OLR Bill Analysis
sHB 6882 (as amended by House "A")*

AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATION MANDATE RELIEF.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

SUMMARY

§ 1 — EDUCATION MANDATE WORKING GROUP
Requires CABE to convene an 11-member mandate review working group to recommend to the legislature repealing or amending obsolete or duplicative mandates; sets January 1, 2025, deadline for the recommendations

§ 2 — IN-SERVICE VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND SEIZURE RESPONSE TRAINING
Requires the existing school district in-service training on school violence prevention to be aligned with DESPP school security and safety plan standards and adds new training requirement on emergency responses to students who have seizures

§ 3 — ACCESS TO CURRICULUM
Requires boards of education to make curriculum and associated materials available to parents and guardians under the requirements of the federal Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment

§ 4 — ACCESS TO ADULT EDUCATION
Allows any parent under age 17 to request permission from the local or regional board of education to attend adult education classes

§ 5 — ELIGIBILITY FOR STATEWIDE REMOTE LEARNING SCHOOL
Requires SDE, when developing a plan for a statewide remote learning school, to narrow the range of students eligible to enroll; also extends the deadline to submit a plan for the school to legislative committees

§ 6 — BOARD MEETING AGENDA AND DOCUMENT POSTING
Requires boards of education conducting a board meeting to make the agenda or any associated documents that members may review at the meeting available for public inspection and post them on the board’s website

§ 7 — FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION COUNCIL
Requires the education commissioner to convene a family and community engagement in education council

§ 8 — SUPPORT FOR AFTER-SCHOOL GRANT RECIPIENTS
Requires SDE to support after-school grant recipients in new, specified ways; allows the department to increase the amount it retains from the appropriation for this grant program

§ 9 — SERC REAL ESTATE AND CONTRACTING
Removes SERC from specified state oversight pertaining to real estate and contracting

§ 10 — FREE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS IN SCHOOL RESTROOMS
Extends the deadline for boards of education to begin providing free menstrual products in restrooms by one year, from September 1, 2023, to September 1, 2024

§§ 11-28 — LCO TECHNICAL REVISIONS
Makes technical, grammatical, and conforming changes in the education and early childhood statutes.

§§ 29 & 32 — MAGNET SCHOOL ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS AND REVISIN REDUCED ISOLATION STANDARDS
Makes permanent existing magnet school enrollment requirements; allows the education commissioner to revise the magnet school reduced isolation standards

§ 30 — SUNSETS TARGETED MAGNET SCHOOL GRANT
Sunsets a targeted magnet school grant

§ 31 — REINSTATES BAN ON MAGNET SCHOOL TUITION
Reinstates the ban on Sheff-decision host K-12 magnet schools charging tuition to sending school districts

§ 33 — GRANTS TO ASSIST SHEFF PROGRAMS
Allows the commissioner to award grants from existing Sheff settlement funds for four specific purposes

§ 34 — INTERSTATE COMPACT ON EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MILITARY CHILDREN
Makes technical changes to the Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children

§§ 35 & 37 — LOWERING ELIGIBILITY AGE FOR SCHOOL READINESS
Lowers the eligibility age of children for the School Readiness preschool program to birth, rather than age three

§§ 36 & 38 — SCHOOL READINESS AND CHILD CARE GRANTS
Removes a requirement that certain excess funds be used exclusively to increase salaries of early childhood educators; changes annual awarding of a school readiness grant from annual to biennial

§ 39 — SMART START COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM
Removes the FY 24 sunset date (i.e., June 30, 2014) for the smart start competitive grant, thus making the program permanent

§ 40 — PARENT ADVISORY CABINET
Requires OEC to establish a parent advisory council
§ 41 — CARE 4 KIDS INCOME LEVEL ELIGIBILITY
Requires the OEC commissioner to establish a two-tiered income eligibility limit for Care 4 Kids that conforms with federal regulations.

§ 42 — PUBLIC SCHOOL OPERATOR DEFINITION FOR INSURANCE PURPOSES
Expands the definition of the types of public school operators that can join in health care benefit agreements with other school operators or municipalities.

