held to discuss the plan. The prohibition extends to the following employees: 1. teachers and substitute teachers; 2. school administrators and superintendents; 3. guidance counselors, school counselors, psychologists, and social workers; nurses, physicians, school paraprofessionals, or coaches employed by a local or regional board of education or working in a public elementary, middle, or high school; or 5. any other people who, in performing their duties, (a) have regular contact with students and (b) provide services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public elementary, middle, or high school, under a contract with the school board. Under existing law, similar protections apply to planning and placement team members, birth-to-three services coordinators, and certain qualified personnel.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§§ 17 & 18 — MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS’ BILL OF RIGHTS Changes the term - This Public Act changes the term in education law for a student whose primary language is not English from “English learner” to “multilingual learner.” It defines “multilingual learner” using the federal definition of “English learner,” which means an individual who meets the following criteria:

1. is aged 3 through 21;
2. is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school;
3. either (a) was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English; (b) is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas, and comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or (c) is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and

4. whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual (a) the ability to meet the challenging state academic standards, (b) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English, or (c) the opportunity to participate fully in society (20 U.S.C. § 7801).

The Public Act also requires SBE to draft a written bill of rights for parents or guardians of multilingual learner (ML) students to guarantee that their rights are safeguarded and protected when bilingual education is provided as required under state law. Under the Public Act, the bill of rights must include declarations of 15 rights on topics including (1) attending school regardless of the student’s or the parent/guardian’s immigration status, (2) having translation services provided by the school district, and (3) participating in a bilingual education program as prescribed by state law. Most of these rights are already provided either in a U.S. Supreme Court ruling (see Background) or a state law or regulation. Beginning with the 2024-25 school year, the Public Act requires each local and regional board of education (i.e., “school board”) that provides bilingual education or English as a new language to (1) give the parents and guardians of eligible students a copy of the bill of rights in the parents’ and guardians’ dominant language and (2) make the bill of rights available on its website.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

[HB 6846, An Act Concerning a Study of the Effectiveness of the Implementation of Crisis Response Drills in Public Schools and Their Effect On Children’s Mental Health](#)

SA 23-31

The Public Act requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), in consultation with the State Department of Education (SDE), to evaluate the effectiveness of the Public Act’s provisions on the number and implementation of both fire drills and crisis response drills. DESPP must report its findings and any recommendations for legislation to the Education Committee by January 1, 2025.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

[HB 6880, An Act Concerning Teachers and Paraeducators](#)

PA 23-159

§ 1 — LIMITATIONS ON USE OF EDTPA - Retroactive to July 1, 2022, the Public Act requires that the state’s teacher preservice performance assessment, edTPA, can only be used as an accountability measure for teacher preparation programs and bars the State Board of Education (SBE) from using edTPA assessment results to deny an application for an initial educator certificate. In 2016, SBE approved a resolution that required all teacher preparation programs in the state, whether at four-year institutions or alternate route to certification programs, to require satisfactory completion of edTPA by all teacher candidates in order to complete a teacher preparation program.

By law, unchanged by the Public Act, SBE must grant an initial educator certificate to any applicant who (1) holds a bachelor’s degree or an advanced degree from an accredited institution of higher education; (2) has completed (a) a teacher preparation program approved by SBE or the appropriate governing body in another state or (b) an alternate route to certification program approved by SBE or the appropriate governing body in another state, and satisfies the requirements for either a temporary 90-

day certificate or a resident teacher certificate, both of which are short-term certificates; and (3) satisfies the special education coursework requirement (CGS § 10-145b). These requirements do not consider the results of the edTPA assessment.

The Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity created edTPA and Pearson Assessments, Inc., scores and administers it across the country. It generally costs applicants \$300.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 2 — CEASE-AND-DESIST ORDERS FOR PROHIBITED PRACTICES - The Public Act allows the State Board of Labor Relations (SBLR) to issue a cease-and-desist order for certain violations of the teachers collective bargaining law (e.g., refusal to negotiate in good faith or retaliating against a complainant). Under the Public Act, when an alleged prohibited practice or breach of duty is ongoing, the SBLR may order the party committing the act or practice to cease and desist from doing it until the board makes a determination on the matter.

Currently, SBLR may only issue a cease-and-desist order after holding a hearing on the complaint and making a determination that the party complained of engaged or is engaging in a prohibitive practice.

