
OLR Bill Analysis

SB 226

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

SUMMARY

This bill makes the following changes in the education statutes:

1. extends the term of validity for three levels of public school teaching certification (i.e., initial, provisional, and professional) (§§ 1-3);
2. establishes new reporting requirements and deadlines for the State Department of Education (SDE) and the State Education Resource Center's (SERC's) collaborative effort to create a model curriculum for grades kindergarten to eight (K-8) (see BACKGROUND) (§§ 4 & 5); and
3. grants the education commissioner temporary authority to waive provisions or modify requirements in state laws about school feeding programs in response to changes in federal law or federally-issued agency waivers (§§ 6 & 7).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2022, except the provisions on feeding programs (§§ 6 & 7) take effect upon passage.

§§ 1-3 — TEACHING CERTIFICATION

The bill extends the term of validity for each of the three levels of public school teaching certification: initial (entry-level), provisional (mid-level) and professional (top level).

Initial Certificate

By law, an initial certificate is valid for three years, with some exceptions allowing for extensions. The bill adds a new exception: it allows the education commissioner to reissue the initial certificate to

anyone who holds the certificate, but has not taught under it. The certificate holder must demonstrate that he or she satisfied the eligibility requirements that were in place when it was originally issued (see BACKGROUND). (The bill does not specify the number of times the commissioner can reissue this certificate.)

Provisional Certificate

A provisional certificate is valid for eight years and carries no renewal option under current law (CGS § 10-145b(h)(1)). The bill allows the education commissioner to reissue the provisional certificate if the holder can show that he or she meets the preparation and eligibility requirements that were in place when it was originally issued (see BACKGROUND). (The bill does not specify the number of times the commissioner can reissue this certificate.)

Professional Certificate

Under current law, a professional certificate is valid for five years and renewable for five-year periods after that. The bill increases its validity and renewability to 10 year periods.

§§ 4 & 5 — MODEL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Progress Report

The bill requires SDE, in consultation with SERC, to submit a progress report to the Education Committee about the K-8 model curriculum's development by January 1, 2023.

Final Development and Description Deadlines

The bill delays by one year, from 2023 to 2024, the deadlines in current law for SDE and SERC to:

1. develop a K-8 model curriculum, due January 1, and
2. submit to the Education Committee (a) a description of the K-8 model curriculum, including the scope and sequence and course objective, and (b) a report on the development and review of this course, due January 15.

§§ 6 & 7 — FEEDING PROGRAMS

School Breakfast Program

The bill allows the education commissioner to temporarily waive any provision or change any requirements in state law about eligibility for the federal school breakfast grant program. The commissioner can issue these waivers or modifications to ensure that local and regional boards of education can continue to receive the federal grants despite any changes in federal law or U.S. Department of Agriculture-issued waivers.

Payment of State Matching Grants

State law authorizes the State Board of Education (SBE) to pay boards of education and operators of public choice schools, within available appropriations, (1) a matching state grant under requirements in federal law governing school feeding programs (i.e., breakfast and lunch programs) and (2) 10 cents per lunch served in the prior school year. State law allows SBE to direct how boards and operators must apply for these grants, determine applicants' eligibility, adopt implementing regulations, and set a procedure for monitoring grant recipients' expenditures.

The bill allows the education commissioner to temporarily waive the above provisions, along with any requirements in state laws governing the following: (1) lunches, breakfasts, and other feeding programs for public school children and employees; (2) private school and nonprofit agency participation in feeding programs; (3) nutrition standards for food that is outside of the lunch or breakfast program; and (4) certification of food nutrition standards. The bill allows the commissioner to issue these waivers or modifications to ensure that local and regional boards of education may continue to receive the matching and per-lunch state funds considering (1) any changes in federal law or (2) waivers issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. (The bill does not appear to allow her to do so for other school operators (i.e., the technical high school system or governing authorities of state charter schools, interdistrict magnet schools, or endowed academies).)

BACKGROUND

Model Curriculum

Once completed, local and regional boards of education can use this curriculum to instruct students in grades K-8. Its content must be rigorous, age-appropriate, aligned with SBE-approved curriculum guidelines, and in accordance with SBE-adopted statewide subject matter content standards (CGS § 10-25b).

Initial Certificate Preparation and Eligibility Requirements

By law, candidates for initial teaching certification must meet requirements relating to bachelor’s degree attainment and teacher preparation or alternate route to certification program completion. Beginning July 1, 2018, candidates also must fulfill subject area major requirements, with some exceptions (CGS § 10-145b(a)). Additionally, beginning July 1, 2019, candidates must fulfill special education coursework requirements (CGS § 10-145b(d)(1)).

Provisional Certificate Preparation and Eligibility Requirements

By law, candidates for provisional teaching certification must meet requirements relating to teacher preparation program completion, completion of at least three years of successful teaching in the last 10, and fulfillment of initial certificate preparation and eligibility requirements (CGS § 10-145b(e)). Additionally, beginning July 1, 2016, candidates must fulfill special education coursework requirements (CGS § 10-145b(d)(2)).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 39 Nay 0 (03/11/2022)