

Paths to Teacher Certification

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Issue

Summarize the various statutory and regulatory paths to teacher certification in Connecticut.

Summary

The state has multiple paths in statute and regulation for applicants to receive a teaching certificate, and this report summarizes them. Under state law, no teacher, supervisor, administrator, or special service staff member (there are limited exceptions for school superintendents) can be employed in any school of a local or regional board of education unless the person possesses an appropriate state teacher certificate ([CGS § 10-145\(a\)](#)).

There are three levels of certification: initial, provisional, and professional (lowest to highest). In general, the process starts with the individual seeking certification by applying to the State Board of Education (SBE) for the appropriate certification. The application must specify what subject area endorsement will accompany the certification (e.g., initial certification with an endorsement in elementary education, or initial certification with an endorsement in math, grades 7-12).

Typically, a teacher obtains an initial teacher certification and after getting a few years of experience in the classroom seeks a provisional certification, the next level. This report will focus on ways to obtain first-time teacher certification, which is usually at the initial level but can be at the provisional level for teachers previously certified outside of Connecticut. There are also short-term permits and certifications (e.g., temporary 90-day certification and resident teacher certification) that can serve as the precursor to achieving an initial certification.

In addition, some certification options depend upon the employing board of education making a request to the state on behalf of the applicant (e.g., the temporary 90-day certificate or the international teacher permit). This essentially places the employer in the role of vouching for the applicant.

Finally, the law authorizes various alternate routes to certification (ARC) programs. These programs may be offered by the state, such as the ones administered by the Office of Higher Education (OHE), or an approved educational entity. They are generally designed to help people who did not take teacher preparation courses as an undergraduate student but are interested in becoming a teacher. These programs often offer weekend or evening classes in a more compressed timeframe than the traditional teacher preparation programs.

This report summarizes 14 pathways to earn teacher certification under Connecticut law.

Initial Educator Certificate ([CGS § 10-145b\(a\) & \(d\)\(1\)](#))

Eligibility Requirements. To be eligible for an initial teaching certificate, an applicant must hold a bachelor's degree from a higher education institution accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) or OHE or regionally accredited. The degree must be in a subject area major determined by SBE unless the applicant is teaching in a subject shortage area or achieved a certain score on a subject area assessment and has completed advanced coursework in that area.

Additionally, the applicant must have completed either:

1. a teacher preparation program approved by SBE or the appropriate governing body in another state or
2. an SBE-approved ARC program or an out-of-state ARC program approved by the appropriate entity in that state, along with satisfying the requirements for either the temporary 90-day certificate or the resident teacher certificate (see below).

Also, the applicant must have completed the following courses of study in special education:

1. at least 36 hours of coursework that includes (a) an understanding of exceptional students' growth and development, including children with a disability, gifted and talented children, and children who may require special education and (b) methods for identifying, planning for, and working effectively with special needs children in a regular classroom and

2. one or multiple courses providing instruction on classroom techniques in reading, differentiated instruction, social-emotional learning, cultural competencies, and assistive technology.

The law also permits a one- or two-year grace period from the special education course requirement for certain applicants. An applicant is entitled to an initial certificate with a one-year grace period to complete the coursework if he or she either completed (1) a teacher preparation program in the state prior to July 1, 1987, or outside the state or (2) the necessary combination of professional experience or coursework as SBE required. An applicant is entitled to a two-year grace period if he or she applies for initial certification in an area for which a bachelor's degree is not required.

Duration. Initial certificates are valid for three years and may be extended for one additional year by the education commissioner for good cause, upon the request of the employing superintendent or the assessment team reviewing the teacher's performance.

Temporary 90-Day Certificate ([CGS § 10-145b\(c\)](#))

Eligibility Requirements. Applicants in the following certification endorsement areas are eligible: (1) elementary education, (2) middle grades education, (3) secondary academic subjects, (4) special subjects or fields, (5) special education, (6) early childhood education, (7) administration and supervision, and (8) teacher shortage areas.

In order for SBE to issue this certificate, an employing board of education must request it in writing and attest that there is a special supervision plan for the prospective certificate holder. The certificate applicant must also meet the following requirements:

1. hold a bachelor's degree from a BOR- or OHE-accredited higher education institution or regionally accredited institution;
2. have (a) either majored in the certification endorsement area the requesting board of education is placing the applicant in or a closely related major, (b) at least the minimum number of credit hours required for the content area in the case of secondary or special subject or field endorsement areas, or (c) received an excellent score, as determined by SBE, on a subject area assessment for a subject shortage area;
3. received a satisfactory score on the appropriate SBE-approved subject area assessment;
4. submitted a written application on forms prescribed by the education commissioner;
5. successfully completed an SBE-approved ARC program provided by BOR, OHE, public or independent colleges or universities, regional education service centers, or private teacher or administrator training organizations;

6. earned at least a “B” undergraduate grade point average or graduate grade point average for at least 24 hours of graduate credit; and
7. provided supporting evidence of appropriate experience working with children.

