
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6498 (as amended by House "A")*

AN ACT CONCERNING IMPLEMENTATION DATES FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL REFORM.

SUMMARY:

This bill delays by two years the implementation of the secondary school reform requirements enacted in 2010 that:

1. increase the minimum number of credits required to graduate from high school,
2. require school districts to offer students support and alternative ways to meet the new graduation requirements, and
3. require the State Department of Education (SDE) to develop end-of-course exams in various subjects.

It also:

1. eliminates a requirement that the state provide grants to help districts implement the new graduation requirements and instead requires SDE to offer technical assistance to districts wishing to start implementing them;
2. requires districts to establish a student success plan for each student starting in grade 6;
3. revises and delays by one year the start of biennial status reports on the implementation of the new graduation requirements;
4. exempts boards of education with low-achieving schools that have only a single grade or that already have substantially similar school governance councils from the existing requirement to establish school councils according to the existing law;

5. reorganizes and clarifies the sequence and contents of required SDE reports on the implementation and effectiveness of school governance councils;
6. establishes a task force to address implementation issues arising from enhanced high school graduation requirements;
7. moves up the deadline for the State Board of Education (SBE), in consultation with the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC), to adopt guidelines for teacher evaluations to July 1, 2012 from July 1, 2013; and
8. for tenure purposes, requires that teachers whose employing boards enter cooperative arrangements to provide educational services retain their credited service with those boards if their employment is transferred to a committee administering the cooperative arrangement.

Finally, the bill makes technical changes.

*House Amendment "A" adds the (1) student success plans, (2) SDE technical assistance and implementation reporting, (3) exemptions from school governance council requirements, (4) deadline change for adopting teacher evaluation guidelines, and (5) tenure protection for teachers working for cooperative arrangements among districts. It eliminates (1) the state implementation grants for all districts and (2) a provision expanding the types of programs districts may establish to meet an existing requirement to offer an advanced placement program starting in the 2011-12 school year. Finally, it adds a representative of the Connecticut Association of Schools to the high school graduation issues task force and gives the education commissioner two appointees instead of an unspecified number.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except for the new deadline for adopting teacher evaluation guidelines and the tenure provision for teachers working for cooperative arrangements, which are effective July 1, 2011.

§ 1 — SECONDARY SCHOOL REFORM PROVISIONS DELAYED

High School Graduation Requirements

Starting with the class graduating in 2018, current law requires students to earn 25 credits in specified subjects (see BACKGROUND), pass end-of-year examinations in five subjects, and complete a senior demonstration project to graduate from high school. It requires school districts to provide adequate support and remedial services for students, starting with students in the 7th grade in the 2012-13 school year.

The bill postpones the effective dates of these requirements for two years. It requires the increased high school graduation requirements to take effect with the class of 2020 instead of the class of 2018 and requires school districts to provide support and remedial services for 7th graders starting in 2014-15 rather than 2012-13.

End-of-Course Exams

The enhanced high school graduation standards require students to pass state-developed or -approved end-of-year exams in algebra I, geometry, biology, American history, and 10th grade English. Current law requires SDE to develop or approve these exams over two years starting by July 1, 2012 and finishing by July 1, 2014. The bill delays this requirement from July 1, 2014 to July 1, 2016.

§ 2 — STUDENT SUCCESS PLANS

Instead of requiring school districts, starting in the 2012-13 school year, to collect information on students' career and academic choices every year beginning in grade six and continuing through grade 12, the bill requires districts to create a student success plan for each student, starting in grade six. The plans must include the student's career and academic choices in 6th through 12th grade.

§ 3 — TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND REPORTING

For FY 13 through FY 18, current law requires the SDE to provide grants, within available appropriations, to help school districts implement the new high school graduation standards and student support services. The bill instead requires SDE, within available

appropriations, to provide technical assistance in FY 12 and FY 13 to boards of education that begin to implement the new standards and student support services.

In addition, instead of requiring all districts seeking grants to submit biennial status reports to SDE on secondary school reform starting by November 1, 2012, the bill requires such reports only from districts that receive the technical assistance. It delays the first report to November 1, 2013 and eliminates the requirement that a district explain in each report why it needs funds for the next biennium to implement the new standards and supports.

It also postpones the start of biennial implementation reports from SDE to the Education Committee from February 1, 2013 to February 1, 2014.

§§ 5, 6 & 10 — SCHOOL GOVERNANCE COUNCILS

By law, boards of education that have jurisdiction over schools designated as low-achieving must, and boards with jurisdiction over schools designated as “in need of improvement” may, establish a school governance council for each such school. Councils must be made up mostly of students’ parents or guardians and are empowered to, among other things, advise the principal on the school budget before it is submitted to the superintendent, interview candidates to fill principal vacancies, and vote to recommend that the school be reconstituted according to models specified in the law. SDE must monitor and report to the Education Committee on the activities and effectiveness of the councils.

Exempted Schools

The bill exempts from the statutory school governance council requirements:

1. schools that have only one grade and
2. schools that adopt a school governance council model on or before July 1, 2011 that (a) is similar to the statutory model; (b) consists of parents, teachers from each grade level or subject

area, administrators, and paraprofessionals; and (c) is being administered at the school at the time it is designated a low-achieving school.

