AN ACT CONCERNING MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.

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

Section 1. (NEW) (Effective from passage) For the school year commencing July 1, 2020, and each school year thereafter, the Minority Teacher Recruitment Policy Oversight Council, established pursuant to section 10-156bb of the general statutes, in consultation with the minority teacher recruitment task force, established pursuant to section 10-156aa of the general statutes, shall develop and implement strategies and utilize existing resources to ensure that at least two hundred fifty new minority teachers and administrators, of which at least thirty per cent are men, are hired and employed by local and regional boards of education each year in the state. As used in this section, "minority" has the same meaning as provided in section 10-156bb of the general statutes.

Sec. 2. Section 10-146c of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2019):

(a) As used in this section:

(1) "State" means a state of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or territories or possessions of the United States; and
(2) "Educator preparation program" means a program designed to qualify an individual for professional certification as an educator provided by institutions of higher education or other providers, including, but not limited to, an alternate route to certification program.

(b) The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee, as agent for the state shall enter into reciprocity agreements concerning professional certification reciprocity with the chief education officials for each state. If the commissioner is unable to establish a reciprocity agreement with another state, the commissioner may establish or join an interstate agreement pursuant to subsection (c) of this section.

[(b)] (c) The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee, as agent for the state shall establish or join interstate agreements with other states to facilitate the certification of qualified educators from other states. Any such interstate agreement shall include provisions requiring candidates for certification to, at a minimum, (1) hold a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university, (2) have fulfilled post-preparation assessments as approved by the commissioner, and (3) have successfully completed an approved educator preparation program. Notwithstanding the provisions of sections 10-145b and 10-145f, as amended by this act, the State Board of Education shall issue the appropriate professional certificate to any applicant, based on such applicant's qualifications, who satisfies the requirements of the appropriate interstate agreement.

[(c)] (d) If the commissioner is unable to establish or join a reciprocity agreement or an interstate agreement with another state, the commissioner may create and make available a recognition statement that specifies the states, assessments and educator preparation programs that the commissioner will recognize for purposes of issuing professional certification under sections 10-145b and 10-145f, as amended by this act.

(e) Not later than January 1, 2020, and annually thereafter, the
commissioner shall submit a progress report on the development and implementation of reciprocity agreements and interstate agreements and any recommendations for legislation to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a.

Sec. 3. Subsection (d) of section 10-145b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2019):

(d) (1) On and after July 1, [2016] 2019, in order to be eligible to obtain an initial educator certificate, each person shall be required to complete (A) a course of study in special education comprised of not fewer than thirty-six hours, which shall include [an understanding of] (i) instruction on the growth and development of exceptional children, including children with a disability, gifted and talented children and children who may require special education, and (ii) methods for identifying, planning for and working effectively with special needs children in a regular classroom, and (B) a course or courses of study in special education relating to instruction on classroom techniques in reading, differentiated instruction, social-emotional learning, [cultural competencies] culturally responsive pedagogy and practice and assistive technology. The provisions of this subdivision shall not apply to any person who has been issued an initial educator certificate prior to July 1, [2016] 2019.

(2) On and after July 1, 2016, in order to be eligible to obtain a provisional educator certificate, each person shall be required to complete a course of study in special education comprised of not fewer than thirty-six hours, which shall include [an understanding of] instruction on the growth and development of exceptional children, including children with a disability, gifted and talented children and children who may require special education, and methods for identifying, planning for and working effectively with special needs children in a regular classroom.
(3) Notwithstanding the provisions of this subsection to the contrary, each applicant for such certificates who has met all requirements for certification except the completion of the course in special education shall be entitled to a certificate (A) for a period not to exceed one year, provided the applicant completed a teacher preparation program either in the state prior to July 1, 1987, or outside the state, or completed the necessary combination of professional experience or coursework as required by the State Board of Education or (B) for a period not to exceed two years if the applicant applies for certification in an area for which a bachelor's degree is not required.

(4) Except as otherwise provided in section 10-146c, as amended by this act, upon receipt of a proper application, the State Board of Education shall issue an initial educator certificate in the endorsement area of intermediate administration and supervision, subject to the provisions of subsection (i) of this section relating to denial of applications for certification, to an administrator from another state, territory or possession of the United States or the District of Columbia who (A) has been an administrator under an appropriate certificate issued by another state, territory or possession of the United States or the District of Columbia for three or more years, and (B) holds a master's degree in an appropriate subject matter area, as determined by the State Board of Education. Such applicant shall be exempt from completing the beginning educator program based upon such administrator experience upon a showing of effectiveness as an administrator, as determined by the State Board of Education, which may include, but need not be limited to, a demonstrated record of improving student achievement.

