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## OLR Bill Analysis

### sHB 5436 (as amended by House "A")\*

#### **AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION.**

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*Simplifies the steps required to receive an initial educator certification for those going through an ARC program; prohibits granting any new provisional educator certificates (the middle level of three educator certificates) and makes the initial certification valid for 10 years; establishes new criteria for a professional educator certificate (the highest of the three current certificate levels) including permitting an alternate pathway to professional licensure instead of the master's degree requirement*

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*Requires the council to advise the SDE commissioner, rather than the governor and SBE; adds to the subjects for which the council must provide advice (e.g., equitable distribution of teachers); eliminates a requirement that the council advise on teacher preparation and certification and review and comment on certain regulations and standards*

**§ 10 — CREATION OF THE CONNECTICUT EDUCATOR PREPARATION AND CERTIFICATION BOARD (CEPCB)**

*Creates the new 16-member CEPCB and charges it with modernizing and aligning educator preparation and certification to attract and retain diverse professionals into teaching, and developing proposals for regulations or legislation relating to educator preparation and certification; requires the board to submit its first annual report to the Education Committee by January 1, 2026*

**§ 11 — CEPCB AND SBE CONSIDER AND APPROVE OR REJECT EACH OTHER’S PROPOSALS**

*Gives CEPCB and SBE each the authority to develop standards and proposals (i.e., “proposals”) for regulations and legislation relating to educator preparation and certification; requires each board to consider the proposals of the other board*

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*Requires CEPCB to develop review criteria for educator preparation and ARC programs*

**§ 15 — EDTPA**

*Beginning July 1, 2024, bans SBE from requiring teacher preparation programs to use edTPA for certain purposes; as of the same date, bans teacher preparation programs from using edTPA scores to prevent a student from completing their program*

**§§ 16 & 17 — TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL AND TRADE OCCUPATIONS EDUCATOR CERTIFICATIONS**

*Creates and specifies requirements for new occupational subject and trade and industrial occupations educator certifications; allows for interim certifications under certain conditions*

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*Changes the terms “school paraprofessional,” “paraprofessional,” and “paraprofessional teacher aide” to “paraeducator” in various education-related statutes*

§ 23 — NOTICE REQUIREMENTS BEFORE SPECIAL EDUCATION PLANNING AND PLACEMENT MEETINGS

*Requires the notice school boards must give parents, guardians, or students before a special education planning and placement team meeting to include the rights the law provides them at these meetings*

§ 39 — GOVERNOR’S WORKFORCE COUNCIL

*Adds a certified teacher to the council’s membership*

§§ 40 & 48 — PRELIMINARY INQUIRIES BY MANDATED REPORTERS

*Specifies that (1) the mandated reporter law does not prohibit mandated reporters from making a preliminary inquiry to determine if reasonable cause exists for a report and (2) this inquiry is not an abuse or neglect investigation by a school board*

§§ 40, 42-45 & 47 — MANDATED REPORTERS MINOR AND TECHNICAL CHANGES

*Adds students in nonpublic schools to the list of students for whom the school employee-specific mandated reporter provisions apply; reorganizes certain provisions on penalties for failing to make a report so that they appear in one statute rather than in two separate statutes*

§ 41 — IMMUNITY FROM LIABILITY

*Extends immunity from criminal or civil liability to persons, institutions, and agencies that, in good faith, do not make a report*

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*Requires the DCF commissioner to assess mandated reporters’ failure to report within timeframes required by law, rather than investigate delayed reports as current law requires*

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*Excludes, from the information that must be disclosed by school employment applicants’ previous employers, information about a substantiated abuse or neglect or sexual misconduct allegation if the substantiation was reversed in an appeal to DCF*

§ 49 — DCF TRAINING

*Requires DCF to update its training program and refresher training for school employees*

§ 50 — ASPIRING EDUCATORS DIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

*Makes the scholarship available to students who graduate from public high schools in alliance districts, rather than public high schools in priority school districts*

§ 51 — REPEALED REGULATIONS

*Repeals numerous educator preparation program and certification regulations, effective July 1, 2026*

**SUMMARY**

This bill makes numerous unrelated changes to the laws on

education, as described in the section-by-section analysis below.

\*House Amendment “A”:

1. changes effective dates for certain educator certification provisions;
2. reduces the membership of the new Educator Preparation and Certification Board from 26 to 16 and requires the education commissioner to designate an existing employee to be the board administrator; and
3. adds new sections on (a) edTPA, (b) educator certification for vocational teachers, (c) family and medical leave for non-certified employees, (d) paraeducators, (e) the Governor’s Workforce Council, (f) mandated reporters, (g) job applicant employment history reviews, and (h) the aspiring educators diversity scholarship program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024, except a few sections vary, see below.

**§§ 1 & 6 — CHANGES TO EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION**

*Simplifies the steps required to receive an initial educator certification for those going through an ARC program; prohibits granting any new provisional educator certificates (the middle level of three educator certificates) and makes the initial certification valid for 10 years; establishes new criteria for a professional educator certificate (the highest of the three current certificate levels) including permitting an alternate pathway to professional licensure instead of the master’s degree requirement*

***Initial Educator Certification***

The bill simplifies the steps required to receive an initial educator certification for those going through an alternate route to certification (ARC) program. It requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to issue an initial educator certification to a candidate with a bachelor’s degree or advanced degree from an accredited higher education institution who completes one of the following pathways:

1. successfully completed an SBE-approved educator preparation program,

2. successfully completed an ARC program pursuant to state law,  
or
3. is an educator from another state and meets one of a list of requirements in Connecticut law (see below).