The education commissioner may waive requirements 6 and 7 above for good cause.

Duration. These certificates are valid for 90 days. Individuals who have successfully taught while holding this certificate may apply for an initial educator certificate if they also meet requirements in state regulations for teacher certification.

Provisional Educator Certificate for Teachers from Other U.S. Jurisdictions ([CGS § 10-145b\(h\)](#))

Eligibility Requirements. Individuals who are teachers from another state, territory, or possession of the United States are eligible for a provisional educator certificate with the appropriate endorsement if they meet the following requirements:

1. taught for at least two years in the past 10 years in another state, territory, or possession of the United States; the District of Columbia, or Puerto Rico;
2. received at least two satisfactory performance evaluations while teaching in these out-of-state locations; and
3. fulfilled post-preparation assessments as approved by the education commissioner.

Applicants who have taught for two or more years under the appropriate certificate issued by another state, territory, or possession of the United States; or the District of Columbia; or Puerto Rico are exempt from completing the beginning educator program based upon their teaching experience showing evidence of teacher effectiveness, as determined by SBE, which may include a demonstrated record of improving student achievement.

Applicants are also exempt from completing a course of study in special education (see “Initial Educator Certificate,” above) if they have completed a teacher preparation or ARC program and hold an appropriate certificate from one of these out-of-state locations.

Additionally, there are some U.S. jurisdictions with which Connecticut may have an interstate agreement to facilitate certification of qualified educators in other states. State law requires such agreements to contain at least the following requirements for certification candidates:

1. a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited college or university,

2. completion of post-preparation assessments as approved by the education commissioner, and
3. successful completion of an approved educator preparation program.

SBE must issue the appropriate professional certificate to any applicant who satisfies the requirements of the appropriate interstate agreement ([CGS § 10-146c\(b\)](#)).

Duration. Provisional educator certificates are valid for at least three years and no more than eight years. Professional certificates are valid for five years and continued every five years thereafter.

Nonrenewable, Three-Year Temporary Certificate ([CGS § 10-145f\(c\)](#))

Eligibility Requirements. There are three types of applicants who are eligible for this type of certificate.

The first type of eligible applicant is an individual who graduated from (1) an out-of-state, regionally accredited teacher preparation program or (2) an SBE-approved ARC program. The applicant must also meet certification requirements, except for testing requirements.

The second type of eligible applicant is an individual who is hired by a charter school after July 1st in any school year for a teaching position that school year, as long as the individual could reasonably be expected to complete the requirements applicable to temporary 90-day certificate applicants (see above).

The third type of eligible applicant is an individual who has successfully taught under an appropriate teaching certificate issued by another state, territory, or possession of the United States; the District of Columbia; or Puerto Rico for two or more years during the last 10 years. The applicant must also meet certification requirements, except for testing requirements.

Duration. This certificate is valid for three years.

International Teacher Permit ([CGS § 10-145k](#))

In response to a request from a local or regional school board, SBE must issue a temporary international teacher permit in a teacher subject shortage area if the applicant meets the criteria. The permit allows a foreign teacher to teach in a public school under the school board's jurisdiction.

Eligibility Requirements. To qualify a teacher must:

1. hold a J-1 visa (i.e., a non-immigrant visa provided to foreign visitors who are allowed to come to the United States to promote mutual educational and cultural exchanges) from the U.S. State Department;
2. teach in the U.S. either under a memorandum of understanding between Connecticut and the teacher's home country or as part of the Teacher Exchange Program run by the State Department's [Exchange Visitor Program](#);
3. have (a) the equivalent of a bachelor's degree from a higher education institution regionally accredited by a foreign accrediting agency recognized by the education commissioner with a major in, or closely related to, the subject he or she is to teach; (b) such a degree with an unrelated major plus successful completion of an SBE-approved teacher test in that subject area; or (c) in the case of those applying to teach bilingual education, completed coursework or training that SDE deems equivalent to a bachelor's degree;
4. have completed, in his or her home country, the equivalent of a regionally accredited teacher preparation program; and
5. successfully complete an English oral proficiency exam approved by the education commissioner.

The local or regional school board requesting the permit must attest that it has a plan for supervising the foreign teacher.

Duration. The permit is valid for one year and may be renewed for one additional year if the school board requests it and the teacher continues to meet the qualifications.

