



2024 Acts Affecting Education

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Notice to Readers

This report provides summaries of new laws (public acts and special acts) significantly affecting education and higher education enacted during the 2024 regular legislative session and June Special Session (JSS). OLR's other Acts Affecting reports, including Acts Affecting Children, are, or will soon be, available on [OLR's website](#).

Each summary indicates the public act (PA) or special act (SA) number. Not all provisions of the acts are included. The report does not include vetoed acts unless the veto was overridden. Complete summaries of public acts are, or will soon be, available on [OLR's website](#).

Readers are encouraged to obtain the full text of acts that interest them from the Connecticut State Library, House Clerk's Office, or [General Assembly's website](#).

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Curriculum and Instruction

Model Digital Citizenship Curriculum

A new law requires the State Department of Education (SDE), in collaboration with the Commission for Educational Technology, to develop a model digital citizenship curriculum for grades kindergarten through 12 for school boards to use. The curriculum must be completed by January 1, 2025, and, among other things, (1) align with curriculum guidelines approved by the State Board of Education (SBE); (2) include content and instruction to develop digital citizenship skills and dispositions within online spaces to cultivate positive student relationships and school climate; and (3) include topics aligned with the model SDE curriculum on civics and citizenship, including digital citizenship and media literacy ([PA 24-151](#), § 145, effective July 1, 2024).

State Seal of Biliteracy

This session, the legislature expanded the types of schools that can affix the Connecticut State Seal of Biliteracy to the high school diplomas of their students who achieve a high level of proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English. New legislation allows the governing body of any school that awards diplomas instead of only public school boards, to use criteria SBE sets for this designation. The same law also expands the definition of “foreign language” to include any language spoken by a Native American tribe, instead of only tribes that are federally recognized as under prior law ([PA 24-78](#), § 5, effective July 1, 2024).

Early Childhood Education and Child Care

Early Childhood Care and Education Fund

Last session, the legislature created an Early Childhood Education Fund as part of the FY 24-25 budget act. This year, it (1) renamed the fund the Early Childhood Care and Education Fund; (2) established a framework for the fund’s deposits and investments and the state treasurer’s authority and powers on behalf of the fund; and (3) created a 23-member advisory commission to, among other things, prepare a five-year plan for its expenditures ([PA 24-91](#), §§ 1, 2 & 13, effective upon passage).

Early Start CT

The legislature passed a new law that, beginning in FY 26, consolidates the School Readiness Preschool Grant Program, state-contracted child care centers for disadvantaged children, and the state supplemental Head Start grants into one program (“Early Start CT”)

and makes the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) responsible for operating and administering it, with the intent of consolidating administrative functions and helping families more easily access early childhood care and education programs. In doing so, the act, among other things, (1) combines the three programs' funding sources into one funding source and (2) allows eligible entities to enter directly into a contract with OEC to receive state financial assistance to operate these programs.

Among its changes, the act eliminates school readiness councils and instead authorizes towns or school districts to set up local or regional governance partners to help provide early care and education in their respective communities under Early Start CT. These local or regional governance partners must be composed of relevant stakeholders and reflect the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic composition of the community served. Each local or regional governance partner must, among other things, (1) conduct a data-driven needs assessment for the town or region it serves, within available appropriations, and (2) employ a staff liaison to facilitate and coordinate services.

The act also includes other provisions to allow:

1. the OEC commissioner to allocate funds to Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs), beginning in FY 25 and within available funds, to provide professional development services, technical assistance and evaluation, and program planning and implementation activities; and
2. up to \$2 million in unexpended Early Start CT funds, beginning FY 26, to be used to (a) provide professional development for early care and education program providers or (b) support early care and education programs in satisfying the act's staff qualification requirements ([PA 24-78](#), §§ 24-34 & 41, most sections effective July 1, 2025).

Exempt Child Care Providers and Emergency Epinephrine

By law, OEC-licensed child care providers are authorized to administer epinephrine for emergency first aid to a child in their care who has an allergic reaction and does not have a prior written parent or guardian authorization or written qualified medical professional order for the provider to administer epinephrine. A new law broadens this authorization to include child care providers that are exempt from licensing (e.g., public school systems, municipalities, boys' and girls' clubs). Under the new law, the person administering epinephrine must be trained according to existing requirements for providers that are licensed ([PA 24-93](#), § 9, effective July 1, 2024).

FY 25 Grant Amounts for Specified Early Childhood Programs

The new law establishing the Early Start CT program in FY 26 authorizes OEC to pay per-child and per-classroom rates as the commissioner determines, subject to specified minimum per-child grant amounts and other parameters. The new law applies these same grant amount requirements to the following early childhood programs for FY 25: (1) school readiness grants, (2) grants for state-contracted child care centers for disadvantaged children, and (3) state supplemental grants for Head Start programs. The statutes for these three programs are repealed beginning with FY 26 as they are all consolidated into Early Start CT ([PA 24-78](#), §§ 35-38, effective July 1, 2024).

Medicaid Children in Care 4 Kids

A new law expands Care 4 Kids program eligibility to parents or guardians of children who are enrolled in Medicaid and adds them to the existing priority intake and eligibility list. Generally, a family must have a parent or caretaker who is working or attending high school or college or participating in a job training or employment program in order to be eligible for Care 4 Kids (the federal requirement that the parent or caretaker work or participate in an eligible program remains). The same law requires the social services and early childhood commissioners to enter a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to share, to the extent law permits, Medicaid enrollment data between the Department of Social Services and OEC for Medicaid enrollees seeking to enroll in Care 4 Kids. The commissioners must do this by January 1, 2026 ([PA 24-74](#), §§ 1 & 4, effective July 1, 2024).

Smart Start Competitive Grant Program

Beginning FY 25, a new act no longer prohibits a town from receiving more than \$300,000 in annual operating expense grants under the Connecticut Smart Start Competitive Grant Program, which provides grants for capital and operating expenses for local and regional school boards to establish or expand preschool programs ([PA 24-78](#), § 40, effective July 1, 2025).

Staff Qualifications for State-Funded Early Childhood Education Programs

Prior law required state-funded early childhood education program staff members to meet increasingly advanced levels of educational attainment to be phased in over several years from July 1, 2022, to July 1, 2029. This law set separate requirements for primary classroom teachers and remaining classroom teachers over three phases, each with its own

set of minimum qualifications. By July 1, 2029, it required 100% of primary classroom teachers to meet one of six specified educational or credentialing standards.

A new law replaces these staff qualification requirements with new requirements for primary classroom teachers that phase in from July 1, 2025, to July 1, 2030. It outlines the degrees or credentials required for these teachers to qualify as “designated qualified staff members” and requires an increasing percentage of primary classroom teachers at each state-funded program to be qualified as “designated qualified staff members” (from 25% by June 30, 2027, to 60% by July 1, 2030).

Under the act, these requirements apply to programs that accept state funds directly from OEC or indirectly through office subcontractors, for any combination of infant, toddler, preschool, and before and after school care program, but does not include Care 4 Kids subsidies ([PA 24-78](#), § 31, effective July 1, 2025).

Tri-Share Child Care Matching Program

A new law requires OEC, within available appropriations, to create a Tri-Share Child Care Matching Program for New London County in which child care costs are shared equally between participating employers, employees, and the state. The program must run for at least two years and be administered by a regional or statewide organization selected by OEC. To participate, employers must have a physical facility in New London County that is its employees’ principal workplace and employees must, among other things, live in Connecticut and not be receiving other public assistance for child care costs ([PA 24-91](#), § 3, effective July 1, 2024).

Wage Supplement Program

New legislation requires OEC to set up and administer a wage supplement program for FY 25 that gives eligible early childhood teachers and teacher assistants a one-time wage supplement payment of at least \$1,800. Under the act, OEC must provide these payments on a first-come, first-served basis, up to the amount made available for the payments, and award all eligible applicants the same payment amount. OEC must use \$9 million of its FY 25 General Fund appropriation for Early Care and Education used for school readiness and child day care purposes for the payments ([PA 24-91](#), § 4, effective upon passage).

Grants and Funding

Artificial Intelligence Tool Pilot Program

For FY 25, the legislature enacted a law that requires SDE to administer an artificial intelligence (AI) tool pilot program to award grants to five school boards to help them implement an existing AI tool for classroom instruction and student learning in grades 7 to 12. The same new law requires SDE to provide professional development for educators working for the school boards participating in the AI tool pilot ([PA 24-151](#), §§ 143 & 144, effective July 1, 2024).