Sec. 4. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2019) (a) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Office of Higher Education, in collaboration with the Minority Teacher Recruitment Policy Oversight Council, established pursuant to section 10-156bb of the general statutes, and the minority teacher recruitment task force, established pursuant to section 10-156aa of the general statutes, shall,
within available appropriations, administer a minority educator loan
reimbursement grant program for persons who meet the eligibility
requirements described in subsection (b) of this section.

(b) The program shall provide student loan reimbursement grants to
any person who (1) is defined as a minority pursuant to section 10-155l
of the general statutes, (2) holds professional certification pursuant to
chapter 166 of the general statutes, and (3) is employed as an
administrator or a teacher by a local or regional board of education.

(c) Any person who satisfies the eligibility requirements prescribed
in subsection (b) of this section may receive an annual grant for
reimbursement of federal or state educational loans (1) in an amount
up to ten per cent of such person's federal or state educational loans
but that does not exceed five thousand dollars in any year, and (2) for a
period not to exceed ten years. Such person shall only be reimbursed
for loan payments made while such person is employed by a local or
regional board of education.

(d) Persons may apply to the Office of Higher Education for grants
under this section at such time and in such manner as the executive
director of the Office of Higher Education prescribes.

(e) Any unexpended funds appropriated for purposes of this section
shall not lapse at the end of the fiscal year but shall be available for
expenditure during the next fiscal year.

Sec. 5. Section 10a-168a of the general statutes is repealed and the
following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2019):

(a) There is established a Connecticut minority teacher incentive
program administered by the Office of Higher Education.

(b) Within available appropriations, the program shall provide
grants to minority students (1) in teacher education programs for their
junior or senior year, or both such years, at any four-year institution of
higher education, (2) completing the requirements of such a teacher
education program as a graduate student, provided such student received a grant pursuant to this section for one year at the undergraduate level, or (3) enrolled in the alternate route to certification program administered through the Office of Higher Education or the Department of Education. No student shall receive a grant under the program for more than two years. Maximum grants shall not exceed five thousand dollars per year. The office shall ensure that at least ten per cent of the grant recipients are minority students who transfer from a Connecticut regional community-technical college.

[(c) A minority student who received grants under subsection (b) of this section, and who teaches in a Connecticut public school upon graduation, shall be eligible for reimbursement of federal or state educational loans up to a maximum of two thousand five hundred dollars per year for up to four years of teaching service.

(d) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (b) and (c) of this section, the combined dollar value of grants and loan reimbursements shall not exceed twenty thousand dollars per student.]

Sec. 6. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2019) On and after July 1, 2020, any program of school and district leadership preparation leading to professional certification shall include, as part of the curriculum, instruction in culturally responsive pedagogy and practice.

Sec. 7. Section 10-145l of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2019):

On and after July 1, 2010, the State Board of Education shall allow an applicant for certification to teach in a subject shortage area pursuant to section 10-8b or a certified employee seeking to teach in such a subject shortage area to substitute achievement of [an excellent] a satisfactory score, as determined by the State Board of Education, on any appropriate State Board of Education approved subject area assessment for the subject area requirements for certification pursuant to section 10-145f.
Sec. 8. Section 8-265pp of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2019):

The Connecticut Housing Finance Authority shall develop and administer a program of mortgage assistance to certified teachers (1) employed by priority school districts pursuant to section 10-266p, (2) employed by transitional school districts pursuant to section 10-263c, (3) employed by the Technical Education and Career System at a technical education and career school located in such priority or transitional school districts, [or] (4) who teach in a subject matter shortage area pursuant to section 10-8b, (5) who graduated from a public high school in an educational reform district, as defined in section 10-262u, or (6) who graduated from an historically black college or university or a Hispanic-serving institution, as those terms are defined in the Higher Education Act of 1965, P.L. 89-329, as amended from time to time and reauthorized by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, P.L. 110-315, as amended from time to time. Such assistance shall be available to eligible teachers for the purchase of a house as their principal residence, provided, in the case of a teacher employed by a priority or a transitional school district, or by the Technical Education and Career System at a technical education and career school located in a priority or transitional school district, the house is located in such district. In making mortgage assistance available under the program, the authority shall utilize down payment assistance or any other appropriate housing subsidies. The terms of any mortgage assistance shall allow the mortgagee to realize a reasonable portion of the equity gain upon sale of the mortgaged property.