Resident Teacher Certificate ([CGS § 10-145m](#))

The resident teacher certificate allows a person to teach in Connecticut while enrolled in an ARC program. Once SBE receives a proper application, it must issue a resident teacher certificate in elementary or middle grades education, secondary academic subjects, special subjects or fields, special education, early childhood education, or administration and supervision.

Eligibility Requirements. To qualify, an applicant must:

1. hold at least a bachelor's degree from a higher education institution accredited by the BOR, OHE, or a regional accreditation agency;
2. have an undergraduate grade point average of at least 3.0;

3. achieve a qualifying score set by the SBE on the appropriate SBE-approved subject area test; and
4. be enrolled in an ARC program that is approved by SBE and meets federal guidelines.

A resident teacher certificate holder must be the “teacher of record” under the supervision of the school superintendent or a school principal, administrator, or other supervisor the superintendent designates. The supervisor must regularly observe, guide, and evaluate the certificate holder’s performance.

Duration. Certificate is valid for two years, and the education commissioner may, for good cause, extend the certificate for an additional year at the request of the superintendent of schools of the district that employs the certificate holder.

A person who taught successfully as the teacher of record while holding a resident teacher certificate will be issued an initial educator certificate, which is valid for three years, if he or she has completed an SBE-approved ARC program and meets the teacher certification testing requirements or applicable exceptions (e.g., no test exists for that endorsement area).

Interim Educator Certificate (Conn. Agencies Regs. § 10-145d-413)

State regulations allow for a nonrenewable interim educator certificate to be granted to applicants who (1) meet the eligibility requirements for certification but need to successfully complete the appropriate assessment to obtain either an initial or provisional educator certification, (2) were hired by a charter school and meet the requirements for entry into an ARC program, or (3) meet the eligibility requirements for certification but need to complete the required special education coursework.

Eligibility Requirements. To be eligible an applicant must:

1. meet the preparation and eligibility requirements for an initial educator or provisional educator certificate except for successful completion of appropriate assessments, provided the applicant:
 - a. lived in another state during the year immediately preceding application, holds current teacher certification in another state, and has completed at least 10 school months of successful teaching in another state in a public school or nonpublic school approved by that state’s appropriate governing body or

- b. graduated from a teacher preparation program at an approved institution outside of Connecticut; or
2. was hired by a charter school after July 1st in any school year for a teaching position that school year, provided the person meets the entry requirements for an ARC program; or
3. meet the preparation and eligibility requirements for an initial educator or provisional educator certificate but lacks the coursework in special education.

For those with a coursework deficiency, the applicant must complete the appropriate course work during the interim period in order for an initial or provisional educator certificate to be issued. Failure to address the coursework deficiency within the period specified will prevent the holder from working for a board of education in a position covered by the expired endorsement, except that the deficient coursework may be deferred for good cause shown, provided the deferment is requested in writing both by the applicant and the employing board of education; is accompanied by evidence to justify the request; and is approved by the SDE.

Any interim educator certificate holder employed by a board of education must, as a condition for holding the certificate, successfully complete the beginning educator support assessments as appropriate and as may be made available by SBE.

Finally, upon meeting the requirements for the initial or provisional educator certificate, the interim certificate holder's new certificate will be issued retroactive to the issuance date of the interim educator certificate.

Duration. The interim certificate is valid for one year and is nonrenewable. The regulations provide an exception that allows for a one-year reissue for an applicant who is otherwise eligible for certification in areas or fields for which a bachelor's degree is not required, for endorsements in agriculture education, health occupations, marketing education, or practical nurse education in vocational-technical schools, but lacks course requirements to the extent of not more than six semester hours of credit and a special education course of study.

Durational Shortage Area Permit (Conn. Agencies Regs. § 10-145d-421)

Eligibility Requirements. In order for SBE to issue this permit (in lieu of a certificate), an employing board of education must establish that there is a shortage of certified teachers suitable for a specific position. The employing board certifies this in writing to SBE and asks permission to issue the permit for this position. The board also attests to the following facts:

1. other steps have previously been taken to attempt to secure a certified person suitable to the position,
2. special attention will be given (e.g., supervision and other assistance as needed) to the permit holder, and
3. the permit holder will participate in a teacher mentoring program, as may have been made available by the board.

If the permit is being issued for special service, administrator, or supervisor endorsements, then the employing board of education must establish that immediate appointment of the position is critical.

Eligible applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. hold a bachelor's degree from an approved institution,
2. have fulfilled the PRAXIS I teacher testing requirement in state regulation,
3. be enrolled in a planned program leading to certification in the field for which the permit is requested or submit a statement of interest to enroll in such a program unless enrollment in a planned program is not required, and
4. have completed at least 12 semester hours of credit in the subject area for which the permit will be issued.