Asset and Capacity Mapping for Nonprofit Organizations

As part of the effort to address the needs of at-risk young people in the state, a new law provides \$100,000 in funding to UConn's School of Public Policy to conduct a study and comprehensive asset and capacity mapping for nonprofit organizations to support information-sharing and collaboration between the nonprofits and the communities they serve.

The school must (1) submit to the Education Committee a preliminary report by October 1, 2024, and a final report by June 30, 2025, and (2) make the final report and the mapping available on its website ([PA 24-81](#), §§ 120 & 122, effective July 1, 2024).

Excess Cost Grant Calculations

A new law requires that excess cost grant calculations for school boards include all expenditures incurred by the board under a contract with a private provider of special education services, private school, agency, or institution during the school year in which the services are provided. The requirement applies even if the private provider, private school, agency, or institution is approved by SDE during the school year in which a board of education is seeking reimbursement for the incurred expenditures (i.e., these expenses must be included in the calculation even if the approval occurs later in the school year, after the services were delivered) ([PA 24-93](#), § 17, effective July 1, 2024).

ECS Grant Estimates for Towns

With new legislation, the General Assembly now requires that by December 31 of each year, SDE calculate the estimated education cost sharing (ECS) grant that each town is entitled to receive for the next fiscal year using data collected during the current fiscal year. The department must notify each town of the estimated amount ([PA 24-93](#), § 10, effective upon passage).

Grants for HVAC Inspections

The law requires school boards to complete a uniform inspection and evaluation of their school buildings' HVAC systems. A new act delays, from July 1, 2024, to July 1, 2026, the start of a prohibition on the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) commissioner awarding grants for HVAC or indoor air quality improvements to school districts that have not certified compliance with the law's inspection and evaluation requirements ([PA 24-74](#), § 8, and [PA 24-151](#), § 169, both effective July 1, 2024)).

New Choice Grant for Magnets and Vo-Ag Centers in FY 25

The legislature replaced grants for interdistrict magnet schools (including for those whose operators are not a board of education) and regional agricultural science and technology centers (i.e., "vo-ag centers") with grants under the new choice program for FY 25. Generally, these new grants use student need weightings, mirroring existing law's weighting for ECS grants and charter school grants. This gives additional weight (and funding) for students eligible for free or reduced-priced meals or free milk or designated as an English language learner.

The new law also includes a hold-harmless provision intended to guarantee that magnet schools and vo-ag operators receive at least the same total revenue per student that they did in FY 24. The grants are for FY 25 only; the act does not make them ongoing annual grants and the law does not revert to the old grants for the following years ([PA 24-81](#), §§ 112-119, effective July 1, 2024).

Open Choice Program for Norwalk and Danbury

This session the legislature expanded the Open Choice pilot program for Norwalk by (1) making it ongoing and (2) allowing students who reside in Darien, New Canaan, Wilton, Weston, and Westport to attend public school in Norwalk. Under prior law, the pilot applied only during the school year beginning July 1, 2022, and only allowed up to 50 Norwalk students to attend public school in Darien, New Canaan, Wilton, Weston, and Westport, not vice versa.

The new law also makes the program ongoing, rather than just the school year beginning July 1, 2022, for 50 students from Danbury who can attend public schools in New Fairfield, Brookfield, Bethel, Ridgefield, and Redding.

Open Choice is a voluntary interdistrict attendance program supported with state grants that allows students from urban school districts to attend suburban school districts, and vice versa, on a space-available basis ([PA 24-74](#), §§ 2 & 3, effective July 1, 2024).

School Indoor Air Quality Grants

New legislation extends eligibility for indoor air quality (IAQ) grants to endowed academies and state charter schools. Endowed academies must receive the same reimbursement rate for IAQ grants as they do for school building project grants under existing law, while state charter schools receive half of the reimbursement rate for the town in which the school is located.

The legislation also:

1. requires DAS, for FYs 25 and 26, to (a) reconsider any rejected application that a school board or RESC submitted before July 1, 2024, and (b) provide technical assistance to applicants during the reconsideration period and
2. earmarks up to \$15 million in general obligation (GO) bonds for grants to purchase equipment and materials for constructing and installing individual classroom air purifiers ([PA 24-151](#), §§ 169 & 170, effective July 1, 2024).

Supplemental Funding for ECS, Charter School, Magnet School, Open Choice, and Vo-Ag Center Grants and Other Allocations

New legislation specifies how \$150 million in education funds that were appropriated in last year's budget act will be spent in FY 25. As under prior law, the funds primarily go to the new choice grants, ECS, and charter school grants. But it also allocates specific amounts to other purposes.

The primary allocation is \$139,626,522 to (1) supplement ECS grants and charter school grants and (2) provide the choice program grants (magnet schools and vo-ag) the same act establishes (see "New Choice Grant for Magnets and Vo-Ag Centers" above).

Additionally, the act allocates a number of smaller amounts to specific programs, schools, or towns with the largest of these being a \$5,000,000 grant to the Hartford Board of Education for magnet school tuition assistance ([PA 24-81](#), § 120, effective July 1, 2024).

Wholesome School Meals Pilot Program

A new law delays the start date for SDE's wholesome school meals pilot program, shifting the pilot's timeframe from FYs 24-26 to FYs 25-27.

By law, the program will award grants to five alliance school districts to embed a professional chef in the district, who must help school meal programs build food service staff capacity, improve meal quality, streamline operations, and establish a financially viable school meal program. The act also extends the SDE's deadline to report on the pilot program to the Appropriations and Education committees from January 1, 2027, to January 1, 2028 ([PA 24-74](#), § 5, effective July 1, 2024).

Health and Safety

Connecticut School Health Survey

By law, the Department of Public Health (DPH) must biennially administer the Connecticut School Health Survey to students in grades 9 through 12, if the department receives funding from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for it. Starting July 1, 2026, a new law requires DPH to include, each time it administers the survey, the sexual abuse and assault awareness prevention survey for high school administrators that was created as part of the statewide sexual assault awareness and prevention program ([PA 24-118](#), § 1, effective July 1, 2024).

Epinephrine Training

By law, a school paraprofessional assigned to a specific student with a known allergy can be approved to administer emergency epinephrine in cartridge injectors ("epipens") to the student with approval of the school nurse and the school medical advisor along with written parental approval and an order from a medical professional. The act requires these paraprofessionals and any qualified school employee authorized to administer epinephrine to annually complete training in emergency epinephrine administration and related first aid that SDE is already required to provide. (Existing law already requires this training for qualified school employees before they can administer emergency epinephrine to students who do not have a known allergic condition) ([PA 24-93](#), § 6, effective July 1, 2024).

Family Resource Centers and Parent Education and Support Centers

This session, the legislature expanded the scope of (1) SDE family resource centers and (2) DCF parent education and support centers to include resources, programs, and services for

nonparent caretaker relatives (e.g., grandparents) and legal guardians. It also requires these centers to make referrals for parents, nonparent caretaker relatives, and legal guardians to community programs on childhood development and positive parenting practices ([PA 24-39](#), §§ 15 & 16, effective October 1, 2024).

HVAC Inspection and Evaluation

A new law extends, from January 1, 2025, to June 30, 2031, the deadline for school boards to complete a required inspection and evaluation of their school buildings' HVAC systems. Beginning July 1, 2026, school boards must conduct the inspection and evaluation in at least 20% of their schools each year until all schools in the district are inspected. It also requires that each school building be inspected again every five years ([PA 24-74](#), § 7, effective July 1, 2024).

Immunity From Liability Regarding Suspected Abuse or Neglect

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 the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or law enforcement as required or permitted by law. A new law extends this immunity to persons, institutions, and agencies that, in good faith, do not make such a report ([PA 24-41](#), § 41, effective July 1, 2024).

Mandated Reporter Failure to Report

Prior law required the DCF commissioner to automatically investigate delayed reports by mandated reporters following a policy the department must develop. New legislation instead requires the commissioner, following the department's policy, to assess mandated reporters' failure to make reports within the time period prescribed by law and then determine what steps are necessary ([PA 24-41](#), § 43, effective July 1, 2024).

Preliminary Inquiries by Mandated Reporters

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 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. A new law 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.

Relatedly, the new law also 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 and (2) DCF's Careline and investigations by the department and school boards ([PA 24-41](#), §§ 40, 48 & 49, effective July 1, 2024, except the training provision is effective upon passage).

