AN ACT IMPLEMENTING CERTAIN RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
SCHOOL PARAEDUCATOR ADVISORY COUNCIL.

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

Section 1. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2022) (a) For the school year
commencing July 1, 2023, and each school year thereafter, each
paraeducator employed by a local or regional board of education shall
participate in a program of professional development. Each local and
regional board of education shall make available, annually, at no cost to
its paraeducators, a program of professional development that is not
fewer than eighteen hours in length, of which a preponderance is in a
small group or individual instructional setting. Such program of
professional development shall (1) be a comprehensive, sustained and
intensive approach to improving paraeducators effectiveness in
increasing student knowledge achievement, (2) focus on refining and
improving various effective instruction methods that are shared
between and among paraeducators, (3) foster collective responsibility
for improved student performance, (4) be comprised of professional
learning that (A) is aligned with rigorous state student academic
achievement standards, (B) is conducted among paraeducators at the
school and facilitated by principals, coaches, mentors, distinguished educators, as described in section 10-145s of the general statutes, or other appropriate teachers, (C) occurs frequently on an individual basis or among groups of paraeducators in a job-embedded process of continuous improvement, and (D) includes a repository of best practices for instruction methods developed by paraeducators within each school that is continuously available to such paraeducators for comment and updating, and (5) include training in culturally responsive pedagogy and practice. Each program of professional development shall include professional development activities in accordance with the provisions of subsection (b) of this section. The principles and practices of social-emotional learning and restorative practices shall be integrated throughout the components of such program of professional development described in subdivisions (1) to (5), inclusive, of this subsection.

(b) Local and regional boards of education shall offer professional development activities to paraeducators as part of the plan developed pursuant to subsection (b) of section 10-220a of the general statutes, as amended by this act, or for any individual paraeducator. Such professional development activities may be made available by a board of education directly, through a regional educational service center or cooperative arrangement with another board of education or through arrangements with any professional development provider approved by the Commissioner of Education and shall be consistent with any goals identified by the paraeducators and the local or regional board of education.

Sec. 2. Subsection (b) of section 10-220a of the 2022 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2022):

(b) Not later than a date prescribed by the commissioner, each local and regional board of education shall establish a professional development and evaluation committee. Such professional development and evaluation committee shall consist of (1) at least one
teacher, as defined in subsection (a) of section 10-144d, selected by the exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees chosen pursuant to section 10-153b, (2) at least one administrator, as defined in subsection (a) of section 10-144e, selected by the exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees chosen pursuant to section 10-153b, and (3) such other school personnel as the board deems appropriate. The duties of such committees shall include, but not be limited to, participation in the development or adoption of a teacher evaluation and support program for the district, pursuant to section 10-151b, and the development, evaluation and annual updating of a comprehensive local professional development plan for certified employees of the district. Such plan shall: (A) Be directly related to the educational goals prepared by the local or regional board of education pursuant to subsection (b) of section 10-220, (B) on and after July 1, 2021, be developed with full consideration of the priorities and needs related to student social-emotional learning and restorative practices, in accordance with the provisions of section 10-148a, and student academic outcomes as determined by the State Board of Education, (C) provide for the ongoing and systematic assessment and improvement of both teacher evaluation and professional development of the professional staff members of each such board, including personnel management and evaluation training or experience for administrators, and (D) be related to regular and special student needs and may include provisions concerning career incentives and parent involvement. The State Board of Education shall develop guidelines to assist local and regional boards of education in determining the objectives of the plans and in coordinating staff development activities with student needs and school programs. For the school year commencing July 1, 2023, and each school year thereafter, such committees shall develop, evaluate and annually update a comprehensive local professional development plan for paraeducators of the district in accordance with the provisions of this subsection.

Sec. 3. Section 10-148b of the 2022 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July
On or before July 1, 2013, the Commissioner of Education shall create a program of professional development for teachers, as defined in section 10-144d, paraeducators and principals in scientifically-based reading research and instruction, as defined in section 10-14u. Such program of professional development shall (1) count towards the professional development requirements pursuant to section 10-148a and section 1 of this act, (2) be based on data collected from student reading assessments, (3) provide differentiated and intensified training in reading instruction for teachers and paraeducators, (4) outline how mentor teachers will train teachers in reading instruction, (5) outline how model classrooms will be established in schools for reading instruction, (6) inform principals on how to evaluate classrooms and teacher and paraeducator performance in scientifically-based reading research and instruction, and (7) be job-embedded and local whenever possible. In the case of any certified individual or paraeducator who is required to complete the reading instruction survey, pursuant to section 10-145r, as amended by this act, the program of professional development for such individual or paraeducator shall be designed using the results of such survey, in accordance with said section 10-145r, as amended by this act. Not later than July 1, 2023, the commissioner shall update such program of professional development to include paraeducators.