By law, boards of education (i.e., “school board”) and an employees’ representative organization (i.e., “union”) can file complaints about prohibited practice violations with the SBLR. Certified teachers and other certified employees may also file complaints about a breach of the duty of fair representation.

Initially, an agent investigates the complaint and may or may not issue a report charging there has been a prohibited practice. And if it does, SBLR must hold a hearing on the matter. Even if the agent’s report recommends dismissing the complaint, or the agent does not make a report or issue a complaint; the SBLR can still choose to hold a hearing.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 3 — RAISING THE KINDERGARTEN STARTING AGE - Current law requires children to be at least five years old by January of the school year in order to enroll in public school. Beginning in the 2024 school year, the Public Act instead requires the child turn five by September 1st of the school year in order to enroll in public school. Section 1 of HB 5003 also addresses the kindergarten start age and a mechanism by which parents can seek to enroll a child who does not turn 5 by September 1st.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§§ 4 & 5 — PLAY-BASED LEARNING DURING PRESCHOOL, KINDERGARTEN, AND GRADES ONE TO FIVE - The Public Act requires each school board to provide play-based learning during the instructional time of each regular school day for students in kindergarten and preschool. The play-based learning must (1) be incorporated and integrated into daily practice; (2) allow for the students’ needs to be met through free play, guided play, and games; and (3) not involve, predominantly, using mobile electronic devices.

Additionally, it requires each school board to allow a teacher to use play-based learning during the instructional time of a regular school day for students in grades one to five, inclusive. The play-based learning may be incorporated and integrated into daily practice, and, as with kindergarten and

preschool, must (1) allow for the students' needs to be met through free play, guided play, and games and (2) predominantly not involve using mobile electronic devices.

Under the Public Act "play-based learning" means a teaching approach that emphasizes play in promoting learning and includes developmentally appropriate strategies that can be integrated with existing learning standards. It does not mean time spent in recess or as part of a physical education course or instruction.

The Public Act requires that any play-based learning comply with a student's individualized education program under special education law or an accommodation plan under Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

A school employee may only prevent or otherwise restrict a student's participation in play-based learning if it is in accord with the school board's policy addressing recess restrictions as a form of discipline.

Additionally, the Public Act adds play-based learning to educator professional development beginning July 1, 2024. Under current law, educator professional development must include a number of specific topics including refining and improving various effective teaching methods that are shared between and among educators. The Public Act adds that this must include play-based learning, as defined in the Public Act, for those teaching preschool or in grades kindergarten through five.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024, except the professional development provision is effective July 1, 2023.

§§ 6-7 — EXIT SURVEY FOR TEACHERS LEAVING THE PROFESSION AND TEACHER ATTRITION RATES - The Public Act requires each school board, by January 1, 2024, to develop an exit survey to be completed by a teacher who is employed by the board and voluntarily ceases employment with that board. The survey must include questions addressing (1) why the teacher is ceasing employment, (2) whether the teacher is leaving the profession, (3) the teacher's demographics, and (4) the subject areas the teacher taught.

The Public Act also requires school boards to add teacher attrition rates and the exit survey results to the existing strategic school profile report that school districts submit to SDE each year. The profile already includes information such as student performance, student needs, school resources and resource usage, and student discipline. SDE publishes the reports on its website.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§§ 10 & 11 — PARAEDUCATOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - By law, local and regional boards of education must make available an annual, free professional development program of at least 18 hours to any paraeducators they employ. Beginning in the 2023-24 school year, the Public Act prohibits trainings that are otherwise mandated (e.g., training on blood-borne pathogens, sexual harassment, or Department of Children and Families' policies and procedures) from being part of the 18 hours.

Additionally, the Public Act requires SDE to collaborate with the School Paraeducator Advisory Council to develop or update guidance and best practices for paraeducator professional development programs, which SDE must distribute to each board of education. By law, the School Paraeducator Advisory Council advises the education commissioner on professional development, staffing strategies, and other relevant issues relating to paraprofessionals (CGS § 10-155k).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 11 — PARAEDUCATOR PDEC MEMBERSHIP - By law, each local and regional board of education must form a professional development and evaluation committee (PDEC) to (1) participate in developing or adopting the district’s teacher evaluation and support program and (2) develop, evaluate, and annually update the district’s comprehensive local professional development plan for certified employees.

