



General Assembly

February Session, 2022

Raised Bill No. 5321

LCO No. 2594



Referred to Committee on EDUCATION

Introduced by:
(ED)

***AN ACT IMPLEMENTING CERTAIN RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
SCHOOL PARAEUCATOR ADVISORY COUNCIL.***

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2022*) (a) For the school year
2 commencing July 1, 2023, and each school year thereafter, each
3 paraeducator employed by a local or regional board of education shall
4 participate in a program of professional development. Each local and
5 regional board of education shall make available, annually, at no cost to
6 its paraeducators, a program of professional development that is not
7 fewer than eighteen hours in length, of which a preponderance is in a
8 small group or individual instructional setting. Such program of
9 professional development shall (1) be a comprehensive, sustained and
10 intensive approach to improving paraeducators effectiveness in
11 increasing student knowledge achievement, (2) focus on refining and
12 improving various effective instruction methods that are shared
13 between and among paraeducators, (3) foster collective responsibility
14 for improved student performance, (4) be comprised of professional
15 learning that (A) is aligned with rigorous state student academic
16 achievement standards, (B) is conducted among paraeducators at the

17 school and facilitated by principals, coaches, mentors, distinguished
18 educators, as described in section 10-145s of the general statutes, or
19 other appropriate teachers, (C) occurs frequently on an individual basis
20 or among groups of paraeducators in a job-embedded process of
21 continuous improvement, and (D) includes a repository of best practices
22 for instruction methods developed by paraeducators within each school
23 that is continuously available to such paraeducators for comment and
24 updating, and (5) include training in culturally responsive pedagogy
25 and practice. Each program of professional development shall include
26 professional development activities in accordance with the provisions
27 of subsection (b) of this section. The principles and practices of social-
28 emotional learning and restorative practices shall be integrated
29 throughout the components of such program of professional
30 development described in subdivisions (1) to (5), inclusive, of this
31 subsection.

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

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

46 (b) Not later than a date prescribed by the commissioner, each local
47 and regional board of education shall establish a professional
48 development and evaluation committee. Such professional
49 development and evaluation committee shall consist of (1) at least one

50 teacher, as defined in subsection (a) of section 10-144d, selected by the
51 exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees chosen
52 pursuant to section 10-153b, (2) at least one administrator, as defined in
53 subsection (a) of section 10-144e, selected by the exclusive bargaining
54 representative for certified employees chosen pursuant to section 10-
55 153b, and (3) such other school personnel as the board deems
56 appropriate. The duties of such committees shall include, but not be
57 limited to, participation in the development or adoption of a teacher
58 evaluation and support program for the district, pursuant to section 10-
59 151b, and the development, evaluation and annual updating of a
60 comprehensive local professional development plan for certified
61 employees of the district. Such plan shall: (A) Be directly related to the
62 educational goals prepared by the local or regional board of education
63 pursuant to subsection (b) of section 10-220, (B) on and after July 1, 2021,
64 be developed with full consideration of the priorities and needs related
65 to student social-emotional learning and restorative practices, in
66 accordance with the provisions of section 10-148a, and student academic
67 outcomes as determined by the State Board of Education, (C) provide
68 for the ongoing and systematic assessment and improvement of both
69 teacher evaluation and professional development of the professional
70 staff members of each such board, including personnel management
71 and evaluation training or experience for administrators, and (D) be
72 related to regular and special student needs and may include provisions
73 concerning career incentives and parent involvement. The State Board
74 of Education shall develop guidelines to assist local and regional boards
75 of education in determining the objectives of the plans and in
76 coordinating staff development activities with student needs and school
77 programs. For the school year commencing July 1, 2023, and each school
78 year thereafter, such committees shall develop, evaluate and annually
79 update a comprehensive local professional development plan for
80 paraeducators of the district in accordance with the provisions of this
81 subsection.