An out-of-state teacher can satisfy the pathway requirement for certification if he or she:

1. graduated from a teacher preparation program at an accredited institution in another state or an SBE-approved ARC program, but has not successfully completed the Connecticut teacher assessments;
2. has taught in another state with an appropriate certificate for at least two years and meets the Connecticut certification requirements except for successful completion of the teacher assessments;
3. was hired by a charter school after July 1 in any school year for a teaching position so long as the person could reasonably be expected to complete the requirements in the 90-day temporary certification law (see *Background – Temporary 90-Day Certificate*);
4. received a satisfactory score on the appropriate educator subject area assessment or exam in another state, provided SBE approves the assessments or exams as being at least equivalent with Connecticut's;
5. taught in a state that participates in the enhanced educator reciprocity agreement with Connecticut; or
6. holds a military spouse permit.

The ARC pathway can be successfully completed by one of four types of ARC program authorized in law:

1. for school administrators (CGS § 10-145p);
2. for school support staff (CGS § 10-145t);

3. for persons from alternate professions (e.g., paraeducators, veterans, professors employed or previously employed at a higher education institution) (CGS § 10-145w); and
4. summer and weekend and evening ARC program (for target groups including teachers in shortage areas and former teachers with expired certification who want to return to the profession) (CGS § 10-155d).

Current law permits teacher certification through ARC programs, but requires these candidates to also satisfy the requirements of a temporary 90-day certificate or a resident teacher certificate (see *Background – Temporary 90-Day Certificate*). The bill eliminates this requirement.

### ***SBE Authority to Waive Requirements***

The bill grants SBE the authority to waive the requirements of (1) completing an educator preparation program, (2) completing an ARC program, or (3) being a certified educator from another state who meets certain Connecticut requirements. Under the bill, SBE may waive these requirements to issue an initial educator certificate to any person who presents a combination of education and experience that the state board determines is the equivalent of the education and experience required under the bill.

### ***Initial Certifications Valid for 10 Years***

The bill makes an initial educator certification valid for 10 years, rather than three as under the current law.

The bill extends existing initial educator certificates that have not expired on July 1, 2025, for a period of 10 years from their issue date, and makes any new certificates issued on or after July 1, 2025, valid for 10 years.

By law, the commissioner may extend initial certifications for an additional year at a superintendent's or local assessment team's request. The bill prohibits the commissioner from granting this extension more than three times to any person.

***Repealing the Provisional Educator Certification and New Criteria for Professional Certification***

Under current law Connecticut has three levels of teacher certification: initial, provisional, and professional.

The bill eliminates SBE's and the education commissioner's authority to issue and reissue provisional certificates effective July 1, 2025. Under the bill, anyone holding a provisional certificate who is not eligible to advance to the professional certificate is eligible for an initial certificate.

Beginning July 1, 2025, the bill allows those holding initial certificates (or those with existing provisional certificates) to apply for a professional certificate rather than a provisional certificate. To qualify for a professional certification a candidate must:

1. have completed at least 50 school months (five years) of successful teaching for one or more boards of education or approved nonpublic schools in Connecticut while holding an initial educator or provisional educator certificate;
2. have satisfactorily completed the teacher education and mentoring program, as required under state law; and
3. either (a) hold a master's degree or higher in an appropriate subject matter area or (b) complete an alternate pathway to professional licensure jointly approved by SBE and the Educator Preparation and Certification Board (see § 10).

Beginning July 1, 2025, upon receipt of a proper application, SBE must issue a professional educator certificate to any person who satisfies these qualifications. For good cause, SBE may waive the requirement for a master's degree or completion of an alternative pathway to professional licensure.

Under current law, to qualify for a professional certificate a candidate must hold or have held a provisional educator certificate and must have a master's degree in an appropriate subject matter area, as determined by SBE, related to the teacher's certification endorsement area.

Under current law, to qualify for a provisional certificate a candidate must either (1) have taught for one year in a public school and completed the beginning educator program or (2) have taught for at least three years within the last 10 years in a public school in another state or for a private school in any state, including Connecticut, approved by the appropriate governing body for that state, and whose superintendent or supervising agent attests the educator meets the preparation and eligibility requirements of a Connecticut initial certification. Additionally, under current law, an educator who holds a provisional certificate can apply to renew it.

Under the bill, the provisional holder may apply for a professional certificate when the provisional one expires.

The bill eliminates language that permits granting provisional certifications for certain teachers who have taught in another state or in private schools in Connecticut and meet certain conditions.

The bill makes other minor and conforming changes including removing obsolete provisions.

***Background — Temporary 90-Day Certificate***

Those seeking a temporary 90-day certificate must (1) hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution with a major either in, or closely related to, the teacher endorsement area being sought, or in the case of a secondary or special subject endorsement, possess at least the minimum number of credit hours in the subject area required by law; (2) have passed the appropriate teacher assessment; and (3) have successfully completed a state-approved ARC program.

The following are additional requirements for the 90-day certificate: (1) the local board must make a written request for the 90-day certificate to the State Department of Education (SDE) that includes an attestation of a special plan to supervise the 90-day certificate holder and (2) the applicant must possess an overall college GPA of at least a B and present supporting evidence of appropriate experience working with children. The law permits the education commissioner to waive the last two



requirements for good cause.