Under current law, a PDEC’s members must be teachers, administrators, and other personnel the board finds appropriate. The Public Act adds at least one paraeducator, chosen by any exclusive bargaining representative for paraeducators, to the required PDEC membership.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 12 — IEP REVIEW BY PARAPROFESSIONALS - By law, school paraprofessionals, or any other paraprofessional providing special education or related services to a student, must be allowed to view a student’s individualized education program (IEP). The Public Act adds the requirement that these paraprofessionals review the IEP with a supervisor, as needed.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 13 — CERTIFICATE ENDORSEMENTS FOR PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN TEACHING

Elementary Endorsements

By law and unchanged by the Public Act, if a person holds an elementary education endorsement to teach grades one through six, and that endorsement was issued on or after July 1, 2017, then the education commissioner may allow that person to teach kindergarten for one school year. The superintendent for the employing school district must request this permission.

Current law prohibits the commissioner from granting the endorsement holder a second year to teach kindergarten unless the person demonstrates enrollment in a program to meet the requirements for the appropriate kindergarten endorsement. The Public Act allows the employing superintendent to request that the commissioner grant the endorsement holder a second year of kindergarten teaching and removes the requirement that the holder demonstrate kindergarten endorsement program enrollment.

Comprehensive Special Education Endorsements

Under current law, anyone who holds a teaching certificate with an endorsement to teach comprehensive special education in grades one through 12 may extend the endorsement to grades kindergarten through 12 if the applicant has earned a satisfactory score on either the SBE-approved reading instruction exam or a comparable reading instruction exam with minimum standards that are equivalent to the SBE-approved one.

Under the Public Act, anyone who holds this endorsement for grades one through 12 may extend it to grades prekindergarten through 12 if they meet the above reading instruction exam score requirements.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 15 — ADJUNCT ARTS INSTRUCTOR PERMIT - By law, SBE may issue part-time adjunct instructor permits to applicants with specialized training, experience, or expertise in the arts if an employing board of education or regional educational service center requests it. The permit authorizes its holder to teach art, music, dance, theater, or any subject related to the holder’s artistic specialty for up to 15 hours per week in certain magnet schools.

Current law requires applicants for this permit to hold a bachelor’s degree from an institution that is regionally accredited or accredited by the Office of Higher Education (OHE) or the Board of Regents for Higher Education. The Public Act expands this educational requirement to allow applicants with an academic degree that is higher than a bachelor’s to hold the permit. By law and unchanged by the Public Act, applicants must also meet certain work experience requirements.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 16 — STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCE BY DISTRICT REFERENCE GROUP (DRG) - SDE created DRGs to group districts with similar needs and socioeconomic characteristics, based on factors including family income, parental education and occupation, family structure, poverty, language spoken at home, and district enrollment. (CSDE no longer uses this classification system.) DRGs were labeled “A” through “I,” with “A” being the most affluent districts and “I” being the least affluent.

By law, teacher preparation program participants must complete a clinical, field, or student teaching experience in a classroom during four semesters. The Public Act removes the requirement that this experience occur in two school districts from certain categories of district reference groups (DRGs).

The Public Act removes the requirement that program participants complete one student teaching experience in a school district from DRG groups “A” through “E” and another in a district from DRG groups “F” through “I.” The Public Act also removes the requirement that any cooperating teacher who is part of the student teaching experience must have earned a performance evaluation designation of “exemplary” or “proficient” in the prior school year to serve as a mentor to student teachers.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 17 — INTEGRATED AND CROSS ENDORSEMENTS - SDE issues endorsements to teachers who hold initial, provisional, or professional level teacher certification. These endorsements are added to the certificate to signify expertise in a subject area. SDE refers to additional endorsements received in other subject areas as cross endorsements.

Beginning on July 1, 2023, the Public Act allows SDE, in cooperation with Office of Higher Education, to authorize the following new endorsements: (1) Integrated Early Childhood/Special Education Birth-Kindergarten, (2) Integrated Early Childhood/Elementary Education N-3, and (3) Special Education N-K. The Public Act specifies that the second and third endorsements listed above are to be added as a cross endorsement as a replacement for requiring full planned program and institutional recommendation.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 18 — SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS - The Public Act allows local or regional boards of education to employ a substitute teacher for up to 60 days without obtaining an SDE-issued substitute authorization. By law

and unchanged by the Public Act, anyone employed as a substitute teacher must hold a bachelor's degree (which the education commissioner may waive for good cause) and be on a list of substitute teachers maintained by the employing board.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 19 — PURCHASING TEACHER RETIREMENT CREDIT - The law allows Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) members to purchase retirement credit for certain service outside the system, such as public school teaching in another state or in a United States Department of Defense school for military dependents. Such purchases allow the TRS members to build additional credit toward their retirement provided the service the purchase is based on is not used for a retirement benefit of another governmental pension system other than Social Security. TRS members are generally all certified public school teachers and administrators in the state with some additional groups added by statute.