82 Sec. 3. Section 10-148b of the 2022 supplement to the general statutes
83 is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*

84 1, 2022):

85 On or before July 1, 2013, the Commissioner of Education shall create
86 a program of professional development for teachers, as defined in
87 section 10-144d, paraeducators and principals in scientifically-based
88 reading research and instruction, as defined in section 10-14u. Such
89 program of professional development shall (1) count towards the
90 professional development requirements pursuant to section 10-148a and
91 section 1 of this act, (2) be based on data collected from student reading
92 assessments, (3) provide differentiated and intensified training in
93 reading instruction for teachers and paraeducators, (4) outline how
94 mentor teachers will train teachers in reading instruction, (5) outline
95 how model classrooms will be established in schools for reading
96 instruction, (6) inform principals on how to evaluate classrooms and
97 teacher and paraeducator performance in scientifically-based reading
98 research and instruction, and (7) be job-embedded and local whenever
99 possible. In the case of any certified individual or paraeducator who is
100 required to complete the reading instruction survey, pursuant to section
101 10-145r, as amended by this act, the program of professional
102 development for such individual or paraeducator shall be designed
103 using the results of such survey, in accordance with said section 10-145r,
104 as amended by this act. Not later than July 1, 2023, the commissioner
105 shall update such program of professional development to include
106 paraeducators.

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

109 For the school year commencing July 1, 2014, and biennially
110 thereafter, the local or regional board of education that employs a
111 certified individual who holds an initial, provisional or professional
112 educator certificate with an early childhood nursery through grade
113 three or an elementary endorsement in a position requiring such an
114 endorsement in kindergarten to grade three, inclusive, shall require
115 each such certified individual to take a survey on reading instruction,
116 developed by the Department of Education that is based on the reading

117 instruction examination approved by the State Board of Education on
118 April 1, 2009, or a comparable reading instruction examination with
119 minimum standards that are equivalent to the examination approved by
120 the State Board of Education on April 1, 2009. The department shall
121 design such survey in a manner that identifies the strengths and
122 weaknesses of such certified individuals in reading instruction practices
123 and knowledge on an individual, school and district level. Such survey
124 shall be administered at no financial cost to such certified individual.
125 The results of such survey shall be confidential and shall not be included
126 as part of any summative ratings for performance evaluations,
127 conducted pursuant to section 10-151b, and not be subject to disclosure
128 under the Freedom of Information Act, as defined in section 1-200,
129 except such results shall be (1) distributed to such certified individual
130 and the supervisor of such certified individual who is responsible for
131 designing and facilitating the program of professional development
132 conducted pursuant to section 10-148b, as amended by this act, for such
133 certified individual, and (2) used for the purpose of improving reading
134 instruction by developing student learning objectives and teacher
135 practice goals that will be included in the professional development
136 conducted pursuant to section 10-148b, as amended by this act, for such
137 certified individuals. For the school year commencing July 1, 2023, and
138 biennially thereafter, each local and regional board of education shall
139 require any paraeducator whose responsibilities include the provision
140 of reading instruction to students to take the survey on reading
141 instruction in accordance with the provisions of this section.

142 Sec. 5. (*Effective July 1, 2022*) The Commissioner of Education shall
143 convene a working group to develop recommendations for the creation
144 of a system of professional certification for paraeducators. Such working
145 group shall include, but need not be limited to, the School Paraeducator
146 Advisory Council, established pursuant to section 10-155k of the general
147 statutes, representatives from each state-wide bargaining representative
148 organization that represents school paraprofessionals with instructional
149 responsibilities, and representatives designated by organizations or
150 associations representing local and regional boards of education,

151 regional educational service centers, superintendents and the interests
152 of students and paraeducators in the provision of special education
153 services. Not later than January 1, 2024, the commissioner shall submit
154 a report of its recommendations to the joint standing committee of the
155 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education,
156 in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

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

160 (10) (A) Each local and regional board of education responsible for
161 providing special education and related services to a child or pupil shall
162 notify the parent or guardian of a child who requires or who may
163 require special education, a pupil if such pupil is an emancipated minor
164 or eighteen years of age or older who requires or who may require
165 special education or a surrogate parent appointed pursuant to section
166 10-94g, in writing, at least five school days before such board proposes
167 to, or refuses to, initiate or change the child's or pupil's identification,
168 evaluation or educational placement or the provision of a free
169 appropriate public education to the child or pupil.

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

182 (C) Such parent, guardian, pupil or surrogate parent shall (i) be given

183 at least five school days' prior notice of any planning and placement
184 team meeting conducted for such child or pupil, (ii) have the right to be
185 present at and participate in all portions of such meeting at which an
186 educational program for such child or pupil is developed, reviewed or
187 revised, (iii) have the right to have (I) advisors of such person's own
188 choosing and at such person's own expense, (II) the school
189 paraprofessional assigned to such child or pupil, if any, and (III) such
190 child or pupil's birth-to-three service coordinator, if any, attend and
191 participate in all portions of such meeting at which an educational
192 program for such child or pupil is developed, reviewed or revised, and
193 (iv) have the right to have each recommendation made in such child or
194 pupil's birth-to-three individualized transition plan, as required by
195 section 17a-248e, if any, addressed by the planning and placement team
196 during such meeting at which an educational program for such child or
197 pupil is developed.