Sec. 4. Section 10-145r of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2022):

For the school year commencing July 1, 2014, and biennially thereafter, the local or regional board of education that employs a certified individual who holds an initial, provisional or professional educator certificate with an early childhood nursery through grade three or an elementary endorsement in a position requiring such an endorsement in kindergarten to grade three, inclusive, shall require each such certified individual to take a survey on reading instruction, developed by the Department of Education that is based on the reading
instruction examination approved by the State Board of Education on April 1, 2009, or a comparable reading instruction examination with minimum standards that are equivalent to the examination approved by the State Board of Education on April 1, 2009. The department shall design such survey in a manner that identifies the strengths and weaknesses of such certified individuals in reading instruction practices and knowledge on an individual, school and district level. Such survey shall be administered at no financial cost to such certified individual. The results of such survey shall be confidential and shall not be included as part of any summative ratings for performance evaluations, conducted pursuant to section 10-151b, and not be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, as defined in section 1-200, except such results shall be (1) distributed to such certified individual and the supervisor of such certified individual who is responsible for designing and facilitating the program of professional development conducted pursuant to section 10-148b, as amended by this act, for such certified individual, and (2) used for the purpose of improving reading instruction by developing student learning objectives and teacher practice goals that will be included in the professional development conducted pursuant to section 10-148b, as amended by this act, for such certified individuals. For the school year commencing July 1, 2023, and biennially thereafter, each local and regional board of education shall require any paraeducator whose responsibilities include the provision of reading instruction to students to take the survey on reading instruction in accordance with the provisions of this section.

Sec. 5. (Effective July 1, 2022) The Commissioner of Education shall convene a working group to develop recommendations for the creation of a system of professional certification for paraeducators. Such working group shall include, but need not be limited to, the School Paraeducator Advisory Council, established pursuant to section 10-155k of the general statutes, representatives from each state-wide bargaining representative organization that represents school paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities, and representatives designated by organizations or associations representing local and regional boards of education,
raised educational service centers, superintendents and the interests of students and paraeducators in the provision of special education services. Not later than January 1, 2024, the commissioner shall submit a report of its recommendations 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 of the general statutes.

Sec. 6. Subdivision (10) of subsection (a) of section 10-76d of the 2022 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2022):

(10) (A) Each local and regional board of education responsible for providing special education and related services to a child or pupil shall notify the parent or guardian of a child who requires or who may require special education, a pupil if such pupil is an emancipated minor or eighteen years of age or older who requires or who may require special education or a surrogate parent appointed pursuant to section 10-94g, in writing, at least five school days before such board proposes to, or refuses to, initiate or change the child's or pupil's identification, evaluation or educational placement or the provision of a free appropriate public education to the child or pupil.

(B) Upon request by a parent, guardian, pupil or surrogate parent, the responsible local or regional board of education shall provide such parent, guardian, pupil or surrogate parent an opportunity to meet with a member of the planning and placement team designated by such board prior to the referral planning and placement team meeting at which the assessments and evaluations of the child or pupil who requires or may require special education is presented to such parent, guardian, pupil or surrogate parent for the first time. Such meeting shall be for the sole purpose of discussing the planning and placement team process and any concerns such parent, guardian, pupil or surrogate parent has regarding the child or pupil who requires or may require special education.

(C) Such parent, guardian, pupil or surrogate parent shall (i) be given
at least five school days' prior notice of any planning and placement
team meeting conducted for such child or pupil, (ii) have the right to be
present at and participate in all portions of such meeting at which an
educational program for such child or pupil is developed, reviewed or
revised, (iii) have the right to have (I) advisors of such person's own
choosing and at such person's own expense, (II) the school
paraprofessional assigned to such child or pupil, if any, and (III) such
child or pupil's birth-to-three service coordinator, if any, attend and
participate in all portions of such meeting at which an educational
program for such child or pupil is developed, reviewed or revised, and
(iv) have the right to have each recommendation made in such child or
pupil's birth-to-three individualized transition plan, as required by
section 17a-248e, if any, addressed by the planning and placement team
during such meeting at which an educational program for such child or
pupil is developed.