PFAS Testing Grants

A new law specifies that school districts are eligible for funding from the General Fund's PFAS Testing account to test for and remediate PFAS contamination in drinking water supplies ([PA 24-59](#), § 2, effective upon passage).

School-Based Health Center Advisory Committee

A new law broadens the qualification criteria for one of the governor's two appointees to the School-Based Health Center (SBHC) Advisory Committee. Prior law required one of these members to be a representative of a hospital-sponsored SBHC. The act additionally allows this member to be a children's hospital staff member or a pediatric health care clinician. As under existing law, the governor's other appointee must be a representative of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics ([PA 24-68](#), § 4, effective upon passage).

School Meals

For FY 25, a new law makes SDE financially responsible for local and regional school boards' portion of the cost for reduced price meals under the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. Specifically, it makes them responsible for these costs for students who are not enrolled in a school that qualifies for maximum federal reimbursement for all meals served under the federal Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).

CEP allows schools to serve free breakfast and lunch to all students in the entire school without collecting household applications, but eligibility is instead based on participation in other specific means-tested programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (P.L. 111-296, § 104) ([PA 24-81](#), § 242, effective July 1, 2024).

School Resource Officer Reports

State law requires each school resource officer (SRO) to give his or her agency's police chief a report for each investigation or behavioral intervention the SRO conducts at school within five days. A new law specifies that, if the SRO's chief of police is not Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST)-certified, then the SRO must instead submit the reports to the superintendent. (In some towns, by charter or municipal ordinance, the chief law enforcement officer is the first selectman.) POST provides the required training for all uniformed municipal police in the state ([PA 24-45](#), § 15, effective July 1, 2024).

SDE Child Nutrition Outreach Program

Under a new law, SDE must administer its child nutrition outreach program in collaboration with OEC and the two agencies must share relevant data between them. By law, the program is intended to (1) increase participation in the federal School Breakfast, Summer Food Service, and Child and Adult Care Food programs and (2) secure federal reimbursement for these programs ([PA 24-82](#), § 3, effective July 1, 2024).

Interscholastic Athletics

High School Football Games on Thanksgiving Day

A new law bans school boards from delegating the authority to schedule Thanksgiving Day interscholastic football games to any nonprofit organization or other entity responsible for governing interscholastic athletics in Connecticut. It also bars any board from adopting a policy or prohibition against scheduling a football game on Thanksgiving Day ([PA 24-151](#), § 131, effective July 1, 2024).

Magnet Schools

Goodwin University Magnet Schools Authority to Charge Tuition

A new law extends to Goodwin University Magnet Schools (GUMS) the same authority to charge tuition for its two magnet schools, and the same conditions, as RESCs. Additionally, the act adds GUMS to the existing group that may charge preschool tuition to parents and applies the existing limitations for this including a prohibition on charging parents tuition if their income is below 75% of the state median income ([PA 24-78](#), §§ 6 & 8, upon passage).

Goodwin University Magnet Schools Employment

New legislation allows teachers employed by GUMS or Goodwin University Educational Services, Inc. to be considered continuously employed regarding teacher tenure and paid

sick leave accumulation when they previously worked for a different school board during the school year before employment with GUMS. This means a teacher does not lose tenure rights or accumulated sick leave earned before gaining employment with a GUMS magnet school ([PA 24-78](#), § 7, effective July 1, 2024).

Sheff Magnet School Requirements

The legislature reinstated, until June 30, 2025, the requirement that the education commissioner consider whether a *Sheff* magnet school meets the reduced-isolation standards required under *Sheff* to award grants to the school. The requirement, which satisfies the ongoing *Sheff* desegregation settlement, had expired at the end of FY 21. The same legislation also renews until June 30, 2025, the commissioner’s authority to impose a financial penalty on a magnet school that does not meet the reduced-isolation standards for two or more consecutive years or to take other steps to help the school comply ([PA 24-78](#), §§ 9 & 10, effective July 1, 2024).

School Buses

Illegally Passing a School Bus

New legislation makes several changes relating to Connecticut’s motor vehicle law that generally prohibits drivers from passing a school bus that has its red signal lights flashing (a.k.a. the “stop arm law”). Principally, it (1) sunsets the current statutory authorization for municipalities and boards of education to use a live digital video school bus violation detection monitoring system to enforce the stop arm law, generally by July 1, 2026, and (2) replaces this authorization with a similar one that expressly allows municipalities to adopt ordinances that authorize the use of a monitoring system to enforce the stop arm law and establish \$250 municipal fines for violations ([PA 24-107](#), effective July 1, 2024).

School Bus Idling

A new law requires the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), by September 1, 2024, to review (and revise if needed) department regulations, policies, and guidance applicable to school bus owners and operators on operating and inspecting school buses. The department must do so to ensure that these policies and procedures (1) promote adherence to the state’s anti-idling law for school buses and air quality regulations related to idling and (2) do not explicitly or implicitly require a school bus to idle for more than three minutes during its daily vehicle inspection. By the same date, the new law also requires DMV to give guidance to school bus owners and operators on aspects of the daily inspections that may be

performed with the engine off and post the guidance on its website ([PA 24-20](#), § 38, effective upon passage).

School Bus Seat Belts

The legislature reestablished a DMV school bus seat belt program that helps pay for school buses with three-point lap and shoulder seat belts by refunding school bus companies (i.e., “carriers”) half the sales tax they pay for buses with seat belts. Program funding comes from the existing school bus seat belt account, which is funded by a portion (\$50) of each DMV fee collected for restoring suspended licenses and registrations. School districts may apply to DMV starting October 1, 2025, and DMV, in collaboration with SDE, must annually inform school districts about the program and how to apply ([PA 24-20](#), § 40, effective January 1, 2025).

School Climate

School Climate Surveys and Climate Improvement Plans

Under a new law, the Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative must develop a (1) school climate survey standard and (2) model school climate improvement plan. For the survey, the standards must address collecting diversity, equity, and inclusion data and how to reduce disparities in data collection between school districts. By law, the collaborative has numerous responsibilities related to fostering a positive school climate, including developing a statewide school climate survey and a model positive school climate policy.

At the local level, a school district must administer a school climate survey for students that meet a number of criteria. A new law additionally requires that the surveys meet the new School Climate Advisory Collaborative survey standards or use the collaborative’s statewide school climate survey.

The new law also allows the school-level climate specialists to incorporate the model school climate improvement plan into his or her school plan ([PA 24-45](#), §§ 16-19, effective July 1, 2024).

State Director of School Climate Improvement

A new law requires SDE, within available appropriations, to appoint a director of school climate improvement to serve as the statewide social and emotional learning and school climate expert. The director’s duties include (1) assisting school boards and the School

Climate Advisory Collaborative in developing and implementing best practices and tools for school climate and culture and (2) annually reporting to the Education Committee on recommendations for school climate improvement strategies in the state ([PA 24-45](#), § 20, effective July 1, 2024).

School Construction

Applicant Requirements

Beginning with applications submitted on and after July 1, 2026, new legislation requires that an applicant's local share authorization include an additional 10% contingency in accordance with guidance developed by DAS. It also allows the DAS commissioner to disapprove an application if it does not include an attestation from the local fire marshal or district or municipal health department, as applicable, that the project plans comply with the state fire marshal's or DPH's requirements ([PA 24-151](#), §§ 152 & 154, effective July 1, 2024).

Audits

The legislature made several changes affecting school construction project audits. It shortened, from within three years to within one year after issuing the certificate of occupancy, the deadline by which towns and regional districts must submit a notice of project completion. By law, DAS must deem the project completed and conduct the audit if the town or district does not submit the notice by the required deadline.

The legislation also requires DAS to conduct a limited scope audit (e.g., a review of total reported expenditures and adherence to authorized space specifications) two years after making the final project payment if a regular audit is not completed. Under prior law, DAS had to conduct a limited scope audit if it did not complete an audit within five years after receiving a notice of project completion ([PA 24-151](#), §§ 162 & 163, effective July 1, 2024).

Contracting Requirements

The school construction legislation made several changes to contracting requirements. Among other things, it deemed cooperative purchasing contracts offered through a RESC or council of governments as qualified bidders for school building projects.

It made other changes including requiring that:

1. contracts awarded for architectural services, construction management services, and other consultant services be from a pool of at least three of the most responsible qualified proposers rather than a pool of up to the four qualified proposers;
2. DAS approval of consultant contracts be in writing or through written electronic communication for the costs to be eligible for state funding; and
3. construction cannot start before the guaranteed maximum price (GMP) is determined.