198 (D) Immediately upon the formal identification of any child as a child
199 requiring special education and at each planning and placement team
200 meeting for such child, the responsible local or regional board of
201 education shall inform the parent or guardian of such child or surrogate
202 parent or, in the case of a pupil who is an emancipated minor or eighteen
203 years of age or older, the pupil of (i) the laws relating to special
204 education, (ii) the rights of such parent, guardian, surrogate parent or
205 pupil under such laws and the regulations adopted by the State Board
206 of Education relating to special education, including the right of a
207 parent, guardian or surrogate parent to (I) withhold from enrolling such
208 child in kindergarten, in accordance with the provisions of section 10-
209 184, and (II) have advisors and the school paraprofessional assigned to
210 such child or pupil attend and participate in all portions of such meeting
211 at which an educational program for such child or pupil is developed,
212 reviewed or revised, in accordance with the provisions of subparagraph
213 (C) of this subdivision, and (iii) any relevant information and resources
214 relating to individualized education programs created by the
215 Department of Education, including, but not limited to, information
216 relating to transition resources and services for high school students. If

217 such parent, guardian, surrogate parent or pupil does not attend a
218 planning and placement team meeting, the responsible local or regional
219 board of education shall mail such information to such person.

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

223 (F) At each initial planning and placement team meeting for a child
224 or pupil, the responsible local or regional board of education shall
225 inform the parent, guardian, surrogate parent or pupil of (i) the laws
226 relating to physical restraint and seclusion pursuant to section 10-236b
227 and the rights of such parent, guardian, surrogate parent or pupil under
228 such laws and the regulations adopted by the State Board of Education
229 relating to physical restraint and seclusion, and (ii) the right of such
230 parent, guardian, surrogate parent or pupil, during such meeting at
231 which an educational program for such child or pupil is developed, to
232 have (I) such child or pupil's birth-to-three service coordinator attend
233 and participate in all portions of such meeting, and (II) each
234 recommendation made in the transition plan, as required by section 17a-
235 248e, by such child or pupil's birth-to-three service coordinator
236 addressed by the planning and placement team.

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

244 (H) Each local or regional board of education shall monitor the
245 development of each child who, pursuant to subsection (a) of section
246 17a-248e, has been (i) referred for a registration on a mobile application
247 designated by the Commissioner of Early Childhood, in partnership
248 with such child's parent, guardian or surrogate parent, or (ii) provided

249 a form for such child's parent, guardian or surrogate parent to complete
250 and submit to such local or regional board of education that screens for
251 developmental and social-emotional delays using a validated screening
252 tool, such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaire and the Ages and Stages
253 Social-Emotional Questionnaire, or its equivalent. If such monitoring
254 results in suspecting a child of having a developmental delay, the board
255 shall schedule a planning and placement team meeting with such child's
256 parent, guardian or surrogate parent for the purposes of identifying
257 services for which such child may be eligible, including, but not limited
258 to, a preschool program under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities
259 Act, 20 USC 1471 et seq. If a parent, guardian or surrogate parent of any
260 child referred for a registration on the mobile application or provided a
261 form to complete and submit, pursuant to subsection (a) of section 17a-
262 248e, fails to complete such registration or complete and submit such
263 form after a period of six months from the date of such referral or
264 provision of such form, the board shall send a reminder, in the form and
265 manner determined by the board, to such parent, guardian or surrogate
266 parent to complete such registration or complete and submit such form.
267 The board shall send another reminder after a period of one year from
268 such referral or provision of such form if such registration remains
269 incomplete or such form is not submitted.

270 (I) Prior to each planning and placement team meeting for a child or
271 pupil in which an educational program for such child or pupil is
272 developed, reviewed or revised, the responsible local or regional board
273 of education shall provide (i) adequate notice of such meeting to the
274 school paraprofessional assigned to such child or pupil so that such
275 school paraprofessional may adequately prepare for such meeting, and
276 (ii) training, upon request of such school paraprofessional, on the role of
277 such school paraprofessional at such meeting. Following such meeting,
278 a copy of such educational program shall be made available to any
279 school paraprofessional who is assigned to such child or pupil or who
280 will be providing special education or related services under such
281 educational program to such child or pupil.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	10-220a(b)
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	10-148b
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	10-145r
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	New section
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	10-76d(a)(10)

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.]