
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 427

AN ACT CONCERNING THE EXPANSION OF THE OPEN CHOICE PROGRAM AND CREATION OF THE STATE TEACHER SHORTAGE AND RETENTION TASK FORCE.

SUMMARY

Beginning with the 2022-23 school year, this bill makes Guilford public schools eligible to participate in the Open Choice Program as a receiving and sending district paired with New Haven public schools. Although Guilford and New Haven are currently served by different Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs), generally, as part of the program, students only attend public schools in the same RESC region.

Open Choice is a voluntary interdistrict attendance program that allows students from large urban districts to attend suburban schools and vice versa on a space-available basis. Its purpose is to reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation; improve academic achievement; and provide public school choice. In consultation with RESCs, receiving districts determine whether they will participate in the program and how many seats they will make available to students.

The bill also creates the state teacher shortage and retention task force and makes it responsible for reporting on recommendations that address, among other things, (1) teacher attrition and retention, (2) teacher shortages across subject matter disciplines, and (3) issues relating to equity and diversity.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2022, except the task force provision is effective upon passage.

STATE TEACHER SHORTAGE AND RETENTION TASK FORCE

The bill creates the state teacher shortage and retention task force and requires it to develop a comprehensive report with recommendations addressing (1) teacher attrition rates and retention, (2) teacher shortages

across subject matter disciplines, (3) the impact of retention and shortages on financially distressed school districts, and (4) streamlining teacher certification without diminishing standards or the professional value of a teaching certificate.

In developing the report, the task force must (1) address issues relating to equity, diversity, and inclusion and (2) examine strategies other states use to address teacher shortages and to attract and retain teachers.

The task force must submit its report to the Education and Children's committees by January 4, 2023. The task force terminates on that date or when it submits its report, whichever is later.

Membership and Appointments

The 17-member task force consists of the following members:

1. two appointed by the House speaker who are certified teachers for grades 6 to 12, one each recommended by the (a) Connecticut Education Association and (b) American Federation of Teachers-Connecticut;
2. two appointed by the Senate president pro tempore who are certified teachers teaching in grades kindergarten to five, one each recommended by the (a) Connecticut Education Association and (b) American Federation of Teachers-Connecticut;
3. one appointed by the House majority leader who is a certified teacher in a priority school district and recommended by the Connecticut Education Association;
4. one appointed by the Senate majority leader who is a certified teacher in a priority school district and recommended by the American Federation of Teachers-Connecticut;
5. one appointed by the House minority leader who is a certified administrator and recommended by the Connecticut Association of Schools;

6. one appointed by the Senate minority leader who is a certified administrator serving as the principal of a school located in a priority school district and recommended by the Connecticut Association of Schools;
7. one appointed by the Education Committee's House chairperson who is a certified teacher and is serving as a member of the Minority Teacher Recruitment Policy Oversight Council;
8. one appointed by the Education Committee's Senate chairperson who is a certified teacher and is serving, or has served, as a member of the minority teacher recruitment task force;
9. one appointed jointly by the Education Committee's House and Senate ranking members who is a faculty member at a Connecticut higher education institution and has expertise in teacher recruitment strategies and is recommended by the Connecticut chapter of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education;
10. the education commissioner or her designee;
11. the Teachers' Retirement Board's chief administrator or her designee; and
12. four gubernatorial appointments, (a) one who is a State Board of Education member, (b) one who is a Technical Education and Career System board member, and (c) two who represent the Connecticut Association for Public School Superintendents.

Appointing authorities must make their appointments within 30 days after the bill's passage and fill any vacancies. The House speaker and Senate president pro tempore must select the chairpersons from among the task force's membership. The chairpersons must schedule the first meeting within 60 days after the bill's passage.

The Education Committee's administrative staff serve as the task force's administrative staff.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference - APP

Yea 39 Nay 0 (03/25/2022)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 50 Nay 0 (04/07/2022)