The bill gives the similar councils the same statutory powers and responsibilities as the existing statutorily established councils.

Reports on School Governance Council Implementation and Effectiveness

The bill reorganizes the sequence and content of the required reports and specifies that they must be submitted biennially instead of once. The current and proposed report sequence is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Reporting Requirements and Deadlines

| Report | Due Dates | |
|--|--|---|
| | Current Law (one-time) | The Bill (biennial starting) |
| Number of school governance councils established (This is currently also part of a required report due January 1, 2011, which the bill repeals, see below.) | January 1, 2012 | December 1, 2011 |
| Evaluation of effectiveness of councils established before January 15, 2011 | October 1, 2014 | December 1, 2013 |
| Number of councils recommending or initiating school reconstitution and the reconstitution models chosen, including a recommendation whether to continue allowing councils to recommend school reconstitutions | January 1, 2012 and January 1, 2013 | December 1, 2015 |
| Monitor and evaluate reconstituted schools according to various measures | No specified date | December 1, 2017 |

The bill eliminates a requirement that SDE also report on (1) a comparison of the councils that have initiated reconstitutions with those that have not and (2) whether there is increased parental involvement at schools with governance councils. Current law requires the department to start reporting by July 1, 2011, but because the law includes two conflicting reporting schedules, it is currently unclear whether SDE must submit this report every year or every two years.

§ 9 — HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION ISSUES TASK FORCE

The bill establishes a task force to examine issues arising from the enhanced high school graduation requirements and mandatory courses adopted in 2010. The group must address at least special

programming needs, requirement waivers, and appropriate placements for courses under the required subject areas. It must report its findings and recommendations to the Education Committee by January 1, 2013. The task force terminates on that date or the date it submits its report, whichever is later.

The task force members must include the education commissioner or his or her designee; one member each designated by the:

1. Connecticut Association of Boards of Education;
2. Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS);
3. Connecticut Association of Schools;
4. Connecticut Federation of School Administrators;
5. Connecticut Education Association; and
6. American Federation of Teachers-Connecticut; and
7. two appropriate people appointed by the education commissioner, including teachers.

Members must be appointed within 30 days of the bill's passage. The CAPSS' representative is the task force chairperson, who must schedule the first meeting within 60 days of the bill's passage. The Education Committee's administrative staff serves as the task force's administrative staff. Appointing authorities fill any vacancies.

§ 502 — TENURE AND TEACHERS UNDER COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

The bill recognizes teachers working under cooperative arrangements for the purpose of earning and maintaining tenure. It provides that teachers working under cooperative arrangements recognized in statute can retain their credited service toward tenure with a board of education if their service is transferred to a committee administering a cooperative arrangement and the district is part of the

committee. It also allows a teacher with tenure at a district to be considered as having continuous employment for tenure purposes if the teacher becomes employed under a cooperative agreement in which the district participates.

The cooperative arrangement statute allows two or more boards of education to agree, in writing, to establish contracts to cooperatively provide school accommodation services, programs or activities, special education services, or health care services to carry out the duties required by law. This authority includes the ability to employ teachers and other staff to carry out the programs and services (CGS § 10-158a).

BACKGROUND

New High School Graduation Requirements

Table 2 shows the minimum high school graduation requirements currently scheduled to take effect for the graduating class of 2018, and delayed to the class of 2020 under this bill.

Table 2: New Graduation Requirements

| <i>Subject Area</i> | <i>Required Credits</i> |
|---|---|
| <i>Humanities – 9 credits</i> | |
| English | 4, including composition |
| Social Studies | 3, including 1 credit in American history and a half credit in civics and American Government |
| Fine Arts | 1 |
| Humanities Elective | 1 |
| <i>Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics – 8 credits</i> | |
| Mathematics | 4, including algebra I, geometry, and either algebra II or probability and statistics |
| Science | 3, including 1 in life science, 1 in physical science |
| Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Elective | 1 |
| <i>Career and Life Skills – 3.5 credits</i> | |
| Physical Education | 1 |
| Comprehensive health education | 0.5 |
| Career and life skills electives, such as career and technical education, English as a second language, community service, personal finance, public speaking, and nutrition and physical activity | 2 |
| <i>Other – 3 credits</i> | |
| World Languages | 2 |
| Senior demonstration project or its SBE-approved equivalent | 1 |

Performance Evaluation Advisory Council

PA 10-111 created the PEAC to meet at least quarterly and help SBE develop and implement the model teacher evaluation program.

The council members are:

1. the education and higher education commissioners, or their designees;
2. one representative each from the following organizations chosen by the organization: (a) the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, (b) the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents, (c) the Connecticut Federation of School Administrators, (d) the Connecticut Education Association, and (e) the American Federation of Teachers-Connecticut; and
3. an unspecified number of appropriate people selected by the education commissioner, including teachers and experts in performance evaluation processes and procedures.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 26 Nay 6 (03/17/2011)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable
Yea 50 Nay 3 (05/09/2011)