(D) Immediately upon the formal identification of any child as a child
requiring special education and at each planning and placement team
meeting for such child, the responsible local or regional board of
education shall inform the parent or guardian of such child or surrogate
parent or, in the case of a pupil who is an emancipated minor or eighteen
years of age or older, the pupil of (i) the laws relating to special
education, (ii) the rights of such parent, guardian, surrogate parent or
pupil under such laws and the regulations adopted by the State Board
of Education relating to special education, including the right of a
parent, guardian or surrogate parent to (I) withhold from enrolling such
child in kindergarten, in accordance with the provisions of section 10-
184, and (II) have advisors and the school paraprofessional assigned to
such child or pupil attend and participate in all portions of such meeting
at which an educational program for such child or pupil is developed,
reviewed or revised, in accordance with the provisions of subparagraph
(C) of this subdivision, and (iii) any relevant information and resources
relating to individualized education programs created by the
Department of Education, including, but not limited to, information
relating to transition resources and services for high school students. If
such parent, guardian, surrogate parent or pupil does not attend a planning and placement team meeting, the responsible local or regional board of education shall mail such information to such person.

(E) Each local and regional board of education shall have in effect at the beginning of each school year an educational program for each child or pupil who has been identified as eligible for special education.

(F) At each initial planning and placement team meeting for a child or pupil, the responsible local or regional board of education shall inform the parent, guardian, surrogate parent or pupil of (i) the laws relating to physical restraint and seclusion pursuant to section 10-236b and the rights of such parent, guardian, surrogate parent or pupil under such laws and the regulations adopted by the State Board of Education relating to physical restraint and seclusion, and (ii) the right of such parent, guardian, surrogate parent or pupil, during such meeting at which an educational program for such child or pupil is developed, to have (I) such child or pupil's birth-to-three service coordinator attend and participate in all portions of such meeting, and (II) each recommendation made in the transition plan, as required by section 17a-248e, by such child or pupil's birth-to-three service coordinator addressed by the planning and placement team.

(G) Upon request by a parent, guardian, pupil or surrogate parent, the responsible local or regional board of education shall provide the results of the assessments and evaluations used in the determination of eligibility for special education for a child or pupil to such parent, guardian, surrogate parent or pupil at least three school days before the referral planning and placement team meeting at which such results of the assessments and evaluations will be discussed for the first time.

(H) Each local or regional board of education shall monitor the development of each child who, pursuant to subsection (a) of section 17a-248e, has been (i) referred for a registration on a mobile application designated by the Commissioner of Early Childhood, in partnership with such child's parent, guardian or surrogate parent, or (ii) provided
a form for such child’s parent, guardian or surrogate parent to complete
and submit to such local or regional board of education that screens for
developmental and social-emotional delays using a validated screening
tool, such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaire and the Ages and Stages
Social-Emotional Questionnaire, or its equivalent. If such monitoring
results in suspecting a child of having a developmental delay, the board
shall schedule a planning and placement team meeting with such child’s
parent, guardian or surrogate parent for the purposes of identifying
services for which such child may be eligible, including, but not limited
to, a preschool program under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities
Act, 20 USC 1471 et seq. If a parent, guardian or surrogate parent of any
child referred for a registration on the mobile application or provided a
form to complete and submit, pursuant to subsection (a) of section 17a-
248e, fails to complete such registration or complete and submit such
form after a period of six months from the date of such referral or
provision of such form, the board shall send a reminder, in the form and
manner determined by the board, to such parent, guardian or surrogate
parent to complete such registration or complete and submit such form.
The board shall send another reminder after a period of one year from
such referral or provision of such form if such registration remains
incomplete or such form is not submitted.

(I) Prior to each planning and placement team meeting for a child or
pupil in which an educational program for such child or pupil is
developed, reviewed or revised, the responsible local or regional board
of education shall provide (i) adequate notice of such meeting to the
school paraprofessional assigned to such child or pupil so that such
school paraprofessional may adequately prepare for such meeting, and
(ii) training, upon request of such school paraprofessional, on the role of
such school paraprofessional at such meeting. Following such meeting,
a copy of such educational program shall be made available to any
school paraprofessional who is assigned to such child or pupil or who
will be providing special education or related services under such
educational program to such child or pupil.
This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

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**Statement of Purpose:**

To establish a system of professional development for paraeducators, to convene a working group to develop recommendations for the creation of a system of professional certification for paraeducators and to require adequate notice and training about planning and placement team meetings and access to individualized education programs for paraeducators in the provision of special education services.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]