
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 1034 (File 664, as amended by Senate "A")*

AN ACT CONCERNING MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.

SUMMARY

This bill creates the minority candidate certification, retention, or residency year program administered by the State Department of Education (SDE) and under the supervision of a regional educational service center (RESC) or a private, non-profit certification program (i.e., operators). It also requires each school district designated as an alliance district to partner with an operator of a residency program to enroll minority candidates and place them in the district for their 10-month residency. Alliance districts are the 33 lowest performing school districts based on the district's accountability index score (see BACKGROUND).

Under the bill "minority" means individuals whose race is defined as other than white, or whose ethnicity is defined as Hispanic or Latino as used by the U.S. Census Bureau. "Minority candidate" means a person who is a minority and is employed as a school paraprofessional or an associate instructor with a local or regional board of education.

It requires SDE to (1) withhold from each alliance district 10% of any increase in alliance aid and (2) use the funds for grant payments to cover costs related to the residency program.

The bill allows non-alliance districts to participate in the residency program.

It also:

1. requires the education commissioner and officials from UConn and the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) to develop a plan together to assist boards of education in

- promoting teaching as a career option to high school students (§ 3);
2. requires SDE, in consultation with other groups, to develop and make available a video training module that addresses implicit bias for school district personnel involved in, or responsible for, hiring teachers (§ 4);
 3. requires school district employees involved in the teacher hiring process to complete a video training module on implicit bias and anti-bias in the hiring process (§ 5);
 4. adds the video training module to the culturally responsive pedagogy and practice training (§ 6);
 5. requires SDE to study and report to the Education Committee on a multiple-measures approach to demonstrating content-area mastery for the content-area assessment required for teacher certification (§ 501); and
 6. requires that the high school course in Black and Latino studies, which under current law must be offered in the 2022-2023 school year, also be offered in each following school year.

The bill also makes conforming changes.

*Senate Amendment "A" adds the provisions requiring (1) SDE to study and report on a multiple-measures approach to demonstrating content-area mastery for teacher certification (§ 501) and (2) that the high school course in Black and Latino studies be offered in each school year beyond 2022-2023 (§ 502).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2021, except where otherwise indicated.

§§ 1 & 2 — MINORITY CANDIDATE CERTIFICATION, RETENTION AND RESIDENCY YEAR PROGRAM

State and Local Responsibilities

The bill requires, for FY 2022, and each subsequent year, SDE to administer the minority candidate certification, retention, or residency

year program to assist (1) minority candidates in enrolling in a residency program for purposes of becoming full-time, certified teachers upon successful completion of the program, and (2) local and regional boards of education in hiring and retaining the minority candidates.

Under the bill, the “residency program” is a State Board of Education (SBE)-approved certification program in which participants serve in (1) a position that otherwise would require professional certification and (2) a full-time position for 10 school months at a board of education under the supervision of (a) a certified administrator or teacher and (b) a supervisor from the regional educational service center (RESC) or a private, nonprofit teacher or administrator operating the certification program. By law, the SBE approves teacher preparation programs and alternate route to certification (ARC) programs. Also, there is a law that allows school support staff to obtain a teacher certification through an ARC program that includes a one-year residency, but that law is not specific to alliance districts or minority candidates (CGS 10-145b(a)).

The bill also requires each board of education for an alliance district to partner, beginning with FY 2022 and in each year after, with an operator of a residency program in order to enroll minority candidates and place them in the school district as part of the residency program.

Reserving Funding for the Residency Program

By law, an alliance district must submit a plan to SDE for approval before SDE will release the district’s alliance funding. The plan must detail how it intends to use its alliance funding and how this will increase student achievement. Alliance funds are a portion of the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funds that alliance districts receive every year.

Under the bill, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, and each subsequent year, the education commissioner must withhold from an alliance district 10% of any increase in funds that the district receives for that fiscal year over the amount that it received for FY 20. The

department must use the funds to make a payment to the alliance district and the district must expend the money for the residency program costs described in the bill.

Allowed Uses of Residency Grants

A participating board may apply to the education commissioner, at a time and in a manner the commissioner prescribes, to receive a payment as established in the bill to cover specified costs. The payments made or grants awarded under the bill may be used for costs associated with the:

1. enrollment of minority candidates in a residency program,
2. certification process for the minority candidates,
3. hiring of the minority candidates following the successful completion of a residency program, or
4. retention of minority candidates as certified employees of the school district.