## **§§ 2 & 4 — BROADENING GRADES COVERED BY CERTAIN TEACHING ENDORSEMENTS**

*Broadens grades covered by certain teaching endorsements*

The bill retroactively allows an educator endorsement to teach elementary grades one to six, inclusive, or grades kindergarten to six, inclusive, issued prior to July 1, 2025, to be valid for grades prekindergarten to six, inclusive. Also, any new elementary endorsement issued on or after July 1, 2025, will also be valid for grades prekindergarten to six, inclusive.

Under current law, certain elementary endorsements are allowed to be valid for kindergarten through grade six, inclusive, depending on various factors including when they were issued.

The bill also makes the following endorsements for grades 7 to 12 valid for grades 4 to 12, regardless of when they were issued: biology, business, chemistry, earth science, English, French, German, general science, history and social studies, Italian, Latin and classical humanities, Mandarin Chinese, mathematics, Portuguese, physics, Russian, Spanish, and any other world language.

### ***Revised Endorsements Do Not Require Applications (§ 4)***

On and after July 1, 2024, any person who holds an initial, provisional, or professional educator certificate, and whose endorsement has been revised according to the changes described above (§ 2), will not be required to apply for a revised endorsement. The educator will be allowed to provide instruction in any course in which the subject matter content of the course corresponds with the revised endorsement.

Beginning July 1, 2026, SBE will assign the revised endorsement upon an educator's certificate being issued or reissued, as appropriate.

## **§ 3 — ELEMENTARY EDUCATION TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS**

*Requires, beginning July 1, 2025, that elementary education teacher preparation programs be aligned with NAEYC standards and competencies for early childhood educators*

The bill requires, beginning July 1, 2025, that any elementary education teacher preparation program be aligned with any professional standards and competencies for early childhood educators developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

## **§ 5 — SUBJECT AREA ASSESSMENTS AND CROSS ENDORSEMENTS**

*Simplifies the process for certified teachers to gain an additional endorsement (i.e., “cross endorsement”)*

On and after July 1, 2024, the bill allows any person who holds an initial, provisional, or professional educator certificate and scores a satisfactory evaluation on the appropriate SBE-approved subject area assessment to be issued a cross endorsement in the relevant certification endorsement area. The bill specifies that this provision does not apply to the endorsement areas of special education, teaching English to speakers of other languages, bilingual, remedial reading and remedial language arts, or school library media specialist.

## **§ 7 — ARC PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF**

*Allows SDE to approve ARC programs that partner with an accredited university to provide a dual degree-plus-certification program for participants who hold an associate degree*

As part of the existing law authorizing approval of ARC programs for people employed as school support staff, the bill allows SDE to approve programs that partner with an institution of higher education that is regionally accredited or has an equivalent accreditation, to provide a dual degree-plus-certification program for participants who hold an associate degree. Under current law, these programs are required to be open only to those who already have a bachelor’s degree.

When making decisions on whether to approve these programs, the bill also requires SDE to give priority to the programs that provide participants flexibility in remaining in their school support staff positions while pursuing an initial educator certificate, other than in the period when the participants are completing the one-year residency

requirement.

Under the law, the programs must have each participant complete a one-year residency that requires participants to serve in a full-time position requiring professional certification for 10 school months for a school board under a certified administrator's or teacher's supervision.

By law, school support staff are people employed by a school board as a behavior analyst, an assistant behavior analyst, an athletic coach, or a paraeducator.

### **§ 8 — ARC PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY EXPANDED**

*Expands who may participate in an existing ARC program for people in alternate professions to include someone with at least five years of work experience requiring discretion and independent judgment in the field related to the teaching endorsement area*

The bill expands the definition of who may participate in an existing ARC program for people in alternate professions. By law, all participants must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and be a person from an alternate profession, which means a person who:

1. is a paraeducator,
2. is a veteran,
3. holds an SBE-issued charter school educator permit, or
4. is or was employed as a professor at an accredited institution of higher education.

The bill expands the definition to include someone with at least five years of work experience requiring the consistent exercise of discretion and independent judgment in the field related to the person's chosen teaching endorsement area.

### **§ 9 — ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR TEACHER PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

*Requires the council to advise the SDE commissioner, rather than the governor and SBE; adds to the subjects for which the council must provide advice (e.g., equitable distribution of teachers); eliminates a requirement that the council advise on teacher preparation and certification and review and comment on certain regulations and standards*

The bill makes several changes affecting the Connecticut Advisory Council for Teacher Professional Standards. It eliminates a requirement that the council advise and report annually to the governor and SBE and instead requires it to do so for the SDE commissioner. Under existing law, unchanged by the bill, it must also advise and report annually to the Education Committee.

Under existing law, the council must advise on teacher recruitment, retention, professional development, assessment and evaluation, and professional discipline. The bill additionally requires it to advise on the equitable distribution of teachers, diversity of the teaching workforce, special education, testing and assessment of students, school safety, and social-emotional learning. It eliminates requirements that the council (1) advise on teacher preparation and certification and (2) review and comment on regulations and other standards on approving teacher preparation programs and teacher certification.

The bill also requires the council to (1) share perspectives on the impact of proposed policies and initiatives on classroom practice with the commissioner and Education Committee and (2) provide suggestions and feedback on guidance to be sent to school districts related to implementing these policies and initiatives with the commissioner.

#### **§ 10 — CREATION OF THE CONNECTICUT EDUCATOR PREPARATION AND CERTIFICATION BOARD (CEPCB)**

*Creates the new 16-member CEPCB and charges it with modernizing and aligning educator preparation and certification to attract and retain diverse professionals into teaching, and developing proposals for regulations or legislation relating to educator preparation and certification; requires the board to submit its first annual report to the Education Committee by January 1, 2026*

The bill creates the Connecticut Educator Preparation and Certification Board (CEPCB), which it deems responsible for modernizing and aligning educator preparation and certification to ensure that policies attract and retain effective and diverse professionals to work in Connecticut's public schools.