Sec. 9. Subsection (b) of section 10-183v of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2019):

(b) A teacher receiving retirement benefits from the system may be reemployed for up to one full school year by a local board of education, the State Board of Education or by any constituent unit of
the state system of higher education (1) in a position (1) designated
by the Commissioner of Education as a subject shortage area for the
school year in which the teacher is being employed, or (2) at a school
located in a school district identified as a priority school district,
pursuant to section 10-266p, for the school year in which the teacher is
being employed, (3) if the teacher graduated from a public high school
in an educational reform district, as defined in section 10-262u, or (4) if
the teacher graduated from an historically black college or university
or a Hispanic-serving institution, as those terms are defined in the
Higher Education Act of 1965, P.L. 89-329, as amended from time to
time and reauthorized by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of
2008, P.L. 110-315, as amended from time to time. Notice of such
reemployment shall be sent to the board by the employer and by the
retired teacher at the time of hire and at the end of the assignment.
Such reemployment may be extended for an additional school year,
provided the local board of education (A) submits a written request for
approval to the Teachers' Retirement Board, (B) certifies that no
qualified candidates are available prior to the reemployment of such
teacher, and (C) indicates the type of assignment to be performed, the
anticipated date of rehire and the expected duration of the assignment.

Sec. 10. Subsection (a) of section 10-145b of the general statutes is
repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July
1, 2019):

(a) The State Board of Education, upon receipt of a proper
application, shall issue an initial educator certificate to any person who
(1) holds a bachelor's degree or an advanced degree from an institution
of higher education [accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher
Education or Office of Higher Education or] that is regionally
accredited or has received an equivalent accreditation, and (2) has
completed (A) an educator preparation program approved by the State
Board of Education or the appropriate governing body in the state in
which the institution of higher education is located, or (B) an alternate
route to certification program approved by the State Board of
Education or the appropriate governing body in the state in which such alternate route to certification program is located, and satisfies the requirements for a temporary ninety-day certificate, pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, or a resident teacher certificate, pursuant to section 10-145m. In addition, on and after July 1, 2018, each applicant shall have completed a subject area major as defined by the State Board of Education, except (i) as provided in section 10-145l, as amended by this act, or (ii) where an applicant achieves a satisfactory evaluation on an appropriate State Board of Education approved subject area assessment [and] or has completed advanced coursework in a relevant subject area. Each such initial educator certificate shall be valid for three years, except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, and may be extended by the Commissioner of Education for an additional year for good cause upon the request of the superintendent in whose school district such person is employed or upon the request of the assessment team reviewing such person's performance.

Sec. 11. Subsections (e) and (f) of section 10-145f of the general statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2019):

(e) (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, any person who holds a valid teaching certificate that is at least equivalent to an initial educator certificate, as determined by the State Board of Education, and such certificate is issued by a state other than Connecticut in the subject area or endorsement area for which such person is seeking certification in Connecticut shall not be required to successfully complete the competency examination and subject matter assessment pursuant to this section, if such person has either [(1)] (A) successfully completed at least three years of teaching experience or service in the endorsement area for which such person is seeking certification in Connecticut in the past ten years in a public school or a nonpublic school approved by the appropriate state board of education in such other state, or [(2)] (B) holds a master's degree or

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higher in the subject area for which such person is seeking certification in Connecticut.

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, any person who has held a valid teaching certificate issued by the State Board of Education and such certificate has expired shall not be required to successfully complete the subject matter assessment in the endorsement area for which such person is seeking renewal or advancement of such certificate, pursuant to this section, if such person has either (A) successfully completed at least three years of teaching experience or service in a public school or a nonpublic school under a valid teaching certificate issued by the State Board of Education or issued by a state other than Connecticut, in the past ten years in such endorsement area, or (B) holds a master's degree or higher in the subject area for which such person is seeking renewal or advancement of such certificate.

(f) (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, any person who has achieved a satisfactory evaluation on an equivalent competency examination or subject area assessment required for educator certification in another state shall not be required to achieve a satisfactory evaluation on the competency examination or subject matter assessment pursuant to this section, provided the State Board of Education determines that the requirements for achieving a satisfactory evaluation on such equivalent competency examination or subject area assessment in another state are at least equivalent to the requirements prescribed by the State Board of Education for achieving a satisfactory evaluation on the competency examination or subject matter assessment pursuant to this section.

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, any person who has previously achieved a satisfactory evaluation on an appropriate State Board of Education approved subject area assessment for a teaching certificate that has expired shall not be required to take the appropriate subject matter assessment currently approved by the State Board of Education, provided the Commissioner of Education
determines that the requirements for achieving a satisfactory evaluation on such previous subject area assessment are at least equivalent to the requirements prescribed by the State Board of Education for such current subject matter assessment.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

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