

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 11-60—sSB 1104

Education Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING CHARTER SCHOOLS

SUMMARY: This act establishes a charter school educator permit and allows the State Board of Education (SBE) to issue such a permit to someone who (1) is employed by a charter school as a teacher or administrator, (2) lacks state certification for the position, and (3) meets the act's qualifications. Starting with the 2011-2012 school year, it allows the education commissioner to waive certification requirements to allow permit holders to work in charter schools as teachers or administrators, but limits the number who may hold the permit in any school year to no more than 30% of a charter school's teachers and administrators combined.

The act also (1) makes anyone holding a charter school educator permit a member of the appropriate teachers' or administrators' unit for collective bargaining purposes and (2) requires a permit holder to become a member of the Teachers' Retirement System when he or she obtains a state educator certificate.

Under prior law, all charter school teachers and administrators had to be certified, with at least half of those providing instruction or pupil services at a charter school required to hold the proper state certification for their positions and the rest required to hold temporary 90-day or nonrenewable temporary certificates.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2011

CHARTER SCHOOL EDUCATOR PERMIT

Permit Qualifications

To receive a permit, a person must:

1. either pass the state reading, writing, and math competency test for teacher certification candidates or meet SBE criteria for a testing waiver;
2. pass the same state test as a teacher or administrator certification candidate seeking to work in the same subject or administrative area; and
3. demonstrate effectiveness as a teacher or school administrator, as appropriate.

Permit Renewals

The act allows the commissioner to renew permits, at the charter school's request and for good cause, when SBE renews the charter for the school where the teacher or administrator is employed. By law, most charters are renewable every five years.

Collective Bargaining Units

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Under prior law, only professional employees holding state administrator or teaching certificates or durational shortage area permits were included in bargaining units under the Teacher Negotiation Act (TNA), the state law that governs teacher collective bargaining.

This act adds those holding charter school educator permits and employed by charter schools to TNA administrator and teacher bargaining units, thus including them in collective bargaining agreements governing wages, hours, and working conditions. As with board of education employees, it requires a charter school employee to be a member of the administrators' unit if his or her position requires (1) holding a charter school educator permit or state intermediate administrator or supervisor certificate or its equivalent and (2) spending at least 50% of his or her assigned time on administrative or supervisory duties. To be a member of a teachers' unit, a charter school employee must hold, and be employed in a position requiring, a state teaching certificate, durational shortage area permit, or charter school educator permit.

BACKGROUND

Temporary Certificates

Temporary 90-day teaching certificates are issued at the written request of an employing board of education or charter school to applicants who successfully complete SBE-approved alternative route to certification programs. Nonrenewable temporary teaching certificates, good for one year, are issued to applicants who (1) are certified and taught successfully in another state, or graduated from an out-of-state teacher preparation program, and meet all requirements for Connecticut certification except the required tests; or (2) are hired by a charter school after July 1 and are reasonably expected to meet Connecticut certification requirements by the start of the following school year.

Charter Schools

A charter school is a nonsectarian public school organized as a nonprofit corporation and operated independently of a local or regional board of education. The SBE grants and renews the charters, usually for five years and, as part of the charter, may waive certain statutory requirements applicable to other public schools. A charter school may enroll students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12 in accordance with its charter.

Charter schools are open to all students, including special education students, though they may limit the geographic areas from which students may attend. If a school has more applicants than spaces, it must admit students through a lottery.

Related Act

PA 11-234 includes the same provisions as this act and also allows administrators who hold charter school educator permits to supervise and evaluate anyone providing instruction or pupil services at the charter school where he or she is employed.

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