The bill prevents any unexpended funds paid or awarded to a board of education under the bill from lapsing at the end of the fiscal year. These funds must be carried over and be available to spend for implementing the bill's purposes during the next fiscal year.

Potential Hires

The bill authorizes a board of education to hire a minority candidate who has successfully completed the residency program.

Non-Alliance School Districts May Participate

Beginning with FY 2022, the bill allows non-alliance districts to partner with a residency program operator to enroll minority candidates and place them in the school district as part of the residency program. Following a minority candidate's successful completion of the residency program, the participating board may hire the minority candidate.

The board may apply to the education commissioner, at a time and

in a manner the commissioner determines, to receive a grant for any of the allowed costs described in the bill. The commissioner may, within available appropriations, award a grant to a non-alliance board of education for any of the allowed costs.

Program Guidelines

The bill requires SDE to develop guidelines and criteria for the implementation of the minority candidate certification, retention, or residency year program and the administration of the related funds.

Education Commissioner to Release Alliance Funds

Under the alliance district law, the education commissioner may only release alliance funding if it will be expended in accordance with (1) the school district's alliance plan, (2) the law requiring the funding only be spent for educational purposes and not to supplant local education dollars, and (3) any SBE guidelines regarding these funds. The bill allows the funds to also be released in accordance with the bill's residency program.

§ 3 — PLAN TO PROMOTE TEACHING AS A CAREER

The bill requires the education commissioner, the CSCU president, and UConn's Neag School of Education dean to jointly develop a plan to assist boards of education in promoting the teaching profession as a career option to high school students. The plan must include a way for local and regional boards of education to develop partnerships with educator preparation programs in the state, and the creation of counseling programs for high school students to inform them about, and recruit them to, the teaching profession. (The bill does not include a deadline for plan completion.)

It also requires that by September 1, 2021, SDE must distribute to boards of education information that promotes the teaching profession, including materials relating to educator preparation programs and alternative route to certification programs offered in the state, for school counselors and students. SDE must also make this information available on its website.

§§ 4-6 — IMPLICIT BIAS AND ANTI-BIAS TRAINING VIDEO MODULE

The bill requires SDE, in consultation with the Minority Teacher Recruitment Policy Oversight Council and the State Education Resource Center, to develop and make available the video training module for school district personnel involved in, or responsible for, hiring teachers. The training module must focus on implicit bias and anti-bias in the hiring process and be developed and available by July 1, 2022. For each school year beginning with the one starting on July 1, 2023, the bill requires any local board of education employee who is involved in, or responsible for, hiring teachers in the school district to complete this training before participating in the teacher hiring process.

The bill also adds the video training module to the required in-service training program that school districts must offer for teachers. It is included as part of the culturally responsive pedagogy and practice training that is part of a statutory list of possible training topics.

§ 501 — STUDY OF MULTIPLE MEASURES TO DEMONSTRATE CONTENT MASTERY FOR TEACHER CERTIFICATION

The bill requires SDE to study a multiple-measures approach to demonstrate content-area mastery of the content-area assessment requirement for teacher certification. The study must at least include (1) a review of current assessment requirements for educator certification, (2) candidate first-time pass rates, (3) best attempt pass rates, (4) candidate access to and use of the free-retake policy, and (4) alternative multiple-measure pathways to demonstrate content-area mastery for certification.

By January 1, 2023, SDE must submit a report on its findings and any recommendations to the Education Committee.

§ 502 — BLACK AND LATINO STUDIES COURSE

The bill requires the high school course in Black and Latino studies, which under current law must be offered in the 2022-2023 school year, to also be offered in each following school year. The bill also specifies

that the course offered must be the one approved by the State Board of Education under the law that required the course.

BACKGROUND

Accountability Index Scores

The “accountability index” for a school district or an individual school means the score resulting from multiple weighted measures that (1) include the mastery test scores (i.e., performance index) and, if appropriate, high school graduation rates, and (2) may include academic growth over time, attendance and chronic absenteeism, postsecondary education and career readiness, enrollment in and graduation from institutions of higher education and postsecondary education programs, civics and arts education, and physical fitness (CGS § 10-223e(a)).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference - APP
Yea 38 Nay 0 (03/29/2021)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable
Yea 50 Nay 0 (04/21/2021)