The legislature also eliminated prior law's prohibition on construction managers bidding on project elements, but this prohibition was reinstated during the special session ([PA 24-151](#), § 163, effective July 1, 2024, [PA 24-1, JSS](#), §§ 32 & 33, effective July 1, 2024, except the repealer section is effective upon passage).

Energy Funds and School Construction Grants

Prior law required that any state funds received by a town for a school building project be subtracted from the total project costs before the state calculated the town's state reimbursement grant amount (i.e., the subtraction decreases the amount on which the grant is based). Starting July 1, 2024, a new law excludes funds or benefits received under the following energy-related initiatives from this subtraction requirement:

1. certain rate design standards for electric utilities;
2. the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's microgrid and resilience grant and loan program;
3. renewable energy tariffs;
4. conservation and load management programs; and
5. the Green Bank's Clean Energy Fund ([PA 24-151](#), § 160, effective July 1, 2024).

Governing Boards of Endowed Academies

A new law eliminates a requirement that, to be eligible for a school construction grant, at least half of the members of an endowed academy's governing board, other than its chairperson, represent the school boards of the towns that designate the academy as their high school ([PA 24-151](#), § 158, effective July 1, 2024).

Inclusive Municipality Designation

The school construction legislation requires boards of education seeking a five-percentage point bonus rate for being an “inclusive municipality” to submit to DAS a written determination by the housing commissioner that the municipality in which the project will occur qualifies for the designation. The board must submit the determination before December 1 in the year it applies to DAS for a school building project grant, and the determination must have been issued within that year. The act applies to priority list applications submitted on and after July 1, 2024 ([PA 24-151](#), § 157, effective July 1, 2024).

Priority List Grant Commitments

The legislature authorized school construction state grant commitments totaling \$486.4 million toward total estimated project costs of \$583.3 million. It also reauthorized three projects that have changed substantially in scope and cost with an additional state grant commitment of \$73.9 million ([PA 24-151](#), § 151, effective upon passage).

Redirecting School Buildings to Another Public Use

This session the legislature passed a law that allows school boards to redirect a school building project to a public use during the grant amortization period without needing to repay the unamortized part of the grant or seek forgiveness for the redirection (e.g., sale, lease, or demolition). The new law leaves unchanged the requirement to repay if the project is redirected for private use ([PA 24-151](#), § 152, effective July 1, 2024).

Reimbursement Rate Increases for Early Childhood Projects

A new law increases prior law’s five-percentage-point reimbursement rate increase to 15 percentage points for new or expansion elementary school building projects that include space for a school readiness program. The new law broadens the rate’s availability to include early childhood care and education programs providing services for children from birth to age five.

The new law also establishes a new 15 percentage point bonus for a building or facility to be used exclusively by a school board for an early childhood care and education program providing services for children from birth to age five. It additionally increases, from 10 to 15 percentage points, the reimbursement rate bonus for elementary school projects relating to (1) full-day kindergarten or preschool in priority school districts or priority schools or (2) reducing class sizes under the Early Reading Success program ([PA 24-151](#), §§ 155 & 156, effective July 1, 2024).

Renewable Tariff for Solar in Schools

This year the legislature required the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) to initiate a docket by January 1, 2025, to develop a program to encourage solar facility and energy storage system installation at public schools. PURA must incorporate the program into existing renewable energy tariffs and may (1) establish a separate tariff (i.e., generally a set of rules and rates) for projects selected under this program and (2) limit the program's size by implementing a cap of up to 25 MW per year on the generating capacity of selected projects, though PURA must allow unused allowance under the cap in any given year to accrue (i.e., be available in subsequent years). This program is separate from and not counted toward separate caps in existing renewable energy tariffs or energy storage programs ([PA 24-151](#), §§ 173-175, effective July 1, 2024).

School Construction Project Exemptions, Waivers, and Modifications

A new law exempts school construction projects in 25 towns (including projects by the state or a different entity) and one regional school district from statutory and regulatory requirements to allow them to, among other things, (1) qualify for state reimbursement grants; (2) receive higher reimbursement percentages for the grants; or (3) have their project reauthorized due to a change in scope or cost ([PA 24-151](#), §§ 177-209, effective July 1, 2024).

Single-User Bathrooms in New Schools

A new law prohibits, beginning July 1, 2025, a new school construction project from being eligible for a school construction grant if the project does not include single-user toilet and bathing rooms available for all students and school personnel. It does this by prohibiting DAS from including new construction projects on the school construction priority list that is submitted to the General Assembly if the project plans do not include such single-user toilet and bathing rooms ([PA 24-151](#), § 167, effective July 1, 2024).

Solar Feasibility Studies for School Construction Grants

Beginning July 1, 2025, new legislation requires school boards, before submitting a priority list application for a school building project grant, to have a solar feasibility assessment performed for the building in the application unless it already uses solar energy. The assessment must give a school board the information it needs to determine the feasibility of installing solar facilities on the school's premises, including the following:

1. the school's annual electric load during the most recent calendar year, if applicable;
2. the available area of rooftop space and impervious surface to host solar facilities;
3. available opportunities to interconnect with the electric distribution system; and
4. a description of anticipated costs, savings, and contractual terms for solar facilities, including interconnection costs and electric bill credits.

The new law allows the DAS commissioner to reject a priority list application that does not have this assessment ([PA 24-151](#), §§ 154 & 176, effective July 1, 2024).

School Districts and Boards of Education

Bans Requiring Parent Participation as a Condition of Student Enrollment

The legislature enacted a law that bans a local school board from requiring a student's parent or guardian to participate in school activities, such as volunteering, as a condition for the student to enroll in one of the board's schools ([PA 24-93](#), § 7, effective July 1, 2024).

Deadline for Submitting Audit Data Revisions to SDE

A new law delays, from December 31 to January 31, the deadline for (1) school boards to submit to SDE revisions to their returns of receipts, expenditures, and statistics and (2) an independent public accountant to certify the returns. It correspondingly delays, from February 15 to March 15, the deadline for SDE to annually publish on its website the data in the reports and returns (1) by education program type, expense function, expense object, and funding source and (2) in a format that allows financial comparisons between school districts and schools ([PA 24-93](#), § 16, effective July 1, 2024).

Education Reserve Funds

Beginning with FY 24, a new law allows a local board of education, rather than a town board of finance, board of selectmen in a town with no board of finance, or other appropriating authority for a school district, to deposit unexpended education funds into a nonlapsing account. As under existing law, the deposit may be up to 2% of the previous fiscal year's budgeted appropriation for education, and account expenditures must be only for educational purposes.

Beginning with FY 24, a new law allows regional boards of education to create reserve funds for educational expenditures, rather than reserve funds for capital and nonrecurring

expenditures as current law allows. As under existing law, boards may create the fund by a majority vote of their members, and the aggregate amount of annual and supplemental appropriations by the district to the fund cannot exceed 2% of the annual district budget for the fiscal year ([PA 24-45](#), §§ 7 & 8, effective upon passage).

Large Organic Materials Generators

For public and private K-12 schools, a new law (1) delays, from January 1, 2025, to July 1, 2026, the requirement for certain organic materials generators to separate the materials and recycle them and (2) limits the requirement to buildings or facilities located within a 20-mile radius of a permitted source-separated organic material composting facility ([PA 24-45](#), § 6, effective July 1, 2024).

Open Choice Grant Amounts in School Board Budgets

Beginning with FY 25, new legislation requires each school board that receives students under the Open Choice Program to include the projected Open Choice grant amount in the board's annual budget and projected revenue statement. The Open Choice program is an interdistrict enrollment program that allows students in urban centers to attend school in suburban districts and vice versa. Receiving school districts get a per-student state grant ([PA 24-93](#), § 2, effective July 1, 2024).

Regional School District Study Committee Membership

This year, the legislature removed a requirement for the state treasurer, or his designee, to serve on the study committee that, by law, must form whenever a town applies to withdraw from a regional school district or multiple member towns apply to dissolve a regional school district ([PA 24-62](#), § 13, effective upon passage).

School Playground Design

A new law requires school boards to conform the design of any school playground designed on or after July 1, 2025, to the principles of universal design. This is a concept of designing spaces with the goal of maximizing usability and access without needing adaptation or specialized design. Among other things, the playgrounds must appeal to a variety of senses, encourage unstructured play, provide access for different ability levels, and use sensory-engaging materials ([PA 24-93](#), § 18, effective July 1, 2024).