Duration. This permit is valid for one year.

ARC Program for School Administrators ([CGS § 10-145p](#))

The law requires SDE to approve proposals from certain entities for ARC programs for school administrators if the proposed program meets the established criteria. Once the program is approved, SBE must grant an initial educator certificate with an administrator endorsement to any applicant who completes the ARC program and passes the relevant SDE-approved test or meets certain exceptions (e.g., lapsed certification). The law waives the existing special education coursework requirement for initial educator certification.

Program Eligibility Requirements. The sponsoring entity must be a public or independent higher education institution, a local or regional board of education, a regional educational service center (RESC) or an SBE-approved private, nonprofit teacher or administrator training organization. The requirements for program proposals, below, also contain the requirements for the individual applicants to the ARC program.

The proposed program must accept only those participants who:

1. hold a bachelor's degree from a BOR- or OHE-accredited or regionally accredited higher education institution,
2. have (a) at least 40 school months teaching experience, of which at least 10 school months are in a position requiring certification at a public school in Connecticut or another state or (b) less than 10 months teaching experience in a public school in another state while holding professional certification, provided the participants provide a statement justifying participation in the ARC program and receive SDE approval to participate, and
3. are recommended by the participant's immediate supervisor or district administrator on the basis of the person's performance.

Also, the number of participants allowed under the "less than 10 months experience" exception cannot be more than 10% of the total number of program participants for a school year.

The law includes an exception to the experience requirement. Instead of the above requirement (described in no. 2 above), the law permits the entity sponsoring the ARC program to admit participants who have provided service to a local or regional board of education in a supervisory or managerial role for at least 40 school months and held a professional educator certificate for at least 10 months during that time, provided the participant holds a bachelor's degree from a BOR- or OHE-accredited or regionally accredited higher education institution.

The ARC program generally must require each participant to complete a one-year residency that requires the person to serve (1) in a position requiring an intermediate administrator or supervisor endorsement and (2) in a full-time position for 10 school months at a local or regional board of education in the state under the supervision of a certified administrator and a supervisor from the organization sponsoring the ARC program. As an alternative, 10 school months experience in a full-time position as an administrator in a public or nonpublic school in another state and approved by that state's board of education, can substitute for the required residency.

Participants must also meet any other criteria that SDE requires.

Duration. Initial certificates with an endorsement in administration and supervision are valid for three years. The law requires a person granted the initial administrator certificate to earn a master's degree within five years in order to be eligible for a professional certification (professional is the highest of Connecticut's three levels of certification).

ARC for School Support Staff ([CGS § 10-145t](#))

The law requires SDE to approve proposals from certain entities for ARC programs for school support staff if the proposed program meets the established criteria. Support staff is defined as a school paraprofessional, athletic coach who holds an SBE-issued permit and coaches for a school district, licensed behavior analyst, or licensed assistant behavior analyst. Once the program is approved, SBE must grant an initial educator certificate to any applicant who completes the ARC program and passes the relevant SDE-approved subject matter test or meets certain exceptions (e.g., lapsed certification). The law waives the existing special education coursework requirement for initial educator certification.

Program Eligibility Requirements. The sponsoring entity must be a public or independent higher education institution; a local or regional board of education; a RESC; or an SBE-approved private, nonprofit teacher or administrator training organization. The requirements for program proposals, below, also contain the requirements for the individual applicants to the ARC program.

The proposed program must accept only those participants who:

1. hold a bachelor's degree from a BOR- or OHE-accredited or regionally accredited higher education institution,
2. have at least 40 school months employment experience as school support staff with a school district, and
3. are recommended by the participant's immediate supervisor or district administrator on the basis of the person's performance.

The ARC program must require each participant to complete a one-year residency that requires the person to serve (1) in a position requiring certification and (2) in a full-time position for 10 school months at a school district in the state under the supervision of a certified administrator or teacher and a supervisor from the organization sponsoring the ARC program.

Participants must also meet any other criteria that SDE requires.

Duration. Initial educator certificates are valid for three years. The law requires a person granted the initial educator certificate in administration and supervision to earn a master's degree within five years in order to obtain a professional certification (professional is the highest of Connecticut's three levels of certification).

Charter School Educator Permit ([CGS § 10-145q](#))

In response to a request from a state charter school governing council, SBE may issue a charter school educator permit if the applicant meets the criteria. The law limits how many such permits can be in use at a state charter school to no more than 30% of the teachers and administrators at the school.

