

# School Superintendent Duties and Requirement

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## Issue

What are the statutory duties of a school superintendent? Does state law require all school districts to have a superintendent?

## Summary

Under state law, the school superintendent is the chief executive officer of the board of education and the supervisor of all the district's schools. The law requires each board of education to have a superintendent to provide this function unless the town or school district meets the small district criteria. If so, the board has the option to receive direction from another board of education's superintendent, which means the district still has someone in the superintendent's role but who is not directly employed by the district. Furthermore, a separate law allows two or more boards of education to jointly hire a superintendent.

## Superintendent Duties

In addition to being the board of education's chief executive officer, state law gives each superintendent "executive authority over the school system and the responsibility for its supervision" ([CGS § 10-157](#)). The superintendent is the education professional the board hires to be responsible for the school system's day-to-day operations. But state law empowers the board of education's elected members to set school district policies and develop and propose the annual board of education budget ([CGS §§ 10-221](#), [-220g](#), [-221o](#), [-222](#), and [-223a](#)). (For more on the division of responsibilities between a superintendent and the board of education, see the [School Governance Position Statement](#), jointly issued by the Connecticut associations of boards of education and public school superintendents.)

## ***Authority Over Teachers and School Professionals***

In brief, the school superintendent hires and evaluates teachers and has specific duties related to teacher tenure and employment termination. The law allows a board of education to authorize the superintendent to hire teachers and most districts designate the superintendent to do so. The law also grants a teacher tenure when, after completing four years of continuous teaching with that school district, the superintendent offers the teacher a contract renewal for the following year based on effective teaching as determined through annual teacher evaluations ([CGS § 10-151\(a\)\(6\)](#)). Also, the superintendent has specific duties related to terminating the employment of a tenured or non-tenured teacher ([CGS § 10-151\(c\) & \(d\)](#)).

By law, the superintendent must annually evaluate, or cause to be evaluated, each teacher in his or her school district. The definition of teacher for this purpose includes every state-certified professional employee employed by the board of education below the rank of superintendent, which includes school social workers, school psychologists, and assistant superintendents, to name a few ([CGS § 10-151b\(a\)](#)).

The superintendent must report annually by June 1 to the board of education on the status of the teacher evaluations and annually by September 1 to the education commissioner on the status of the teacher evaluation program's implementation, including the frequency of evaluations, aggregate evaluation ratings, number of teachers who have not been evaluated, and other information as the State Department of Education requires ([CGS § 10-151b\(a\)](#)).

## ***Other Duties***

State statutes specifically require the superintendent to perform certain other duties, including the following:

1. issuing certificates of age (i.e., "working papers") for any minor from the school district seeking employment in certain work settings ([CGS § 10-193](#)),
2. annually attesting to the education commissioner that the district is implementing a plan for managing students with life-threatening food allergies and glycogen storage disease ([CGS § 10-212c\(b\)](#)),
3. annually presenting the school district's strategic school profile to the board of education ([CGS § 10-220\(c\)](#)),
4. appointing a district safe school climate coordinator as part of the state's anti-bullying requirements ([CGS § 10-222k](#)),
5. annually reporting to the state on the number of school-age children in the district ([CGS § 10-250](#)), and

6. submitting any application for a school construction reimbursement grant ([CGS § 10-283\(a\)\(1\)](#)).

The local or regional board of education, as appropriate, sets many other duties of the superintendent that are not statutorily prescribed.

## **Small District Option**

For local boards of education whose towns have fewer than (1) 10,000 residents, (2) 2,000 resident students, or (3) three public schools, the law gives them the option to either employ a local superintendent or receive direction from another board of education's superintendent provided the legislative body of the town of the other board authorizes the use of its superintendent ([CGS § 10-157](#)). Under the latter option it appears the superintendent is not directly employed by the school district, but the district still has a superintendent providing direction.

## **Districts Sharing a Superintendent**

By law, two or more boards of education (or a committee formed by the boards) may jointly hire a superintendent of schools who has the same authority as a superintendent hired by a single school district. The agreement to hire the superintendent must specify the term of the agreement and, for each district, specify the proportionate share of the superintendent's salary and related expenses ([CGS § 10-157a](#)). Any board of education participating in the agreement may withdraw if the board provides a minimum of one-year written notice to the other participating boards.

This mechanism can also be used by a regional school district and its member districts. This comes into play, for example, when a regional district's local members each still operate a grammar school in their respective towns, and the regional district operates the middle and high school. [Regional School District No. 4](#), which includes Chester, Deep River, and Essex, is an example of this. For these towns one superintendent is the chief executive officer of all four districts (one regional and three town).

Furthermore, any board of education that jointly employs a superintendent under this law may hold regular joint meetings, at least once every two months, with any of the other boards that employ the superintendent for the purpose of reducing expenses and more easily aligning the boards' educational programs ([CGS § 10-157a\(c\)](#)).

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