Youth Service Bureaus

A new law requires school boards, when requested by a youth service bureau (YSB) that provides services to the board, to enter into a MOU addressing when students' educational records may be shared between the board and a YSB and requiring that the record sharing be done in accordance with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

The new law also allows private youth-serving organizations to establish a YSB if they are designated to act as agents of one or more local or regional boards of education. As under existing law, the YSB may evaluate, plan, coordinate, and implement services, including prevention and intervention programs for delinquent, pre-delinquent, pregnant, parenting, and troubled youths referred to the bureaus ([PA 24-45](#), §§ 23 & 24, effective July 1, 2024).

Special Education

Connecticut Technical Education and Career System and Transition Services

Existing law requires the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) to provide an appropriate educational program for each child requiring special education. A new law explicitly requires CTECS to provide and fund transition services as part of this requirement. It also requires CTECS (rather than the local or regional board of education) to convene a planning and placement team meeting for home-schooled special education students before they enroll in a CTECS school ([PA 24-78](#), § 23, effective July 1, 2024).

Notice Requirements Before Special Education Planning and Placement 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. A new law 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 parts of the meeting where the student's educational program is developed, reviewed, or revised; and (2) have advisors of their choosing, the paraeducator assigned to the student, the birth-to-three coordinator, if any, and a language interpreter, if needed ([PA 24-41](#), § 23, effective July 1, 2024).

Transition Services for Students Receiving Special Education Services

The legislature enacted a new law that modifies the statutory definition of “transition service” for purposes of planning these services for special education students who are leaving, or about to leave, the kindergarten-12 education system.

Prior law defined a transition service as a service for special education students that facilitates their transition from school to postsecondary activities, such as education, training, employment, or independent living. The new law uses the federal definition of transition services, which is similar but adds the requirement that activities be results-oriented, based on the individual child’s needs, and names specific activities (e.g., vocational education, integrated employment, continuing and adult education, and adult services).

The new law also removes the requirement that SDE’s transition services coordinator’s visits to transition programs be unannounced but allows the coordinator or SDE to still make unannounced visits ([PA 24-78](#), §§ 12-16, effective July 1, 2024).

State Department of Education & State Board of Education

Connecticut Grown for Connecticut Kids Week

A new law modifies SDE’s responsibilities regarding the annual Connecticut Grown for Connecticut Kids Week, which promotes Connecticut agriculture and foods to children through school meal and classroom programs, farmers’ markets, farms, and other community locations. Prior law required SDE to arrange for interaction between students and farmers, including field trips to farms and in-school presentations by farmers. The new law instead requires SDE to provide technical assistance and support for schools to do this ([PA 24-78](#), § 11, effective July 1, 2024).

Plan to Make Education Commissioner the Department Head Rather Than SBE

A new law requires the education commissioner to develop a plan to (1) convert SBE from its legal status as the agency department head to an advisory board and (2) empower the education commissioner to become the department head. By January 1, 2026, the commissioner must submit the plan and any legislative recommendations to the Education Committee ([PA 24-81](#), § 121, effective upon passage).

Public School Testing Audit

The legislature enacted a new law requiring SDE to conduct a comprehensive audit of the assessments (i.e., tests) that public school students must take. The audit must be done in consultation with national assessment experts and local school boards. By January 31, 2026, SDE must report on the audit and any related legislative proposals to the Education Committee. The same law also repeals an existing requirement that by January 1, 2025, the education commissioner audit state and local testing requirements and administration and to submit a report on the audit to the Appropriations and Education committees by that date ([PA 24-93](#), §§ 1 & 20, effective July 1, 2024).

Racial Imbalance Law Pause

The racial imbalance law requires SBE, when it finds a racial imbalance at a public school, to give written notification to the school's board of education. This in turn requires the notified school board to prepare a plan to correct the imbalance and submit it to SBE for approval. The legislature enacted a new law that prevents SBE from notifying a school board of a racial imbalance at one of its schools until July 1, 2025. Similarly, it delays until July 1, 2025, other related actions, such as the requirement that affected boards prepare and file a correction plan ([PA 24-93](#), §§ 3-5, effective July 1, 2024).

SDE Literacy Research and Reading Success Resources

A new law requires SDE's Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success to make certain resources available to the faculty of teacher preparation programs, including resources and research supporting scientifically based reading instruction. The act replaces current requirements that the center make available (1) materials related to the science of teaching reading, (2) the intensive reading instruction program, and (3) samples of available reviewed and approved reading curriculum models or programs. It also eliminates the requirement for the center to report on teacher preparation programs' progress in including these models or programs ([PA 24-78](#), §§ 1 & 2, effective July 1, 2024).

State Education Resource Center

SERC Funding

Prior law allowed the SDE commissioner to allocate funds to the State Education Resource Center (SERC) so that it may provide professional development services, technical assistance and evaluation activities, policy analysis, and other forms of assistance to the following entities: (1) local and regional school boards, (2) SDE, (3) charter schools, and (4) other education entities and providers. A new law makes the commissioner's fund allocation

to SERC required rather than optional (as under prior law, it does not include an amount) ([PA 24-81](#), § 125, effective July 1, 2024).

Students

Changes to Early Grades Out-of-School Suspension

New legislation changes the standard for out-of-school suspensions for grades preschool to two and limits the suspension to up to five, rather than up to 10, school days. Under prior law, the standard was conduct of a violent or sexual nature that endangers persons. Under the act, the standard is behavior that causes physical harm.

Additionally, under the legislation, in order to suspend a student in these grades, the school administration must (1) require that the student receive trauma-informed and developmentally appropriate services that align with any behavioral intervention plan, individualized education program, or Section 504 plan (Rehabilitation Act of 1973), when the student returns to school and (2) consider whether to convene a planning and placement team meeting to evaluate whether the student may need special education or related services ([PA 24-45](#), § 14, effective July 1, 2024).

Credit Recovery Programs

Existing law allows school boards to have a school or program in a nontraditional setting that addresses students' social, emotional, behavioral, and academic needs (i.e., "alternative education"). Under a new law, school boards with a credit recovery program as part of their alternative education must allow students enrolled in a traditional school program and at risk of not graduating to also enroll in the credit recovery program while remaining enrolled in the traditional program. The boards must do so beginning with the 2024-25 school year ([PA 24-45](#), § 25, effective July 1, 2024).

Disconnected Youth

This session the legislature enacted several measures relating to "disconnected youth" (generally, people ages 14-26 who are neither employed nor enrolled in school). One measure requires the Connecticut Preschool through Twenty and Workforce Information Network (P20 WIN) to develop a plan to establish a statewide data intermediary to provide technical support, create data-sharing agreements, and build and maintain the infrastructure needed to share data between nonprofit organizations serving disconnected youth. The P20 WIN executive board must submit (1) the plan to the Education Committee

by January 1, 2025, and (2) a report on disconnected youth annually beginning by January 1, 2025, to various legislative committees ([PA 24-45](#), §§ 21 & 22, effective July 1, 2024).

Expulsion Hearing Notice

By law, a student cannot be expelled without a hearing unless an emergency exists and notice of the hearing must be given to the student’s parents or guardian at least five business days before it takes place. A new law specifies that the five days must not include the day of the hearing ([PA 24-93](#), § 12, effective July 1, 2024).

High School Graduation Requirement Changes

The legislature made several changes affecting high school graduation requirements, including the following:

1. (a) delaying, to the graduating class of 2027, a requirement that students complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), institutional financial aid, or signed waiver in order to graduate from high school and (b) exempting endowed academy students who hold F-1 visas from this requirement (i.e., nonimmigrant student visas);
2. beginning with the graduating class of 2027, eliminating the option for school boards to require students to complete a one-credit mastery-based diploma assessment (i.e., a “capstone”) in order to graduate from high school;
3. allowing the half-credit of personal financial management and financial literacy (which begins with the graduating class of 2027) to count as a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics credit;
4. eliminating a (a) ban on partisan political activities counting as credit for community service and (b) requirement that SBE give community service recognition awards to students who complete at least 50 hours of community service; and
5. adding physician assistants to the types of practitioners who may sign a certificate stating that a student should not participate in physical education (which is otherwise a graduation requirement) ([PA 24-45](#), §§ 9 & 10, effective July 1, 2024).

In-School Suspensions

A new law reduces, from 10 to 5, the maximum number of consecutive days a school may give a student for an in-school suspension ([PA 24-45](#), § 13, effective July 1, 2024).