The board must develop standards and proposals for regulations or legislation relating to educator preparation and certification that reflect

the teaching profession and respond to emerging understandings of effective, evidence-based practices.

Additionally, the standards and proposals must address the following objectives:

1. building streamlined, flexible pathways in the educator profession that are grounded in a commitment to educator effectiveness;
2. enabling educators to broaden their scope of practice to meet more students' needs;
3. ensuring educator preparation programs are accountable for both the quality training experiences and outcomes for candidates;
4. creating a system to help educators continuously improve their practice that supports and rewards educators who demonstrate mastery;
5. supporting improved data transparency regarding the state's distribution of educators and educator vacancies and accountability for remedying observed inequities; and
6. treating educators as professionals and lifelong learners who need access to high-quality professional learning and mentorships throughout their careers.

### ***Board Members and Appointing Authorities***

The board has 16 members. In addition to the appointed members (see table below), the board includes the following officials or their designees: the education commissioner, the early childhood commissioner, and the Technical Education and Career System superintendent.

**Table: Connecticut Educator Preparation and Certification Board  
Appointed Members**

<i>Appointing Authority</i>	<i>Members</i>
<b><i>Four public school classroom teachers who are classroom teachers throughout their term</i></b>	
Connecticut Education Association	Two: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one kindergarten through grade six teacher, and</li> <li>• one high school teacher</li> </ul>
American Federation of Teachers-Connecticut	One appointee who is a special education teacher
Connecticut Teacher of the Year Council	One appointee
<b><i>Three representatives from an SBE-approved educator preparation program</i></b>	
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education Connecticut Chapter	One who represents an educator preparation program of a public institution of higher education
Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges	One appointee
Education commissioner	One representative of an ARC program
<b><i>Three administrators employed by a local or regional school board</i></b>	
Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents	One who is a school superintendent for an urban district
Connecticut Association of Schools	One who represents a rural district
Connecticut Federation of School Administrators	One who represents a suburban district
<b><i>Additional appointees</i></b>	
Connecticut Association of Boards of Education	One appointee
Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA)	One representative of the CBIA education and workforce affiliation
Increasing Educator Diversity Policy Oversight Council	One representative from the Increasing Educator Diversity Policy Oversight Council

***Initial Appointments, Vacancies, Bylaws, Board Chair, and Staff***

All initial board appointments must be made by August 1, 2024. The appropriate appointing authority must fill any vacancy by 10 days following the vacancy. Members serve three-year terms. The board must establish bylaws for its own operation and management.

The chairperson and vice chairperson of the board must be elected from among the voting members of the board. The bill requires the

education commissioner to designate an SDE employee to serve as the board's administrator (see § 19 below).

### ***Annual Report to the Education Committee***

The board must develop, by January 1, 2026, and annually after that, an annual report that includes a detailed summary of the substance and disposition of any standards and proposals for regulations or legislation the board or SBE develops under the bill (see § 11). The board must submit the annual report to the Education Committee.

## **§ 11 — CEPCB AND SBE CONSIDER AND APPROVE OR REJECT EACH OTHER'S PROPOSALS**

*Gives CEPCB and SBE each the authority to develop standards and proposals (i.e., "proposals") for regulations and legislation relating to educator preparation and certification; requires each board to consider the proposals of the other board*

The bill gives CEPCB and SBE each the authority to develop standards and proposals (i.e., "proposals") for regulations and legislation relating to educator preparation and certification. The bill creates a process where each board sends its proposals to the other board to be either approved or rejected within 60 days after receiving them (e.g., CEPCB sends its proposals to SBE, and SBE sends its proposals to CEPCB).

If either board approves the proposals, then for proposals that (1) require regulations, SBE must adopt regulations consistent with the approved proposal and (2) require legislation, the proposal will be submitted to the Education Committee for consideration.

## **§ 12 — CEPCB DUTIES**

*Requires CEPCB to develop proposals for regulations and legislation by July 1, 2025*

The bill requires CEPCB to develop proposals for regulations and legislation by July 1, 2025, regarding the following:

1. criteria for assessing proposals from school boards, regional educational service centers, and educator preparation programs for alternative pathways for educators to (a) progress from initial certificate to professional certificate or (b) be issued a cross endorsement that will allow educators to teach in content areas

- or grades beyond their initial certification areas;
2. how well degrees from SBE-approved educator preparation programs will align with the revised endorsement areas under § 2;
  3. the adequacy and relevance of existing certification subject endorsement areas;
  4. implementation of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation standards for educator preparation programs;
  5. the necessity of the temporary 90-day certificate; and
  6. the design and development of a state-wide data dashboard that enables longitudinal monitoring of educator workforce data.

***Collecting, Reviewing, and Evaluating Data***

Additionally, the bill requires, annually, beginning July 1, 2026, the board to:

1. collect and review (a) state-specific data, including, at least, qualitative data on stakeholders’ experiences and quantitative data from SDE on educator vacancies, shortage areas, and the educator preparation program dashboard, and (b) data on applicable national policy developments on educator preparation, certification, and employment;
2. evaluate whether any changes are needed to the educator preparation and certification frameworks; and
3. develop, as necessary, evidence-based standards and proposals for regulations and legislation to strengthen existing systems.

