



## Senate

General Assembly

**File No. 598**

February Session, 2000

Substitute Senate Bill No. 404

*Senate, April 13, 2000*

The Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding reported through SEN. LOONEY of the 11<sup>th</sup> Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

### ***An Act Concerning The Teacher Shortage.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) The Commissioner of Education shall annually, by  
2 December first, determine subject and geographic areas in which a  
3 teacher shortage exists and shall certify such shortages to the Board of  
4 Governors of Higher Education for purposes of section 2 of this act  
5 and to the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority for purposes of  
6 section 3 of this act. In determining teacher shortages, the  
7 commissioner shall consider the following: (1) The number of teacher  
8 vacancies in a particular subject or geographic area; (2) the number of  
9 new certificates in such areas issued by the Department of Education  
10 during the preceding year; and (3) the number and types of classes  
11 being taught by persons whose training is not specific to the field in  
12 which they are teaching.

13 Sec. 2. (NEW) The Board of Governors of Higher Education, within

14 available appropriations, shall establish a program to provide grants to  
15 teachers who teach in shortage areas, pursuant to section 1 of this act,  
16 to assist such teachers in paying off their education loans. A teacher  
17 who is employed by a local or regional board of education in a  
18 shortage area and has been so employed for at least one year at the  
19 time of application shall be eligible for a grant. Teachers may receive  
20 up to five annual grants under the program. No grant shall exceed two  
21 thousand dollars. Teachers shall apply, annually, for grants at such  
22 time and on such forms as the Commissioner of Higher Education  
23 prescribes.

24       Sec. 3. (NEW) The Connecticut Housing Finance Authority shall  
25 develop and administer a program of mortgage assistance to certified  
26 teachers (1) employed by priority school districts pursuant to section  
27 10-266p of the general statutes, as amended, (2) employed by  
28 transitional school districts pursuant to section 10-263c of the general  
29 statutes, as amended, or (3) who teach in a subject matter shortage area  
30 pursuant to section 1 of this act. Such assistance shall be available to  
31 eligible teachers for the purchase of a house as their principal  
32 residence, provided, in the case of a teacher employed by a priority or  
33 a transitional school district, the house is located in such district. In  
34 making mortgage assistance available under the program, the  
35 authority shall utilize downpayment assistance or any other  
36 appropriate housing subsidies. The terms of any mortgage assistance  
37 shall allow the mortgagee to realize a reasonable portion of the equity  
38 gain upon sale of the mortgaged property.

39       Sec. 4. (NEW) Any municipality may, by vote of its legislative body  
40 on recommendation of its board of finance or equivalent body, provide  
41 property tax relief to certified teachers who are employed by the local  
42 or regional board of education for such municipality and are residents  
43 of such municipality, with respect to real property owned and  
44 occupied by such teachers as their principal residence provided such  
45 teachers have been taxpayers of such municipality for one year

46 immediately preceding their receipt of tax benefits under this section,  
47 and meet the requirements which may be established by such  
48 municipality with respect to maximum income allowable during the  
49 calendar year preceding the year in which application is made for the  
50 tax relief provided in this section. No such property tax relief shall  
51 exceed five hundred dollars.

52 Sec. 5. (NEW) (a) The Commissioner of Education, within available  
53 appropriations, shall provide grants of one thousand dollars to assist  
54 teachers seeking national board certification to meet the costs of such  
55 certification. Teachers may apply for such grants to the Department of  
56 Education at such time and in such manner as the commissioner  
57 prescribes.

58 (b) Courses and programs taken by a teacher for purposes of  
59 obtaining national board certification shall be counted toward the  
60 ninety hours of continuing education required pursuant to subsection  
61 (l) of section 10-145b of the general statutes, as amended.