Parental Notification of Student Causing Disruption or Harm and Intervention Meeting

The legislature enacted a law that creates two new parental notifications related to student behavior.

The first one requires a school principal or other administrator to notify a parent or guardian of a student whose behavior has caused (1) a serious disruption to school instruction or (2) harm to his or herself or others, within 24 hours after the behavior occurs. The notice must inform the recipient that the classroom teacher may request a behavior intervention meeting with the school's crisis intervention team as permitted by law. In these cases, by law a teacher can request a behavioral intervention meeting with a crisis intervention team.

The second one requires the crisis intervention team, after it receives the teacher's request, to notify the student's parents or guardians of the teacher's request before holding the meeting. Also, the crisis intervention team must submit a summary of the meeting, including any resources and supports identified, to the student's parents or guardians within seven days after the meeting ([PA 24-93](#), § 11, effective July 1, 2024).

Student Success Plans

New legislation requires that student success plans consider enrollment opportunities in CTECS. By law, school boards must create a student success plan for each public school student beginning in sixth grade. The plan must include the student's career and academic choices in grades 6-12 ([PA 24-45](#), § 9, 11 & 12, effective July 1, 2024).

Task Forces, Councils, Working Groups, and Studies

Additional Members for Two Task Forces

The legislature increased the membership of two previously-established task forces established in prior years. Specifically, it increased:

1. the Connecticut Civics Education, Civics Engagement and Media Literacy Task Force membership from 18 to 20 by adding two student members and
2. the membership of the task force to study the provision and funding of special education during the 2016-17 through 2020-21 school years from 23 members to 24 by adding a representative of the Connecticut Council of Administrators of Special Education ([PA 24-93](#), §§ 13 & 14, effective upon passage).

Advisory Council for Teacher Professional Standards

A new law 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. It additionally requires the council 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 new legislation 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 ([PA 24-41](#), § 9, effective July 1, 2024).

Indoor Air Quality Working Group

New legislation extends the deadline, from July 1, 2024, to January 1, 2031, for the school indoor air quality working group to submit its final report to the governor and the Education, Labor and Public Employees, and Public Health committees. It also requires annual progress reports from the working group, with the first due by January 1, 2025. It also adds members to the group and expands its mission ([PA 24-74](#), § 6, effective upon passage).

Mandate Review Council

This session the legislature created a 10-member Education Mandate Review Advisory Council to advise and provide annual reports to the Education Committee on the (1) cost and implementation of existing education mandates on local and regional school boards and (2) impact of proposals to add to or revise these mandates. The council's annual reports may include a review of mandates in the state's laws and regulations on school boards to identify those that may be repealed or are burdensome or limit or restrict providing student instruction ([PA 24-45](#), § 1, and [PA 24-81](#), § 108, effective July 1, 2024).

Reading Leadership Implementation Council

New legislation requires that the Reading Leadership Implementation Council members' initial terms expire on June 30, 2024, and that subsequent appointments be made by July 1, 2024. The newly appointed members serve two-year terms, and members may serve

consecutive terms. By law, the council must develop and publish annual goals for SDE's Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success ([PA 24-93](#), § 19, effective upon passage).

Study of State-Wide Program to Support Advanced Placement Students

This session, the legislature passed a law requiring SDE to study the feasibility of establishing and administering a statewide program to support public high school students' participation in advanced placement (AP) courses or programs, giving priority to students from low-income families. The study must review current in-state programs to provide advanced courses or programs, identify and analyze similar programs in other states, and make recommendations on the framework and criteria for implementing the program, and SDE must report to the Education Committee by January 1, 2026 ([PA 24-78](#), § 4, effective July 1, 2024).

Task Force to Study Workers' Compensation Coverage for Vo-Ag Students on Farms

A new law establishes a 10-member task force to study workers' compensation coverage for students of regional agricultural science and technology education centers (i.e., "regional vo-ag centers") who are enrolled in an (1) approved public work-study program or a Connecticut Career Certification Program or (2) internship, as defined in state law. The study must examine the policies and practices of regional vo-ag centers regarding workers' compensation coverage for these students and potential changes to workers' compensation law for them. The task force must submit a report to the Labor and Public Employees Committee by January 1, 2025 ([SA 24-16](#), effective upon passage).

Working Groups on High School Graduation Requirements, Grading Policies, and Accountability Index

A new law allows the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education's executive director to convene a working group of at least 15 members to review high school graduation requirements to identify requirements that limit or restrict instruction or service provision to students and recommend revisions. The new law also allows the Connecticut Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers-Connecticut presidents to jointly convene a working group of at least 15 members to review (1) high school grading policies used by local and regional boards of education and (2) the accountability index and information and data SDE uses to calculate index scores. The groups must each submit a

report to the Education Committee by January 1, 2026 ([PA 24-45](#), §§ 27 & 28, effective July 1, 2024).

Teachers and Other School District Staff

Alternative Route to Certification Program Eligibility Expanded

A new law expands who may participate in an existing alternative route to certification (ARC) program for people in alternate professions to include someone with (1) a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and (2) at least five years of work experience requiring discretion and independent judgment in the field related to the teaching endorsement area ([PA 24-41](#), § 8, effective July 1, 2024).

Aspiring Educators Diversity Scholarship Program

The legislature broadened the aspiring educators diversity 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 under prior law. By law, the students must be enrolled in a teacher preparation program at a four-year higher education institution to be eligible ([PA 24-41](#), § 50, effective July 1, 2024).

ARC Programs for School Support Staff

New legislation allows SDE to approve, as part of the existing ARC program for school support staff, programs that partner with an institution of higher education to provide a dual degree-plus-certification program for participants who hold an associate degree. Under prior law, SDE could only approve programs that required participants to have a bachelor's degree. By law, school support staff are people employed as behavior analyst, assistant behavior analyst, athletic coach, or paraeducator ([PA 24-41](#), § 7, effective July 1, 2024).

Banning EdTPA as Teacher Prep Requirement

Beginning July 1, 2024, a new law prohibits SBE from requiring an SDE-approved teacher preparation program to use edTPA (a preservice performance assessment) as a (1) requirement for students to complete their programs and (2) program preservice performance assessment. Also, beginning July 1, 2024, the same law bans teacher preparation programs at higher education institutions from using the results of edTPA to deny a candidate completion of their program. But the law permits these institutions to use the results as a diagnostic tool to provide necessary remedial instruction to enrolled candidates ([PA 24-41](#), § 15, effective July 1, 2024).

Broadening Grades Covered by Teacher Endorsements

A new law makes endorsements to teach elementary education valid for grades prekindergarten to six, including those already issued for teaching grades kindergarten or one to six. The same law 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, general science, history and social studies, classical humanities, mathematics, physics, and a broad list of world languages (e.g., French, Mandarin, Russian, and Spanish) ([PA 24-41](#), §§ 2 & 4, effective July 1, 2024).

Creation of the Connecticut Educator Preparation and Certification Board (CEPCB)

A new law creates the 16-member Connecticut Educator Preparation and Certification Board (CEPCB) with the broad charge of modernizing and aligning educator preparation and certification to attract and retain diverse professionals into teaching. Among other things, the board must (1) review educator preparation and certification regulations and statutes for obsolete or conflicting provisions, (2) develop review standards for new or continuing educator preparation programs and ARC programs, and (3) develop legislation relating to educator preparation and certification (see below). The law requires the board to submit its first annual report to the Education Committee by January 1, 2026 ([PA 24-41](#), §§ 10, 12-14 & 19, effective July 1, 2024).

CEPCB and SDE Approval of Proposals for Educator Preparation and Certification Legislation and Regulations

The legislature enacted a new law that gives CEPCB and SBE each the authority to develop standards and proposals for regulations and legislation relating to educator preparation and certification and requires each board to either approve or reject the proposals of the other. If a proposal is approved by both boards, then for proposals that require (1) regulations, SBE must adopt regulations consistent with the approved proposal and (2) legislation, the proposal will be submitted to the Education Committee for consideration ([PA 24-41](#), § 11, effective July 1, 2024).

Deadline for SDE to Distribute Paraeducator Professional Development Funding

A new law requires SDE, by September 1, 2024, to distribute FY 23 ARPA funding for paraeducator professional development to school boards proportionately based on the number of paraeducators each board employs ([PA 24-81](#), § 123, effective upon passage).