In most cases, these purchases are limited to a total of 10 years, but service as a public school teacher in another state is exempt from this limit. The law allows for the purchase of retirement credit for service at the State Education Resource Center (SERC) before July 1, 2007. The Public Act makes the SERC service and the out-of-state teaching service, combined, exempt from the 10-year limit. The credit must be paid for at the present value of the full actuarial cost.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§§ 20 & 21 — ADDITIONS TO THE TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM - By law, teachers employed at a "public school," as defined in state law, may participate in the TRS. The Public Act expands the definition of "public school" to include any interdistrict magnet school that is operated by (1) a private higher education institution's board of governors or (2) an SDE approved, third-party nonprofit corporation, so long as the magnet school is classified as a public school by the Teachers' Retirement Board (TRB).

The Public Act also requires the TRB to (1) classify as public schools all schools operated by Goodwin University Magnet Schools, Inc. and Goodwin University Educational Services, Inc. and (2) admit each teacher employed at them.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 22 — TENURE AND ACCUMULATED SICK LEAVE - State law maintains a teacher's tenure and accumulated sick leave in the event the school district in which the teacher works joins a regional school district. The law requires that this change is not deemed an interruption of continuous employment, so tenure and accumulated sick leave is preserved.

The Public Act modifies this to include when a teacher with these accumulated rights who works for a school district or a regional school district begins working for a new regional school district. As with existing law, the teacher must work for a school district or regional school district during the school year immediately before, or within which, the new regional district is established and such teacher continues as an employee of the new regional district.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§§ 23-27 — TEACHER PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS - By law, each public school district’s superintendent must annually evaluate each teacher or have each teacher be evaluated. This refers to each professional board of education employee, below the rank of superintendent, who holds an SBE-issued certificate or permit. The superintendent may conduct formative (i.e., continuous diagnostic) evaluations to be used to produce an annual summative (i.e., final) evaluation.

This Public Act makes various changes in the teacher evaluation laws, including requiring the SBE to adopt revised program guidelines that use new (1) student indicators and assessment methods and (2) teacher feedback mechanisms. Local and regional boards of education are required to adopt revised teacher evaluation programs for the school year commencing July 1, 2024. The Public Act maintains the option for boards of education to adopt SBE’s model teacher evaluation and support program, but it requires the SBE to ensure that its model program aligns with the revised guidelines. The Public Act also removes obsolete language, including references to a now obsolete teacher evaluation and support pilot program and a UConn study of the pilot program. It also makes other technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

**HB 6882, An Act Concerning Education Mandate Relief and Other Technical and Assorted Revisions
and Additions to the Education and Early Childhood Education Statutes**

PA 23-160

§ 2 — IN-SERVICE VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND SEIZURE RESPONSE TRAINING - The bill requires the in-service training on school violence prevention, which boards of education must annually provide to teachers, administrators, and other certified school employees, be aligned with the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) school security and safety plan standards.

It also requires in-service trainings for the same groups of employees to include emergency responses to students who have seizures in school. This training must include (1) the recognition of the signs and symptoms of seizures; (2) appropriate steps for seizure first aid; (3) information about student seizure action plans; and (4) for those authorized to administer medication under state law, the administration of seizure rescue medication or prescribed electrical stimulation using a Vagus Nerve Stimulator magnet.