62 Sec. 6. (NEW) The Department of Education shall provide grants,  
63 within available appropriations, to local and regional boards of  
64 education to assist such boards of education in establishing  
65 professional development programs for school paraprofessionals. In  
66 order to be eligible for a grant pursuant to this section, a local or  
67 regional board of education shall develop a plan for such professional  
68 development programs. The plan may (1) include a provision for  
69 mentors for school paraprofessionals and (2) provide for training in the  
70 implementation of special reading programs and the management of  
71 special needs students. Each local and regional board of education  
72 seeking a grant pursuant to this section shall submit an application for  
73 grant funds and its plan to the department at such time as the  
74 Commissioner of Education prescribes. The department shall award  
75 grant funds based on approved plans. For purposes of this section,  
76 "school paraprofessional" means an employee of a local or regional

77 board of education who does not possess a certificate issued by the  
78 State Board of Education and who serves as an instructional assistant  
79 for such local or regional board of education.

80 Sec. 7. Subsection (k) of section 10-145b of the general statutes is  
81 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof:

82 (k) (1) Unless otherwise provided in regulations adopted under  
83 section 10-145d, in not less than three years nor more than eight years  
84 after the issuance of a provisional educator certificate pursuant to  
85 subsection (g) of this section and upon the statement of the  
86 superintendent in whose school district such certificate holder was  
87 employed, or the superintendent of a nonpublic school approved by  
88 the State Board of Education, in whose school such certificate holder  
89 was employed, that the provisional educator certificate holder and  
90 such superintendent have mutually determined or approved an  
91 individual program pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (j) of this  
92 section and upon the statement of such superintendent that such  
93 certificate holder has a record of competency in the discharge of his  
94 duties during such provisional period, the state board upon receipt of  
95 a proper application shall issue such certificate holder a professional  
96 educator certificate. A signed recommendation from the  
97 superintendent of schools for the local or regional board of education  
98 or from the superintendent of a nonpublic school approved by the  
99 State Board of Education shall be evidence of competency. Such  
100 recommendation shall state that the person who holds or has held a  
101 provisional educator certificate has successfully completed at least  
102 three school years of satisfactory teaching for one or more local or  
103 regional boards of education or such nonpublic schools. Each applicant  
104 for a certificate pursuant to this subsection shall provide to the  
105 Department of Education, in such manner and form as prescribed by  
106 the commissioner, evidence that the applicant has successfully  
107 completed coursework pursuant to subsection (h) or (j) of this section,  
108 as appropriate.

109       (2) Upon application, a teacher from another state who is nationally  
110 board certified shall be issued a professional educator certificate,  
111 subject to the provisions of subsection (m) of this section relating to  
112 denial of applications for certification.

113       Sec. 8. Subsection (d) of section 10-220a of the general statutes is  
114 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof:

115       (d) The [state] Department of Education may fund, within available  
116 appropriations, in cooperation with one or more regional educational  
117 service centers: (1) A cooperating teacher program to train Connecticut  
118 public school teachers and certified teachers at private special  
119 education facilities approved by the Commissioner of Education and at  
120 other facilities designated by the commissioner, who participate in the  
121 supervision, training and evaluation of student teachers; (2) institutes  
122 to provide continuing education for Connecticut public school  
123 educators, assessors and cooperating teachers and teacher mentors,  
124 including institutes to provide continuing education for Connecticut  
125 public school educators offered in cooperation with the Connecticut  
126 Humanities Council; and (3) a beginning teacher support and  
127 assessment program to train Connecticut public school teachers and  
128 other qualified persons approved by the Commissioner of Education  
129 and certified teachers at such private special education and other  
130 designated facilities who serve as mentors or assessors for beginning  
131 teachers and who supervise, train and assist or assess beginning  
132 teachers in their initial years in teaching and to pay stipends to  
133 mentors and assessors. [Funds available under this subsection shall be  
134 paid directly to] Mentors shall be paid stipends of five hundred dollars  
135 per semester. The department shall use any remaining funds to pay  
136 school districts directly for the provision of substitute teachers when  
137 cooperating teachers, teacher mentors, beginning teachers and  
138 assessors are released from regular classroom responsibilities and for  
139 the provision of professional development activities for cooperating  
140 and student teachers, teacher mentors, assessors and beginning