Elementary Education Teacher Preparation Program Standards

New legislation requires, beginning July 1, 2025, that any elementary education teacher preparation program be aligned with any National Association for the Education of Young Children professional standards and competencies for early childhood educators ([PA 24-41](#), § 3, effective July 1, 2024).

Employment History Reviews

By law, school boards and other entities hiring employees for schools must review an applicant's employment history and request information from the applicant's previous employers, including information about abuse and neglect allegations that are being investigated or were substantiated. A new law excludes information about a substantiated abuse or neglect or sexual misconduct allegation if the substantiation was 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) ([PA 24-41](#), § 46, effective July 1, 2024).

Family Medical Leave for Non-Certified School Board Employees

New legislation reduces for all non-certified school employees the number of work hours required to qualify for unpaid family and medical leave benefits (from 1,250 to 950). Under prior law, paraeducators were the only non-certified employees that qualified at this lower threshold. The legislation and the existing law require boards of education to provide to these employees the same benefits provided by the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FLMA) to noncertified employees ([PA 24-41](#), § 18, effective July 1, 2024).

In-Service Training

Existing law requires school boards to provide an in-service training program for certified educators and establishes several required training topics. New legislation specifies that a school board's professional development and evaluation committee and may decide the format and frequency of the trainings, as long as the required subject matter is covered at least once every five years. Additionally, the new law eliminates requirements that the training include (1) identification and prevention of and response to bullying, (2) culturally responsive pedagogy and practice, and (3) the principles and practices of social-emotional learning and restorative practices. Generally, training on these subjects is covered under other laws on educator training ([PA 24-45](#), §§ 2-5, most provisions effective July 1, 2024).

Orientation for School Nurses

Beginning with the 2024-25 school year, existing law requires school boards to annually approve and provide professional development programs or activities for each school nurse or nurse practitioner appointed by, or under contract with, the board. Under newly enacted legislation, the programs or activities must include an orientation to school health services for new school nurses or nurse practitioners. The orientation must be (1) developed by an association representing school nurses in the state and (2) completed within six months after the nurse or nurse practitioner is appointed by, or enters a contract with, the board ([PA 24-93](#), § 15, effective July 1, 2024).

Paraeducator Health Insurance Subsidy Programs

New legislation extends by one year a health savings account subsidy program for paraeducators and expands it to cover high deductible health plans for Medicare-eligible paraeducators. The legislation also (1) requires the comptroller to establish a one-year premium subsidy program for school boards that provide paraeducators with certain health plans and (2) repeals a program providing stipends to paraeducators to purchase a qualified health plan through Access Health CT ([PA 24-81](#), §§ 124 & 126, effective July 1, 2024, except the repealer is effective upon passage).

Repeal of Various Teacher Certification Regulations

A new law repeals numerous SBE regulations addressing educator preparation programs, the various levels of teacher certification, and teacher subject and grade level certification endorsements effective July 1, 2026 ([PA 24-41](#), § 51, effective July 1, 2026).

Subject Area Assessments and Cross Endorsements

The legislature enacted a new law that simplifies the process for certified teachers to gain an additional endorsement to teach in another subject area. It generally 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 endorsement area, with some exceptions (e.g., special education) ([PA 24-41](#), § 5, effective July 1, 2024).

Teacher Certification Changes

This session, the legislature made significant changes to the teacher certification laws that, among other things, (1) simplify how certain applicants qualify for an initial educator certification and (2) reduce the number of teacher certification levels from three to two.

The new law does so by eliminating the provisional educator certificate, the middle level of Connecticut's three levels of certification, while retaining the initial and professional levels. It makes an initial educator certification valid for 10 years, rather than three as under the prior law, and allows an educator who holds this certification to apply for professional certification if they have certain teaching experience and either (1) hold a master's degree or (2) have completed an alternate pathway to professional certification.

The legislation also expands those eligible for the ARC program certification to candidates with a bachelor's degree or advanced degree from an accredited higher education institution after completing an ARC program. It eliminates prior law's requirement that ARC program graduates also satisfy the requirements of a temporary 90-day certificate or a resident teacher certificate ([PA 24-41](#), §§ 1-6, effective July 1, 2024).

Teacher Certifications for Technical High School and Trade Occupations

A new law 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 CTECS (formerly known as the technical high schools) and the other to teach trade and industrial occupations in comprehensive high schools ([PA 24-41](#), §§ 16 & 17, effective July 1, 2024).

Higher Education

Barber, Hairdresser, and Cosmetician Education on Textured Hair

A new law requires the public health commissioner, in consultation with the state Examining Board for Barbers, Hairdressers and Cosmeticians, to amend the curriculum requirements for barber schools and hairdressing and cosmetology schools to include education and training in providing services to people with textured hair (i.e., coiled, curly, or wavy hair), including working with various curl and wave patterns, hair strand thicknesses, and hair volumes ([PA 24-53](#), effective July 1, 2024).

Board of Regents Membership Expansion

A new law expands the Board of Regents (BOR) membership by adding the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) secretary, or his designee, as an ex-officio, nonvoting member ([PA 24-81](#), § 110, effective July 1, 2024).

Connecticut Automatic Admissions Program

A new law requires the four Connecticut State Universities and any other institutions participating in the Connecticut Automatic Admissions Program to use a BOR-established minimum unweighted grade point average (GPA), rather than a BOR-established minimum class rank percentile, as an academic threshold for admission. It correspondingly requires BOR to set the minimum unweighted GPA threshold and makes conforming changes ([PA 24-47](#), effective July 1, 2024).

Connecticut Collegiate Awareness and Preparation Program Expansion and New Transition to Higher Education Program

This session, the legislature passed a law requiring the Connecticut collegiate awareness and preparation program (ConnCAP), which is part of the Office of Higher Education’s (OHE’s) Minority Advancement Program, to target disadvantaged students, including low-income and first-generation prospective college students, rather than “underachievers” as under prior law.

The act also requires OHE, also as part of its Minority Advancement Program, to establish the Preparation for Academic Transition to a Higher Education program to give grants to nonprofit community-based organization that assist 11th- and 12th-grade students with certain college preparation activities, including (1) completing applications to postsecondary education programs and (2) securing education scholarships and grants to finance postsecondary education attendance. Beginning in FY 25, OHE must allocate up to \$100,000 to the program ([PA 24-117](#), effective July 1, 2024).

Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority Loans for Students Under Age 18

New legislation allows Connecticut residents who are under age 18 to sign for a Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority (CHESLA) loan if they otherwise qualify for it and obtain the loan with an adult cosigner (i.e., age 18 or older) ([PA 24-64](#), § 1, effective upon passage).

Construction Management Oversight Committee

A new law eliminates the Construction Management Oversight Committee (CMOC) and transfers its responsibilities to the UConn Board of Trustees (BOT), or one of the board’s committees. The law previously charged CMOC with overseeing and implementing the UConn 2000 program, but it functionally disbanded in 2014 after completing its major work.

Since then, the BOT has assumed CMOC’s oversight responsibilities such as reviewing and approving UConn 2000 policies and procedures on selecting professionals and contractors ([PA 24-22](#), §§ 1-3, effective July 1, 2024).

Department of Correction Vocational Village Program

By law, the Department of Correction (DOC), in consultation with the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), administers a vocational village program to provide skilled trades training to inmates, including opportunities to earn nationally recognized industry certifications and credentials. A new law requires the DOC commissioner to prepare and equip the department and its post-secondary education partners to use the program’s allocated funding for programs that produce economic and other benefits, including employment opportunities for inmates ([PA 24-81](#), § 17, effective July 1, 2024).

Global Entrepreneur in Residence Program

The legislature passed a law this session requiring DECD, in consultation with UConn, the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, the Office of Workforce Strategy, and the governor’s office, to recommend to the Commerce Committee how to design and establish a three-year Global Entrepreneur in Residence pilot program to attract or retain resident specialists in Connecticut. Under the law, a “resident specialist” is someone who (1) is employed part-time by a private employer in a specialty occupation, (2) is not a United States citizen, and (3) wants to move to or remain in Connecticut as a nonimmigrant while employed by a private employer. The pilot program may also facilitate partnerships between higher education institutions and private employers that employ resident specialists and help resident specialists file visa applications ([PA 24-103](#), effective upon passage).

Higher Education Commissioner

A new law renames the title of OHE’s head as a “commissioner” rather than an “executive director.” Under existing law unchanged by the act, this position was already classified as a statutory department head, subject to the same nomination and appointment process, terms, and general qualifications, duties, and powers as other agency commissioners ([PA 24-81](#), §§ 91, 131-175 & 177, effective upon passage).