Eligibility Requirements. To be eligible for a charter school educator permit, the applicant must:

1. be employed by a charter school as a teacher or administrator and must not hold the initial educator, provisional educator, or professional educator certificate;
2. achieve satisfactory scores on the state reading, writing, and mathematics competency examination prescribed by SBE and administered under its direction, or qualify for a waiver of the test based on SBE-approved criteria;
3. achieve a satisfactory evaluation on the appropriate SBE-approved subject area assessment; and
4. demonstrate evidence of effectiveness.

The permit authorizes the applicant to serve as an administrator or teacher in the charter school where he or she is employed.

Duration. The education commissioner may renew each charter school educator permit for good cause upon the request of the state charter school governing council employing the person at the time the charter for the school is renewed (most charters are renewed for five years).

Adjunct Art Instructor Permit (Magnet Schools Only) ([CGS § 10-145n](#))

In response to a request from a local or regional school board or a RESC, SBE may issue an adjunct instructor permit to any applicant who meets the criteria. The permit allows the holder to teach only arts part-time in a magnet school.

Eligibility Requirements. The applicant must:

1. have specialized training, experience, or expertise in any form of visual or performing arts;

2. hold a bachelor's degree from a BOR- or OHE-accredited or regionally accredited higher education institution;
3. have at least three years of work experience in the arts, or one year of work experience and two years of specialized schooling related to the applicant's artistic specialty; and
4. attest to SBE that he or she has at least 180 hours of cumulative experience working with children, in a private or public setting, including, but not limited to, after school programs; group lessons; children's theater; dance studio lessons; and artist-in-residence programs; or at least two years' experience as a full-time faculty member at a higher education institution.

The permit authorizes a person to hold a part-time position of no more than 15 classroom instructional hours per week at a part-time interdistrict arts magnet high school in existence on July 1, 2009 or the Cooperative Arts and Humanities Magnet High School as a teacher of art, music, dance, theater, or any other subject related to the holder's artistic specialty.

In addition, the law grants permits to any part-time teacher of art, music, dance, theater or any other subject related to the person's artistic specialty who was employed at such a magnet school for at least one year prior to July 1, 2009. Those permitted this way are exempt from requirements 2 to 4 above.

While employed at the school, the permit holder must be under the supervision of the superintendent, a principal, an administrator, or other supervisor designated by such superintendent. The school must also provide a program to assist the permit holder.

Duration. The permit is valid for three years and may be renewed by the education commissioner for good cause upon the request of the employer.

ARC Program for Alternate Professions ([PA 18-34, § 2](#), codified at CGA § 10-145w)

The law requires SDE, in consultation with OHE, to develop, or review and approve, proposals for ARC programs that enable those in alternate professions to obtain an initial educator certification.

Eligibility Requirements. To qualify for this certification, a person from an alternate profession must hold at least a bachelor's degree from a BOR- or OHE-accredited or regionally accredited institution and be one of the following:

1. a paraeducator (i.e., a classroom assistant who helps teachers or other professional staff with instruction or related services);
2. a veteran (i.e., a person honorably discharged or released from active U.S., military service);
3. a Connecticut charter school educator permit holder; or
4. a person currently or previously employed as a professor at an accredited higher education institution.

A person from an alternate profession may also include someone with a master's degree from a social work program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education or, for someone educated outside the United States or its territories, an educational program deemed equivalent by the council.

An ARC program developed or approved under this law must (1) include instruction in classroom management and cultural competency, (2) align with SBE-adopted standards for teaching competencies, and (3) meet other criteria as SDE requires. Starting July 1, 2019, the law waives the existing special education coursework requirement for initial educator certification and requires SBE, upon receiving a proper application, to certify applicants who (1) successfully complete the ARC program and (2) meet the teacher certification testing requirements or certain exceptions (e.g., lapsed certification).

Duration. The certificate is valid for three years.

ARC for Teachers, Administrators, and Early Childhood Education Teachers ([CGS § 10-155d](#))

In addition to the specific programs mentioned earlier, OHE is required to expand or develop several different ARC programs. The law requires OHE to:

1. expand, within available appropriations and with the approval of the education commissioner, its summer and weekend and evening ARC programs (expansion of the weekend and evening program must be for those seeking certification in SDE-designated subject shortage areas);
2. develop, in collaboration with SDE, (a) a regional ARC program targeted to the subject shortage areas and (b) an ARC program for former teachers whose certificates have expired and who are interested in resuming their teaching careers; and

3. develop, in consultation with SDE, ARC programs for (a) school administrators and superintendents and (b) early childhood teachers (these programs must include mentored apprenticeships and admissions criteria).

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