**§ 13 — CEPCB REVIEW OF EDUCATOR REGULATIONS AND STATUTES AND CONTENT KNOWLEDGE AND ENDORSEMENT AREAS**

*Requires CEPCB to review (1) educator preparation and certification regulations and statutes for obsolete or conflicting provisions and (2) how SDE assesses certification candidates’ content knowledge within their endorsement area*



The bill also requires CEPCB to:

1. review educator preparation and certification regulations and statutes for obsolete or conflicting provisions,
2. review how the state assesses whether educator certification candidates demonstrate minimum content knowledge within their endorsement areas as required by state law, and
3. develop recommendations for alternatives for certification candidates to demonstrate content knowledge.

By January 31, 2025, the board must submit its findings, as well as any legislative recommendations, to SBE and the Education Committee.

Also, the bill requires CEPCB to:

1. review certification endorsement areas to develop endorsement area adequacy and relevance standards, including whether to expand grade ranges for endorsement areas;
2. explore alternative pathways for cross endorsements; and
3. consider whether ARC program providers should have candidate admission criteria authority for their programs.

By July 1, 2025, the board must submit a report on its findings, as well as any legislative recommendations, to SBE and the Education Committee.

#### **§ 14 — CEPCB TO DEVELOP STANDARDS FOR REVIEWING EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS**

*Requires CEPCB to develop review criteria for educator preparation and ARC programs*

The bill requires the CEPCB to develop review criteria standards for new or continuing educator preparation programs and ARC programs. The standards must require that (1) these programs obtain continuing program approval every seven years, and (2) the methodology for continuing program approval be (a) based on final accreditation decisions of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation

and (b) classified in these categories: approval, provisional, probationary, or denial of approval. The board must complete the standards by July 1, 2026.

### **§ 15 — EDTPA**

*Beginning July 1, 2024, bans SBE from requiring teacher preparation programs to use edTPA for certain purposes; as of the same date, bans teacher preparation programs from using edTPA scores to prevent a student from completing their program*

Beginning July 1, 2024, the bill prohibits SBE from requiring an SDE-approved teacher preparation program in Connecticut to use edTPA, a preservice performance assessment, as a (1) requirement for students to complete their programs and (2) program preservice performance assessment. In 2016, SBE approved a resolution that required all teacher preparation programs in the state to require satisfactory completion of edTPA (see *Background — edTPA*) by all teacher candidates in order to complete a teacher preparation program.

Also, beginning July 1, 2024, the bill bans teacher preparation programs at higher education institutions from using the results of edTPA to deny a candidate completion of their program. But the bill permits these institutions to use the results as a diagnostic tool to provide necessary remedial instruction to a candidate while enrolled in the teacher preparation program.

### ***Background — edTPA***

The Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity created edTPA, and Pearson Assessments, Inc., scores and administers it across the country.

### **§§ 16 & 17 — TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL AND TRADE OCCUPATIONS EDUCATOR CERTIFICATIONS**

*Creates and specifies requirements for new occupational subject and trade and industrial occupations educator certifications; allows for interim certifications under certain conditions*

The bill creates two new occupational initial educator certifications in statute (similar versions of these certifications exist in regulations). One enables the holder to teach an occupational subject in the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) (formerly known as

the technical high schools) and the other to teach trade and industrial occupations in comprehensive high schools.

***Occupational Subject Certification (§ 16)***

Under the bill, CTECS “occupational subject” includes, but is not limited to, automobile servicing, carpentry, plumbing, culinary arts, electronics, cosmetology, and public safety. (CTECS high schools offer a wide range of occupational programs that, in addition to the areas mentioned above, also include architecture; information technology; manufacturing; marketing and sales; and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning.)

The bill authorizes SBE to issue an initial educator certificate for occupational subjects to an applicant who has:

1. a high school diploma or its equivalent;
2. five years of experience in the field for which the certificate is sought, which may include up to two years of registered apprenticeship, work-based learning program, or specialized schooling;
3. completed a minimum of six semester hours of credit teaching vocational and industrial education; and
4. completed a course of special education study of at least three semester hours, which includes (a) study in understanding the growth and development of exceptional children, including children with a disability, gifted and talented children, and children who may require special education, and (b) methods for identifying, planning for, and working effectively with special needs children in the regular classroom.

An initial educator certificate for occupational subjects at CTECS authorizes the holder to teach an occupational subject at CTECS.

***Trade and Industrial Occupations Certification (§ 17)***

For the comprehensive high schools, “trade and industrial

occupations” includes, but is not limited to, food service, automotive servicing, machine tool and operation, building maintenance and repairs, welding, appliance repair, and public safety.

The bill authorizes SBE to issue an initial educator certificate for trade and industrial occupations in comprehensive high schools to an applicant who has:

1. provided a written request from a school board;
2. a high school diploma or its equivalent;
3. completed at least three years of approved successful work experience appropriate to the field for which the certificate is sought, which may include up to two years of specialized appropriate schooling;
4. completed a minimum of six semester hours of credit in professional education in areas such as (a) teaching vocational and industrial education, or (b) foundations of education, educational or adolescent psychology, psychology of learning, curriculum and methods of teaching, classroom instruction and management, multicultural diversity, or equity issues in education; and
5. completed a course of special education study of at least three semester hours, which includes (a) study in understanding the growth and development of exceptional children, including children with a disability, gifted and talented children, and children who may require special education, and (b) methods for identifying, planning for, and working effectively with special needs children in the regular classroom.

The holder of an initial educator certificate for trade and industrial occupations is authorized to teach in a comprehensive high school trade and industrial program in grades six to 12, except this initial educator trade and industrial occupations certificate is not valid to teach at CTECS.