Higher Education Financial Sustainability Advisory Board

This past session, the legislature established the Higher Education Financial Sustainability Advisory Board. The act designates its members, assigns the board powers and duties, and requires public higher education institutions and the UConn Health center to submit certain

information to the board at the chairpersons' request ([PA 24-81](#), § 107, effective July 1, 2024).

Increasing the Number of Full-Time Faculty at Public Higher Education Institutions

This session, the legislature passed a law pausing, until 2028, a biennial requirement that the BOR and UConn BOT develop plans on how to increase the number of full-time faculty and report on them to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee ([PA 24-22](#), § 4, effective July 1, 2024).

Kirklyn M. Kerr Program for State Residents Enrolled in a Veterinary Graduate School

A new law requires UConn to assess the feasibility of restarting the Kirklyn M. Kerr program with a veterinary school accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association, and to submit a report to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement and Appropriations committees on the feasibility and cost of restarting the program. The program has been dormant in recent years, but when active, Connecticut residents could attend Iowa State University's College of Veterinary Medicine and pay reduced tuition (there are no veterinary schools in Connecticut) ([SA 24-22](#), effective July 1, 2024).

Needs Assessment on Postsecondary Education Programs in Correctional Facilities

This session, the legislature passed a law requiring OPM's Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division, in consultation with DOC, to do a needs assessment of the facilities, materials, and staffing required to deliver postsecondary education programs in correctional facilities. Under the act, the assessment must include, among other things:

1. feedback solicitation from higher education institutions that provide postsecondary education programs in correctional facilities to understand current needs;
2. an analysis of DOC's policies on incarcerated individuals' postsecondary education; and
3. an estimate of the level of unmet demand for this type of education ([PA 24-81](#), § 18, effective July 1, 2024).

Partnerships Between High Schools and Community-Technical Colleges

A new law requires each regional community-technical college to consult with the public high school counselors and administrators within the college's region to establish collaborative partnerships between the schools and the college. The partnerships may include collaborative counseling programs for (1) students interested in specific careers; (2) evaluation and alignment of curricula; and (3) offering support or programs to improve student outcomes ([PA 24-93](#), § 8, effective July 1, 2024).

Planning Commission for Higher Education

A new law makes several changes to the Planning Commission for Higher Education, which is charged with revising and updating the 2015 strategic master plan for higher education in Connecticut. Among other things, it gives the commission three chairpersons, rather than one, with the House speaker and the Senate president pro tempore each appointing an additional chair from the commission's voting members. It also makes the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee's chairs and ranking members voting commission members, rather than ex-officio nonvoting members.

Additionally, it removes the commission from OHE and instead requires the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee's administrative staff to serve as the commission's administrative staff. The act eliminates the requirement that the commission be responsible for implementing any policies it develops.

New commission appointments (presumably the additional chairs) must be made by June 1, 2024, and the chairpersons must jointly schedule the commission's first meeting by July 1, 2024. The act also extends the commission's reporting deadlines by one year ([PA 24-125](#), effective upon passage).

Pledge to Advance CT (PACT) Program

This session, the legislature modified PACT (i.e., the state's debt-free community college program) eligibility by (1) eliminating the requirement that a student graduate from a high school in Connecticut, thus allowing graduates from high schools outside the state to qualify, and (2) extending eligibility to students who are enrolled in a transition program under their individualized education program and meet other specified criteria.

The act also increases the program's minimum award amounts, names the award the "Mary Ann Handley Grant," and requires BOR's upcoming semesterly reports on certain program

metrics to be submitted by November 1, 2024, and March 1, 2025, and each following semester ([PA 24-81](#), § 75, effective July 1, 2024).

Repeal of Student Loan Reimbursement and Related Programs

This session, the legislature repealed several student loan reimbursement, scholarship, and related programs, including the “Engineering Connecticut” and “You Belong” student loan reimbursement programs OHE administers; the Connecticut green technology, life science, and health information technology student loan reimbursement program; the information technology student loan reimbursement pilot program BOR administers; a scholarship program for Vietnam-era veterans; and a program which under prior law required OHE to provide grants in FYs 23-25 to public and private colleges and universities for delivery of student mental health services on campus ([PA 24-81](#), § 87, effective July 1, 2024.)

Roberta B. Willis Scholarship Program Changes

A new law prohibits OHE, for the academic year beginning July 1, 2024, from requiring higher education institutions participating in the Roberta B. Willis scholarship program to reduce the amount of a need-based grant awarded under the program to an eligible student based on the initial qualifications as determined from his or her FAFSA, even if the U.S. Department of Education subsequently revises the qualifications. The act pauses, for the academic year beginning July 1, 2024, the requirement that Roberta B. Willis scholarship program’s need- and merit-based grants be awarded in a higher amount than its need-based grants.

The new law also requires OHE to (1) disburse funds allocated to the program for FYs 24 and 25 according to a plan developed by the office and (2) reserve up to \$15 million from the program’s FY 25 appropriation for disbursement during FY 26 ([PA 24-81](#), §§ 50 & 53, effective July 1, 2024).

Scholarship Displacement Policies at Higher Education Institutions

A new law requires each higher education institution in the state to disclose its policy on reducing the amount of financial aid it offers to a current or prospective student who receives a scholarship (“scholarship displacement”) in:

1. the initial financial aid packaged offered to each current or prospective student, and
2. a report submitted to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee by January 1, 2025 ([PA 24-87](#), effective July 1, 2024).

Student Loan Payment Tax Credit Expansion

A new law expands the student loan payment tax credit for qualified employers that make eligible student loan payments on a qualified employee's behalf. It does so by allowing the employer to claim the credit for eligible payments it made to a student loan servicer on a qualified employee's behalf on any student education loan, rather than only loans CHESLA issued. It also caps at \$10 million the total amount of credits that may be issued under this program annually and establishes a process for employers to reserve credits.

The act also requires CHESLA to (1) establish a High Priority Occupation Loan Subsidy Program to subsidize interest rates on loans it issues to eligible individuals employed in high priority occupations and (2) consult with the Office of Workforce Strategy to designate occupations as such ([PA 24-52](#), effective July 1, 2024, except the tax credit expansion is effective January 1, 2025, and applicable to calendar or income years commencing on or after that date).

Student Loan Reimbursement Pilot Program

A new law modifies eligibility requirements for the OHE Student Loan Reimbursement Pilot Program, including (1) expanding the program to students who have attended either a public or private college in the state and graduated with an associate degree; (2) requiring the OHE executive director to establish hardship waiver qualifications; and (3) requiring specific documentation from participants as part of their annual reporting requirements ([PA 24-81](#), § 22, effective July 1, 2024).

Surveys During Evaluation of a Private Career School to Renew a Certificate of Authorization

By law, private career schools must have a certificate of authorization from OHE in order to operate.

The act requires OHE, by January 1, 2025, to develop a student survey to be conducted during an evaluation for renewing a private career school's certificate of authorization. The survey must at least include questions about the quality of each course or instructional program in which the student is or was enrolled. Under the act, each evaluation team must administer the survey to students beginning with evaluations on or after January 1, 2025 ([PA 24-116](#), effective July 1, 2024).

UConn 2000 Infrastructure Program

This session, the legislature extended the UConn 2000 program by four years and authorized an additional \$625 million in new bonding under the program. As part of this new law, it required UConn or the UConn Foundation to raise \$100 million of “UConn 2000 philanthropic commitments and gifts,” set cumulative target milestones for this fundraising that apply from FY 25 through FY 31, and tied the annual amount of UConn 2000 bonds that UConn’s Board of Trustees may request in these years to the ratio of the actual commitments and gifts received to the target milestones ([PA 24-151](#), §§ 19-24, effective July 1, 2024).

Additional Minor Acts

Various Acts

In addition to the acts summarized above, several other acts make minor changes affecting education. These acts include the following:

1. [PA 24-41](#), §§ 20-38 (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);
2. [PA 24-41](#), § 39 (adds a certified teacher to the Governor’s Workforce Council membership);
3. [PA 24-29](#) (makes technical revisions to the education and early childhood statutes); and
4. [SA 24-14](#) (requires the Department of Correction to assess and consider ways to screen for dyslexia people who are (1) sentenced to a period of incarceration and (2) who have not been convicted or sentenced and who are in custody for longer than six months).

JM:JC:co