The bill also requires boards to allow paraeducators and other noncertified employees to voluntarily participate in its in-service training program. Currently, the board can decide whether to allow these noncertified employees or paraprofessionals to attend.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 3 — ACCESS TO CURRICULUM - The bill requires local and regional boards of education to make all curriculum approved by their school district curriculum committee, as well as all associated curriculum materials, available to parents and guardians under the requirements of the federal Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA). PPRA, in part, gives parents and guardians the right to inspect instructional material used by the school district as part of their student’s educational curriculum (excluding academic tests and assessments) (20 U.S.C. § 1232h).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 4 — ACCESS TO ADULT EDUCATION - Current law allows a mother under age 17 to request permission from the local or regional board of education to attend adult education classes. The bill extends eligibility to any parent under age 17. By law and unchanged by the act, a majority vote of present board members is required to assign the requesting student to adult education.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 5 — ELIGIBILITY FOR STATEWIDE REMOTE LEARNING SCHOOL - Under current law, SDE must develop a plan to create and implement a statewide remote learning school for grades kindergarten to 12. When making the plan, the department must estimate the number of Connecticut students who may be eligible to enroll. The bill defines an “Eligible student” as a student who resides in Connecticut but is unable to attend school in-person due to a (1) medical diagnosis, including a psychological or physical condition or restriction, or (2) medical exemption to required immunizations, documented by the child’s health care provider.

The bill also extends the deadline for submitting the plan, draft requests for proposals, and any legislation recommendations from July 1, 2023, to January 1, 2024. By law, SDE must submit these items to the General Assembly’s joint standing Appropriations and Education committees.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 6 — BOARD MEETING AGENDA AND DOCUMENT POSTING - The bill requires each local or regional board of education conducting a regular or special board meeting to make available for public inspection (1) the meeting agenda or (2) any associated documents that board members may review at the meeting. The board must also post these items on its website. The bill’s requirements appear to be in addition to those of the Freedom of Information Act.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 8 — SUPPORT FOR AFTER-SCHOOL GRANT RECIPIENTS - By law, SDE may administer an after-school grant program to support programs for students in grades kindergarten through 12 offering educational, enrichment, and recreational activities for children and that have a parent involvement component. Local and regional boards of education, municipalities, and nonprofit organizations are eligible recipients (CGS § 10-16x(a)).

Current law requires SDE to give after-school grant recipients technical assistance, evaluation, program monitoring, professional development, and accreditation support. The bill now instead requires the department to collaborate with regional educational service centers (RESCs) to support grant recipients by doing the following: 1. monitoring and evaluating programs and activities, 2. Conducting a comprehensive evaluation of programs’ effectiveness and implementing risk assessments, 3. providing technical assistance and training to eligible applicants, and 4. ensuring program activities are aligned with state academic standards. The bill also allows SDE to increase the percentage of appropriated grant funds it retains, from 4% to 7.5%, for administrative support.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 10 — FREE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS IN SCHOOL RESTROOMS - By law, each local and regional board of education must provide free menstrual products in the following areas that are accessible to students in

grades 3-12: women’s restrooms, all-gender restrooms, and at least one men’s restroom. The bill delays the deadline by which boards must begin providing these products by one year, moving it from September 1, 2023, to September 1, 2024.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 29 — MAGNET SCHOOL ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS AND REVISING REDUCED ISOLATION STANDARDS - The bill makes permanent the requirements that a magnet school’s total enrollment (1) have no more than 75% of students from one school district and (2) meets the reduced isolation setting (i.e., desegregation) standards developed by the education commissioner. These requirements were set to expire after the 2023-2024 school year. It also extends the law barring the commissioner from awarding grants to magnet schools that do not comply with these enrollment standards. This ban was set to expire after the 2022-2023 school year and the bill extends it to the 2024-2025 school year.

The bill leaves unchanged an exception that allows the commissioner to award a grant for an additional year or years to a noncompliant school if the Commissioner finds it appropriate and approves a plan to bring the school into compliance with the residency and reduced isolation setting standards as existing law requires. (Reduced-isolation standards consider the racial composition of the school’s student body.)

§ 32 – provides that the Commissioner of Education shall revise as necessary reduced-isolation enrollment standards for interdistrict magnet school programs which the commissioner was required to develop not later than July 1, 2017. These standards shall comply with the decision in *Sheff v. O’Neill*, 238 Conn. 1 (1996) or any related stipulation or order in effect for an interdistrict magnet school program located in the Sheff region. The requirements of existing law are largely unchanged. These requirements set minimum criteria for the commissioner to use in setting the reduced isolation standards, including (1) at least 20% of a magnet school’s enrollment must be reduced isolation students and (2) a school’s enrollment may have up to 1% below the minimum percentage, if the commissioner approves a plan for the school to reach the 20% minimum or the percent the commissioner established in the standards. It also requires the commissioner to define “reduced isolation student.” The bill authorizes the commissioner to revise as necessary the alternative reduced-isolation enrollment percentages for the 2018-2019 school year. Those percentages expired in 2019, so it is unclear if this has any legal effect.)