***Interim Educator Certificates***

The bill offers a way for applicants to receive an interim educator certificate for either an occupational subject at CTECS or trade and industrial occupations at comprehensive high schools when they do not meet all the requirements.

An applicant who is otherwise eligible for either of these initial educator certificates, but is deficient in the course requirements for six semester credit hours and the course of study in special education, may be issued an interim educator certificate, valid for one year, which the education commissioner can reissue for a second year.

***Extensions for Interim Educator Certificates***

If the holder of such an interim educator certificate fails to meet the course requirements when the interim certificate expires, the commissioner must prevent the holder from serving, as appropriate, in the employ of a board of education in a position covered by the initial educator certificate for occupational subjects at CTECS or for trade and industrial occupations at comprehensive high schools. However, the bill allows that the applicant's deficient course work may be deferred for one additional year for good cause. (Presumably this additional delay of the course work means the interim certificate is valid for an additional year.)

**§ 18 — FMLA FOR NONCERTIFIED SCHOOL BOARD EMPLOYEES**

*Reduces the number of work hours, from 1,250 to 950, that noncertified school employees need to qualify for unpaid family and medical leave benefits*

The bill reduces the number of work hours noncertified school employees need to qualify for unpaid family and medical leave benefits.

Under federal law, all municipal employees, including all public school employees, qualify for unpaid leave and job reinstatement under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) if they have been employed by the municipality or school district for at least 12 months and worked at least 1,250 hours in the previous 12 months. The bill requires boards of education to provide benefits equal to those provided by the federal FMLA to noncertified employees who have (1) been employed by the

board for at least 12 months and (2) worked at least 950 hours for the board during the 12 months before taking the benefit (see *Background – Federal FMLA Provisions*). (Connecticut’s FMLA law does not cover municipal employees.)

The bill similarly reduces the work requirement, from 1,250 to 950 hours in the previous 12 months, for noncertified employees to request leave to serve as an organ or bone marrow donor.

Noncertified employees are board of education employees, such as cafeteria workers, janitorial staff, administrative support staff, and security staff, who do not need to hold a professional education certificate like other school professions (e.g., teachers or school social workers). Existing law already allows school paraprofessionals (who are also noncertified employees) to qualify for the leave, including for organ or bone marrow donation, after working 950 hours. The bill also changes the term “school paraprofessional” to “paraeducator” to be consistent with other education law.

The bill also makes technical changes.

### ***Background — Federal FMLA Provisions***

The federal FMLA provides up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to employees of all political subdivisions, including towns, cities, boroughs, and school districts. The table below shows the law’s provisions.

**Table: Federal FMLA Provisions**

<b><i>Provision</i></b>	<b><i>Brief Description</i></b>
<b>Political subdivisions covered</b>	All
<b>Employees eligible</b>	Those who have worked at least (1) 12 months for the employer and (2) 1,250 hours in the previous 12 months
<b>Leave amount</b>	Up to 12 weeks in one year
<b>Types of leave</b>	For birth, adoption, or foster care; to care for employee’s own parent, child, or spouse with a serious health condition; for employee’s own serious health condition; or for qualifying exigency because the employee’s spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a military member on covered active duty or notified of impending call or order to covered active duty

<b>Provision</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>
<b>Serious health condition or illness</b>	Illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition involving incapacity or treatment connected with inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical-care facility; or continuing treatment by a health care provider
<b>Health benefits during leave</b>	Employee health insurance must be continued under same conditions as prior to leave, including any required employee contribution
<b>Job reinstatement rights</b>	Must be restored to same position or equivalent in all benefits and other terms and conditions of employment

### **§ 19 — CEPCB ADMINISTRATOR**

*Requires, for FY 25, OPM to reclassify one unfilled, authorized SDE position in order to hire an administrator for CEPCB*

The bill requires, for FY 25, the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) secretary, in consultation with the education commissioner, to reclassify one unfilled, authorized position at SDE for the purpose of hiring an administrator of CEPCB. SDE must use funds appropriated to the department’s personal services account to fill the reclassified position.

### **§§ 20-38 — CHANGES TERM TO “PARAEDUCATOR”**

*Changes the terms “school paraprofessional,” “paraprofessional,” and “paraprofessional teacher aide” to “paraeducator” in various education-related statutes*

The bill changes the terms “school paraprofessional,” “paraprofessional,” and “paraprofessional teacher aide” to “paraeducator” in various education-related statutes to conform with other sections of education law.

### **§ 23 — NOTICE REQUIREMENTS BEFORE SPECIAL EDUCATION PLANNING AND PLACEMENT MEETINGS**

*Requires the notice school boards must give parents, guardians, or students before a special education planning and placement team meeting to include the rights the law provides them at these meetings*

By law, school boards must give a parent or guardian (or student if he or she is emancipated or over 18 years old) at least five days’ notice before any planning and placement meeting for students eligible or being evaluated for special education and related services. The bill requires this notice to include the specific rights the law provides

parents, guardians, and students at these meetings. These include the right to (1) be present at and participate in all portions of the meeting where an educational program for the student is developed, reviewed, or revised; and (2) have advisors of the person's own choosing, the paraeducator assigned to the student, the birth-to-three coordinator, if any, and a language interpreter, if needed.

### **§ 39 — GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE COUNCIL**

*Adds a certified teacher to the council's membership*

The bill adds a certified teacher to the Governor's Workforce Council's membership. The teacher must be appointed by the governor and employed by a local or regional board of education.