141 teachers. The cooperating teacher and beginning teacher support and  
142 assessment programs shall operate in accordance with regulations  
143 which shall be adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to  
144 chapter 54. Student teachers shall be placed with trained cooperating  
145 teachers. Beginning teachers shall participate in a beginning teacher  
146 support and assessment program as made available by the board.  
147 School districts shall be responsible for providing support to beginning  
148 teachers which shall include, but not be limited to, the placement of  
149 beginning teachers with trained teacher mentors who may be full or  
150 part-time teachers in the same or a different building than the  
151 beginning teacher and provision of trained assessors to conduct  
152 assessments of beginning teachers. Cooperating teachers, teacher  
153 mentors and assessors may serve concurrently in more than one  
154 capacity and may be assigned more than one student teacher or  
155 beginning teacher in each such capacity. The assessment of each  
156 beginning teacher shall be based upon, but not limited to, data  
157 obtained from observations conducted by assessors using an  
158 assessment instrument. Notwithstanding any regulation to the  
159 contrary, the State Board of Education may require less than six  
160 observations as part of such assessment for the fiscal year ending June  
161 30, 1992, and may establish different assessment standards for use  
162 during such fiscal year. Notwithstanding any regulation to the  
163 contrary, a beginning teacher need not be assessed by a certified  
164 teacher who holds a certification endorsement in the same general  
165 subject area as such beginning teacher. Cooperating teachers and  
166 teacher mentors who are Connecticut public school teachers and  
167 assessors who are employed by school districts shall be selected by  
168 local and regional boards of education. Cooperating teachers and  
169 teacher mentors and assessors at such private special education and  
170 other designated facilities shall be selected by the authority responsible  
171 for the operation of such facilities. If a board of education is unable to  
172 identify a sufficient number of individuals to serve in such positions,  
173 the commissioner may select qualified persons who are not employed

174 by the board of education to serve in such positions. Such regulations  
175 shall require primary consideration of teachers' classroom experience  
176 and recognized success as educators. The provisions of sections 10-  
177 153a to 10-153n, inclusive, shall not be applicable to the selection,  
178 placement and compensation of persons participating in the  
179 cooperating teacher and beginning teacher support and assessment  
180 programs pursuant to the provisions of this section and to the hours  
181 and duties of such persons. The State Board of Education shall protect  
182 and save harmless, in accordance with the provisions of section 10-235,  
183 any cooperating teacher, teacher mentor or assessor while serving in  
184 such capacity.

185 Sec. 9. This act shall take effect July 1, 2000.

**ED Committee Vote:** Yea 30 Nay 0 JFS C/R FIN

**FIN Committee Vote:** Yea 36 Nay 10 JF

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

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**OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:** Cost

**Affected Agencies:** Department of Education, Department of Higher Education, Department of Economic and Community Development

**Municipal Impact:** Potential Revenue Loss

**Explanation**

**State Impact:**

Section 1 of the bill which requires the Department of Education to identify teacher shortage areas results in a minimal workload increase which is absorbable within existing resources.

Section 2 of the bill requires the Department of Higher Education (DHE) to establish a grant program for teachers who teach in shortage areas identified by the State Department of Education. Teachers can receive up to 5 annual grants with each grant not to exceed \$2,000. Although the bill provides that the Department of Higher Education is to create this program within available appropriations, there are no funds currently appropriated for this purpose. Passage of the bill would result in an indeterminate cost.

In 1983, the Teacher Incentive Loan Program (TILP) was created to attract students to teach in designated shortage areas, which included

math, chemistry and physics. Under TILP, annual loans of \$5,000 for independent college students and \$3,000 for public college students were forgiven at the rate of 20% per year for teaching in a shortage area subject at a state public school. Almost 300 individuals received \$1.2 million in TILP loans and approximately half were forgiven and half were repaid. Although no TILP loans have been given since 1989, a number of the loans remain in repayment status. It should be noted that the program was financed through a \$3 million bond authorization from the previous year that was earmarked for scholarships. The initial appropriation for this program was \$175,000 in FY 1984 and \$350,000 in FY 1985. These funds were provided for the servicing of loans and the general administration of the program.

In addition, in 1984 the Academic Excellence Loan Program was established to attract academically talented students to teach in Connecticut public schools. Approximately 200 students received \$2.2 million in loans with half being forgiven and half being repaid. Finally, DHE currently administers the federally funded Paul Douglas Teacher Scholarship Program.

