



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