By law, the council consists of stakeholders, legislators, and government agency representatives that advise the governor on workforce development matters. Its statutory duties include, among other things, convening state agencies, educational institutions, business leaders, and others to (1) inform state workforce development policy, (2) help state agencies and educational institutions align with employers' needs, and (3) help businesses understand how to contribute to the state's workforce efforts (CGS § 31-3h).

### **§§ 40 & 48 — PRELIMINARY INQUIRIES BY MANDATED REPORTERS**

*Specifies that (1) the mandated reporter law does not prohibit mandated reporters from making a preliminary inquiry to determine if reasonable cause exists for a report and (2) this inquiry is not an abuse or neglect investigation by a school board*

The law designates certain professionals (e.g., school employees, health professionals, and coaches) as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect. Generally, they must report to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or law enforcement within prescribed timeframes when, in the ordinary course of their employment or profession, they have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child (1) has been abused or neglected, (2) has an injury that is at variance with its given history, or (3) is at imminent risk of physical harm.

Under existing law, a mandated reporter's suspicion or belief does not require certainty or probable cause and may be based on, among



other things, allegations, observations, facts, or statements by a child, victim, or third party. The bill specifies that (1) the mandated reporter law does not prohibit mandated reporters from making a preliminary inquiry to determine if reasonable cause exists for a report and (2) this inquiry is not an abuse or neglect investigation by a school board. (Generally, the law requires school boards to investigate abuse and neglect allegations but requires them to allow and give priority to any investigation by DCF or a law enforcement agency.) The bill also requires DCF to develop training on how to conduct preliminary inquiries (see § 49 – DCF TRAINING below).

### **§§ 40, 42-45 & 47 — MANDATED REPORTERS MINOR AND TECHNICAL CHANGES**

*Adds students in nonpublic schools to the list of students for whom the school employee-specific mandated reporter provisions apply; reorganizes certain provisions on penalties for failing to make a report so that they appear in one statute rather than in two separate statutes*

The law requires a school employee (see *Background – School Employees*) to report to DCF if he or she, in the ordinary course of his or her employment or profession, has reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a student enrolled in a technical high school or a school under the local or regional board of education’s jurisdiction (other than an adult education program) is a victim of any of the following crimes committed by a school employee: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th degree sexual assault; 1st degree aggravated sexual assault; or 3rd degree sexual assault with a firearm.

The bill extends this requirement to situations where the alleged victim is a student in a nonpublic school. (Private school employees are mandated reporters under existing law.)

The bill also reorganizes certain provisions on penalties for failing to make a report so that they appear in one statute rather than in two separate statutes. It also makes conforming changes. Under current law and the bill, failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect is a class A misdemeanor if a mandated reporter fails to report within the prescribed time period. It is a class E felony if the (1) violation is a subsequent violation; (2) violation is willful, intentional, or due to gross

negligence; or (3) mandated reporter had actual knowledge that a child was abused or neglected, or a student was the victim of sexual assault.

### **Background — School Employees**

The law defines a “school employee” as follows:

1. a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, school counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional, or coach (a) employed by a board of education or a private elementary, middle, or high school or (b) working in a public or private elementary, middle, or high school; or
2. anyone who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public or private elementary, middle, or high school under a contract with the board of education or private school’s supervisory agent (CGS § 53a-65).

### **§ 41 — IMMUNITY FROM LIABILITY**

*Extends immunity from criminal or civil liability to persons, institutions, and agencies that, in good faith, do not make a report*

Existing law grants immunity from civil or criminal liability to persons, institutions, and agencies that, in good faith, report suspected child abuse or neglect or alleged sexual assault of a student to DCF or law enforcement as required or permitted by law. The bill extends this immunity to persons, institutions, and agencies that, in good faith, do not make such a report.

### **§ 43 — FAILURE TO REPORT**

*Requires the DCF commissioner to assess mandated reporters’ failure to report within timeframes required by law, rather than investigate delayed reports as current law requires*

Current law requires the DCF commissioner to investigate delayed reports by mandated reporters following a policy the department must develop. The bill instead requires the commissioner, following the department’s policy, to assess mandated reporters’ failure to make reports within the time period prescribed by law. It also makes

conforming changes (e.g., the department's policy must cover assessments instead of investigations).

Relatedly, the bill requires DCF to make a record of mandated reporters' failure to report within the required timeframe, rather than a record of a delayed report as current law requires. It also expands this requirement to cover all mandated reporters, rather than only those employed by a school board as current law requires.

By law, mandated reporters must make oral or electronic reports to DCF or a law enforcement agency as soon as practicable but no later than 12 hours after the reporter has reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect and, for oral reports, must follow up with a written report within 48 hours (CGS §§ 17a-101b & -101c).

#### **§ 46 — EMPLOYMENT HISTORY REVIEWS**

*Excludes, from the information that must be disclosed by school employment applicants' previous employers, information about a substantiated abuse or neglect or sexual misconduct allegation if the substantiation was reversed in an appeal to DCF*

The law requires school boards, charter school governing councils, magnet school operators, and supervisory agents of nonpublic schools to review an applicant's employment history before offering employment (including contract employment) if the applicant would have direct student contact. As part of this review, these entities must send the applicants' previous employers an SDE-developed form that asks, among other things, if the employer has knowledge of the following:

1. a substantiated allegation against the applicant of abuse or neglect or sexual misconduct;
2. whether the applicant resigned, was asked to resign, otherwise separated from employment, or was disciplined because of a substantiated allegation of these acts; or
3. whether the applicant surrendered a professional or occupational license, certificate, authorization, or permit, or had it suspended or revoked, because of a substantiated allegation of these acts.