Section 3 establishes a program for home purchasing assistance for public school teachers in priority and transitional school districts. Eligible teachers could receive mortgage assistance in the form of downpayment assistance or other appropriate housing subsidies from the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA). As the down payment assistance program is funded through state bonds allocated to the Department of Economic and Community Development, additional bonding costs are expected to result for the state. The extent of these additional costs cannot be determined as it is contingent upon the number of interested teachers and the average assistance amount.

#### Connecticut Housing Finance Authority

It is assumed that the requirements of this bill will increase the volume of bonds that are issued by CHFA, which in turn may increase

the debt service costs to the Authority. Although the issuance of bonds by CHFA has no direct fiscal impact upon the state, CHFA's bonds are considered contingent liabilities of the state. Any actual liability to the state would only result in the event that CHFA's capital reserve fund fell below the minimum reserve level requirement.

Section 5 and 6 establish grant programs for which no funds have been provided in either version of the FY 01 budget. The potential cost of section 5 which provides grants of \$1,000 each to teachers seeking national board certification is expected to be less than \$10,000 per year. Currently, only 34 teachers have been nationally certified in the state in the last 6 years. Section 6 results in an undeterminable cost as grant amounts are not determined by any specific data element.

Section 8 results in a cost of up to \$5,000,000 based on \$500 per mentor teacher per semester. Funds for this purpose are not included in either version of the FY 01 budget. The total appropriation for this program is \$3.5 million in FY 01 in both versions of the budget. This level of funding is needed for the current requirements of the program. Under the current program, the state provides \$200 per year for each beginning teacher (approximately \$700,000). It is not clear from the bill whether the \$500 requirement is to replace the \$200 or be an additional payment.

***Municipal Impact:***

Section 4 of the bill, which allows municipalities to provide tax relief of up to \$500 to certified teachers employed and residing in their community, results in a potential revenue loss to municipalities. As the provision is permissive and no data exists on the number of teachers residing in and being employed by a community, no estimates can be made on this section.

**OLR Bill Analysis**

sSB 404

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE TEACHER SHORTAGE.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill provides grants and other incentives to address the shortage of teachers in certain subjects and in certain districts. It:

1. requires the education commissioner, by December 1 annually, to identify the subjects and geographic areas that have a shortage of teachers;
2. requires the Board of Governors of Higher Education (BOG), within available appropriations, to establish a grant program to provide up to \$10,000 to help teachers who teach in shortage areas repay educational loans;
3. requires the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) to develop and administer a mortgage assistance program for certified teachers who are employed by priority or transitional school districts or who teach in a subject shortage areas;
4. allows municipalities to give up to \$500 in property tax relief to certified teachers who live in the municipality and are employed by its school district;
5. requires the education commissioner, within available appropriations, to give grants of \$1,000 to help teachers defray the cost of national board certification;
6. counts courses or programs a teacher takes to obtain national board certification towards the 90 hours of continuing education each certified teacher must complete every five years; and
7. requires the education commissioner to issue a professional educator certificate (the highest-level state certificate) to any out-of

state teacher who holds national board certification, without requiring the teacher to meet Connecticut's assessment requirements.

The bill also establishes a grant program, within available appropriations, to help local school boards provide professional development for school paraprofessionals and requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to pay each teacher mentor under the state's Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) program a stipend of \$500 per semester.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2000

### **IDENTIFYING SHORTAGE AREAS**

In determining where teacher shortages exist, the commissioner must consider (1) how many vacancies there are in a subject or geographic area, (2) how many new certificates in those areas SDE issued over the previous year, and (3) how many and what kinds of classes are being taught by teachers not trained in that field.

The commissioner must certify the shortage areas to the BOG for the educational loan reimbursement program and to CHFA for the mortgage assistance program the bill establishes.

### **GRANTS TO REPAY EDUCATIONAL LOANS**

Under the bill, teachers who have been employed in public schools in a shortage area for at least one year may apply for a grant from the BOG to repay their educational loans. The maximum grant is \$2,000 per year and a teacher may receive no more than five annual grants. Eligible teachers must apply for a grant annually at a time and on forms the commissioner of higher education prescribes.

