

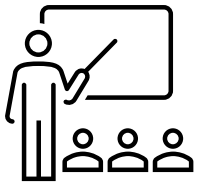


Teacher Shortage

Does Connecticut Have a Public School Teacher Shortage?

While for years the state has had certain teacher shortage subject areas (e.g., special education, world languages, math, and science), the shortage in the state and around the country has worsened since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. In August 2022, the State Department of Education (SDE) conducted a staffing [survey](#) of all school districts (and approved private special education providers) in the state and found 1,221 teaching vacancies and another 1,322 paraprofessional vacancies going into the start of the school year (Connecticut has [approximately 42,278](#) general education and special education teachers). Further, it found that 25% of all teaching vacancies were in special education and 20% were in either math or science. Additionally, the state's 36 Alliance Districts (the current 33 lowest-performing districts as measured by the performance index, plus three districts that were formerly in the lowest group) have a disproportionate share – 71% – of the vacancies. More than 70% of school districts responded to the survey.

Is it a National Problem?



National surveys show that the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified longstanding teacher shortages. For example, a National Center for Education Statistics [survey](#) released in March found that 44% of public schools reported at least one full- or part-time teaching vacancy as of January. It also found that of schools with at least one vacancy, 61% of them specifically identified the pandemic as a cause of increasing teaching and non-teaching vacancies. Resignation was reported as the leading cause of vacancies (51%), followed by retirement (21%).

Furthermore, recent news articles ([here](#) and [here](#)) spotlight how pandemic-related disruptions have amplified the long-simmering labor shortage in teaching and related support positions in school districts around the country.

What is the State Doing About the Situation?

The state has certain longstanding methods to address teacher shortages, such as long- and short-term substitute teacher authorizations and [durational shortage area permits](#), each of which allow for classroom help from staff who

are not fully certified when certified candidates cannot be found. But in recent years the legislature and SDE have added several new tools to help address the situation.

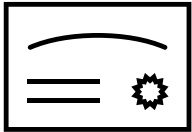
For example, SDE has streamlined the process to hire daily substitute teachers who do not have a bachelor's degree. By [law](#), substitutes must hold a bachelor's degree, but the law also gives the commissioner discretion to waive the requirement. SDE has established a new [online method](#) for districts to request a waiver for daily substitutes.



Additionally, the State Board of Education has approved the issuance of four [emergency educator certificates](#) to allow those who already hold a certificate to teach outside their normal subject area. For example, a teacher with a certification and endorsement to teach high school social studies can, upon the employing school district's request, get an Emergency Generalist, 7-12, certificate that allows that teacher to teach all high school academic subject areas (excluding special education and bilingual endorsements). SDE reports that

118 emergency certifications have been issued for the 2022-23 school year between July 1 and November 7, 2022.

Does Connecticut Have Teacher Licensing Reciprocity With Other States?



In April 2022, SDE announced a new enhanced [teacher certification reciprocity program](#) with 13 jurisdictions. Under the program, SDE has granted 804 certifications and subject endorsements to 561 educators between April 18 and

November 7, 2022. The program includes Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia.

Through the program, authorized by [PA 19-74](#), § 2, out-of-state educators can obtain a Connecticut educator certificate if they hold a valid out-of-state certificate that is at least equivalent to Connecticut's initial educator certificate. After receiving an application, including a copy of their certificate, SDE's certification bureau can recognize a valid out-of-state certificate for teaching, special services, or administration and grant at least a three-year initial educator certificate. There is some additional review for administration and integrated early childhood/special education certificates.

Teacher Loan Refinance and Scholarship Programs

Through [PA 21-62](#) the legislature created the Alliance District Teacher Subsidy Loan Program to help refinance part of the student debt of teachers who are employed in one of Connecticut's Alliance Districts.

The law required the Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority (CHESLA), in partnership with SDE, to create the teacher loan subsidy program. The [program](#), subject to available funds, offers a 3% interest rate subsidy on existing private student loan debt that is refinanced. Interest rates for the refinance loans range from 0.75% to 2.49%, including the 3% subsidy. Refinance loans can range from \$5,000 to \$25,000.

Teachers receive the 3% rate subsidy provided they continue to teach in an Alliance District and maintain their educator certification.

CHESLA and SDE launched the program on July 12, 2022, and as of August 31, 2022, 52 applications have been submitted and 22 were approved.

Learn
More

"Acts Affecting Education," OLR Report [2022-R-0132](#)

"Minority Teacher Recruitment Legislation," OLR Report [2022-R-0055](#)

[Teacher Shortage Areas](#), State Department of Education

["The Outlook is Bad for School Hiring This Fall,"](#) Education Week