The bill narrows the scope of this review to exclude substantiated allegations that were reversed in an appeal to DCF (i.e., appeals of a DCF determination that an individual should be placed on the state’s child abuse and neglect registry).

#### **§ 49 — DCF TRAINING**

*Requires DCF to update its training program and refresher training for school employees*

The law requires DCF to develop a training program and refresher training for mandated reporters on accurately and promptly identifying and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect. The bill requires DCF, by October 1, 2024, to update the training and refresher programs to include training for school employees on (1) properly conducting a preliminary inquiry (see above) and (2) DCF’s Careline and investigations by the department and school boards.

Under existing law, school employees hired by a school board must be required to complete the training program. They must then complete the refresher training every three years (CGS § 17a-101i(g)).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

#### **§ 50 — ASPIRING EDUCATORS DIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

*Makes the scholarship available to students who graduate from public high schools in alliance districts, rather than public high schools in priority school districts*

The law requires SDE to administer an aspiring educators diversity scholarship program for students who graduate from public high schools in certain school districts and are enrolled in a teacher preparation program at a four-year higher education institution. The bill broadens the scholarship’s availability by making it available to students who graduate from public high schools in alliance districts, rather than public high schools in priority school districts as current law provides.

By law, a priority school district is a district that receives additional state grants based on a formula that considers high populations or concentrations of students (1) on temporary family assistance and (2) performing poorly on statewide mastery exams (CGS § 10-266p).

(Connecticut has 15 priority school districts.)

An alliance district is a school district that is among the towns with the 33 lowest accountability index (AI) scores as calculated by SDE or was previously designated as an alliance district from FYs 13-22. (The AI score measures school district performance based on student standardized test scores plus additional measures such as student growth over time.) Existing law requires the education commissioner to designate 36 alliance districts (which counts the previously designated districts) for the five-year period from FYs 23-27.

## § 51 — REPEALED REGULATIONS

*Repeals numerous educator preparation program and certification regulations, effective July 1, 2026*

Effective July 1, 2026, the bill repeals the numerous SBE educator preparation program and certification regulations shown in the table below.

**Table: SBE Educator Preparation and Certification Regulations Repealed, by Citation and Topic**

<b><i>Regulation Citation</i></b>	<b><i>Topic</i></b>
10-145d-9(b) to -145d-9(e)	Procedures for educator preparation program approval
10-145d-9(g)(1), 10-145d-9(i)	SBE authority to approve or deny request for continuing approval; just cause authority to change approval status
10-145d-10(a) to -145d-10(b)(9), 10-145d-10(c) to -145d-10(g), 10-145d-11	Educator preparation program standards and approval standards, including student admission standards
10-145d-400a(a) to -145d-400a(d)	Code of professional responsibilities for teachers including to the students, the profession, and the community
10-145d-401(a), 10-145d-401(c)	Personnel required to have certification (selected provisions)
10-145d-402	Application forms
10-145d-403(b), 10-145d-403(g)	Application documentation and materials required (selected provisions)
10-145d-404 to -145d-406	Assessment requirements, exceptions; acceptability of

<b>Regulation Citation</b>	<b>Topic</b>
	course work
10-145d-407(a), 10-145d-407(b), 10-145d-407(d), 10-145d-407(f), 10-145d-407(h), 10-145d-407(i)	Responsibilities of employing agents of school boards (selected provisions)
10-145d-409 to -145d-415	Recommendation from an approved institution; validity of certifications issued prior to July 1, 1989; certification types; initial, interim, 90-day temporary, and provisional educator certifications
10-145d-417	Professional educator certificate
10-145d-419	Limited extended authorization for early childhood
10-145d-420(f)	Waiver of requirement that substitute teacher have a bachelor's degree
10-145d-421(b), 10-145d-422	Requirements of a durational shortage area permit; durational shortage area permit reissue
10-145d-423(a)	Coaching permits (obsolete provision)
10-145d-426	Adult education authorization
10-145d-427	Reissuance and extension of certificates
10-145d-434, 10-145d-435(b)	Validity of certificates specific to elementary grades and kindergarten
10-145d-436 to -145d-438	Elementary level: Initial, provisional, and professional educator certification requirements
10-145d-441 to -145d-443	Foreign languages pre-K through grade 8: Initial, provisional, and professional educator certification requirements
10-145d-444 to -145d-448	Middle grades (grades 4-6 or 5 & 6 depending on school grade structure): Initial, provisional, and professional educator certification requirements
10-145d-449 to -145d-453	Secondary grades (grades 7-12): Initial, provisional, and professional educator certification requirements
10-145d-472 to -145d-474	Teaching English to speakers of other languages: Initial, provisional, and professional educator certification requirements
10-145d-476 to -145d-479	Bilingual education: Initial, provisional, and professional

<b><i>Regulation Citation</i></b>	<b><i>Topic</i></b>
	educator certification requirements
10-145d-481, 10-145d-482(c), 10-145d-482(d), 10-145d-483, 10-145d-484	Remedial reading and remedial language arts: Validity of certificates; initial educator certification requirements (selected provisions); provisional and professional educator certification requirements
10-145d-535 to -145d-537	Special education: Blind, partially sighted, or hearing impaired: Initial, provisional, and professional educator certification requirements
10-145d-539 to -145d-542	Comprehensive special education: Validity of certificates; initial, provisional, and professional educator certification requirements
10-145d-608 and 10-145d-609	Discontinued endorsements (previously issued, but no longer available)

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

### **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 32 Nay 12 (03/20/2024)