### **MORTGAGE ASSISTANCE**

CHFA's mortgage assistance program must help certified teachers who are employed by priority or transitional school districts or who teach in a subject shortage area identified by the education commissioner. The program, which must use down payment

assistance or any other appropriate subsidy, must be available to help such a teacher to buy a house as his principal residence. If the teacher is employed by a priority or transitional district, the house must be in the district. The terms of the mortgage assistance must allow the mortgagee to realize a reasonable amount of equity gain on the sale of the house.

### **PROPERTY TAX RELIEF**

The tax relief applies to real property the teacher owns and occupies as his principal residence. To be eligible, a teacher must have paid taxes in the municipality for at least one year immediately before receiving relief. The teacher must also meet other requirements concerning maximum allowable income for the year preceding the application for relief that the municipality may establish.

A municipality that decides to offer the tax relief must do so by vote of its legislative body and on the recommendation of its board of finance or equivalent body.

### **NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION**

The bill requires the education commissioner to prescribe how and when teachers must apply for the \$1,000 grants to defray the cost of national board certification.

With respect to an out-of-state teacher with national board certification, the commissioner retains authority to deny the teacher a Connecticut professional educator certificate:

1. if the applicant seeks to obtain it through fraud or by misrepresenting a material fact;
2. if the applicant has been convicted of a crime either involving moral turpitude or of a nature that, in the State Board of Education's opinion, would impair the standing of certificates; or
3. for any other sufficient cause.

### **PARAPROFESSIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS**

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To be eligible for a grant, a local board must develop a plan for a program that may include mentors for paraprofessionals and training in how to implement special reading programs and manage special needs students. The education commissioner prescribes how and when boards must apply for a grant and must award them based on approved plans.

Under the bill, a “school paraprofessional” is any employee who acts as an instructional assistant and has no teaching certificate.

### **BEST MENTOR STIPENDS**

Under current law, it appears that any funds available to SDE for teacher training and support programs, including BEST, must be paid directly to local school boards for substitutes to replace teachers released from class to participate in such activities. Under the bill, funds must first be used to pay stipends to BEST mentors. Any remaining funds must be sent to districts for substitute teachers.

### **BACKGROUND**

#### ***Priority and Transitional School Districts***

The priority districts are Bloomfield, Bridgeport, Danbury, East Hartford, Hartford, Meriden, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwalk, Stamford, Waterbury, West Haven, and Windham.

The transitional districts are Ansonia, Bristol, Derby, Groton, Hamden, Killingly, Manchester, Middletown, Norwich, Putnam, Stratford, and West Hartford.

#### ***National Board Certification***

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) began assessing and certifying teachers in 1994. NBPTS certification is voluntary and requires teachers to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and talent. Candidates must prepare a school-site portfolio, including, for example, descriptions of their practice, student work, and videotapes of their classroom activities. In addition, there are two days of

assessment activities where candidates participate in structured interviews, work collaboratively with other teachers, complete a written essay exam, and work on real-life problems.

**Connecticut Teacher Assessment Requirements**

Candidates for Connecticut teacher certification must demonstrate (1) competency in essential skills in reading, writing, and math, either by passing the Praxis I computer-based test or achieving a minimum score on the SAT or an equivalent test; (2) subject knowledge in their intended teaching area by passing the Praxis II subject exam; and (3) if they are beginning teachers employed under an initial educator certificate, professional knowledge by completing the BEST program.

**BEST Program**

The BEST program is a comprehensive instruction program for beginning teachers. It consists of both support (provided by mentor teachers) and assessment (provided by assessor teachers).

**Related Bill**

Substitute Senate Bill 75, File 43, requires the CHFA to implement a pilot program to help public school teachers in certain districts buy homes where they work. The teacher must be employed in a priority or transitional school district and meet other requirements. Under the program, CHFA can provide low-interest loans, while participating municipalities can provide grants for closing costs. CHFA can spend up to \$10 million on this pilot program, using revenue bonds to pay for it. The program must run from January 1, 2001 through December 31, 2003.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference  
Yea 30 Nay 0

Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

Joint Favorable Report  
Yea 36 Nay 10