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 31 — REINSTATES BAN ON MAGNET SCHOOL TUITION - The bill reinstates for the school year commencing July 1, 2023 the prohibition on local or regional boards of education operating Sheff K-12 magnet schools from charging tuition for any student enrolled in a preschool program or in kindergarten to grade twelve in an interdistrict magnet school operated by the school district. The ban had expired after the 2018-19 school year (although in practice, none of these schools had begun charging tuition). Sheff magnet schools are schools operating under the *Sheff v. O’Neill* state Supreme Court decision and related stipulations and orders.

The bill, as under existing law, includes an exception that allows the Hartford school district to charge tuition for any student enrolled in the Great Path Academy, which it operates in Manchester.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 33 — GRANTS TO ASSIST SHEFF PROGRAMS - The bill allows the commissioner, in order to assist the state in meeting its Sheff desegregation obligations, to award grants from funds appropriated for the Sheff settlement for academic and social student support programs to the following voluntary interdistrict programs: (1) magnet schools, (2) the Open Choice program, (3) the interdistrict cooperative program, and (4) the state technical education and career high schools. By law, unchanged by the bill, the commissioner can transfer Sheff money for grants for unspecified purposes for the same programs, also including grants to state charter schools.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 39 — SMART START COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM - The bill removes the FY 24 sunset date (i.e., June 30, 2024) for the smart start competitive grant to provide funds for capital and operating expenses for school districts to expand or establish preschool programs. The bill makes the program permanent with no end date.

Under current law, the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) commissioner must prioritize school boards (1) that demonstrate the greatest need to establish or expand a preschool program and (2) whose plan allocates (a) at least 60% of the spaces in the preschool program to children who are members of families at or below 75% of the state median income or (b) 50% of the spaces to children who are eligible for free and reduced price lunches (FRPL). The bill eliminates the option for the commissioner to give priority to boards based on allocation of spaces to children eligible for free and reduced price lunch (FRPL).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 42 — PUBLIC SCHOOL OPERATOR DEFINITION FOR INSURANCE PURPOSES - Current law allows a school board or a municipality to join together with other school boards or municipalities through a written agreement to form a single entity in order to provide medical or health care benefits for their employees.

The bill expands what kinds of entities can participate by allowing “public school operators” to be part of these agreements. It defines “public school operator” as a local or regional board of education, a regional educational service center, the governing council of a state or local charter school, or an operator of an interdistrict magnet school program, as described in law.

The bill makes a conforming change to specify that before a municipality or a public school operator may enter into such an agreement, the legislative body of a municipality shall approve such an agreement where (1) there is an existing arrangement between a municipality and a public school operator for the provision of medical care benefits to the employees of both the municipality and the public school operator or (2) a municipality and the public school operator have separate plans for their respective employees and both plans are paid for by the general fund of the municipality.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§§ 43 & 44 — CHARTER SCHOOLS AND THE EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS OF THE STATE - By law, charter schools are required to follow all federal and state laws governing public schools, with limited exceptions. The bill explicitly provides that the educational interests of the state as described in

Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-4a apply to charter schools. It also allows complaints to be brought to SBE in situations where a resident or a parent alleges the failure or inability of a charter school to implement the educational interests of the state. This complaint provision currently applies to local and regional boards of education.

Educational Interests of the State include, but are not limited to the concern of the state that:

1. each child must have equal opportunity to receive a suitable program of educational experiences as prescribed in law;
2. each school district must finance, at a reasonable level and at least, as appropriate, equal to the minimum budget requirement required by state law, an educational program designed to provide suitable educational experiences;
3. each school districts shall provide educational opportunities for its students to interact with students and teachers from other racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds and may provide these opportunities with students from other communities, and
4. the mandates in the general statutes pertaining to education within the jurisdiction of the State Board of Education are implemented.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

[HB 6941 An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2025, and Making Appropriations Therefor, and Provisions Related to Revenue and Other Items Implementing the State Budget](#)
PA 23-204

This bill makes various changes to the state budget.

**Please see the [Office of Fiscal Analysis Report](#) for a complete summarization of this bill.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Various