§§ 43 & 44 — CHARTER SCHOOLS AND THE EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS OF THE STATE
Explicitly places charter schools under the educational interests of the state law that includes a complaint process if a party believes the school is not meeting the educational interests of the state.

§ 45 — SDE CURRICULUM COORDINATOR
Requires the education commissioner to employ at least one curriculum coordinator.

SUMMARY
This bill makes numerous changes to education law, as described below.

*House Amendment “A” is a strike-all amendment that replaces the underlying bill, thereby removing (1) the provision creating a task force to study education mandates and replacing it with a working group to study them and (2) the provision that eliminates the requirement that high school students graduating in 2023 and after complete at least one credit in a mastery-based diploma assessment (i.e., capstone project). In addition to adding many new provisions, it keeps the requirement that in-service training on school violence prevention, which boards of education must annually provide, be aligned with the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection’s (DESPP) school security and safety plan standards.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Various, see below

§ 1 — EDUCATION MANDATE WORKING GROUP
Requires CABE to convene an 11-member mandate review working group to recommend to the legislature repealing or amending obsolete or duplicative mandates; sets January 1, 2025, deadline for the recommendations.

The bill requires the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) executive director or the director’s designee to convene a
working group to review mandates on State Department of Education (SDE) and boards of education in the state’s statutes and regulations and federal law and report its findings and recommendations to the legislature. The group must identify mandates that are overly burdensome or limit or restrict providing student instruction or services. For each mandate identified, it must give a detailed analysis and indicate the specific statutory or regulatory citation and how it is imposed on the department or board. It must also make recommendations on the (1) development of a biennial review process to examine the education statutes and state agency regulations to identify obsolete or duplicative mandates on SDE or boards of education and (2) repeal of, or amendment to, any statutes or regulations.

**Working Group Membership**

The 11-member working group includes the Education Committee chairpersons and ranking members, or the chairpersons’ and ranking members’ respective designees, and the education commissioner, or her designee. Additionally, the group includes a representative from each of the following organizations, designated by each organization:

1. CABE,
2. the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents,
3. the Connecticut PTA,
4. the American Federation of Teachers-Connecticut,
5. the Connecticut Education Association, and
6. the Connecticut Association of School Business Officials.

All initial appointments to the working group must be made by 30 days after the bill is effective. Any vacancy is filled by the appointing authority.

The CABE executive director, or the executive director’s designee, serves as the working group chairperson. The chairperson must
schedule the first meeting of the working group no later than 60 days after the bill’s effective date.

**Public Input**

The bill permits the working group to provide an opportunity for public comment or seek input from students, parents, educators, boards of education, and other education stakeholders while conducting the review and developing its recommendations.

**Reporting**

By January 1, 2025, the working group must submit its (1) mandate review and (2) recommendations to either repeal or amend any mandates and develop a biennial review process to Education Committee. The working group terminates on the date it submits its report or July 1, 2025, whichever is later.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 2 — IN-SERVICE VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND SEIZURE RESPONSE TRAINING

Requires the existing school district in-service training on school violence prevention to be aligned with DESPP school security and safety plan standards and adds new training requirement on emergency responses to students who have seizures

The bill requires the in-service training on school violence prevention, which boards of education must annually provide to teachers, administrators, and other certified school employees, be aligned with the DESPP school security and safety plan standards (see Background).

It also requires in-service trainings for the same groups of employees to include emergency responses to students who have seizures in school. This training must include (1) the recognition of the signs and symptoms of seizures; (2) appropriate steps for seizure first aid; (3) information about student seizure action plans; and (4) for those authorized to administer medication under state law, the administration of seizure rescue medication or prescribed electrical stimulation using a vagus nerve stimulator magnet.
The bill also requires boards to allow paraeducators and other noncertified employees to voluntarily participate in its in-service training program. Currently, the board can decide whether to allow these noncertified employees or paraprofessionals to attend.

**Background — School Security and Safety Plans**

The law requires DESPP, in consultation with SDE, to develop standards for school security and safety plans and reevaluate and update them every three years. SDE must distribute these standards to all public schools. Each board of education must annually develop and implement a school security and safety plan for each school within its district based on these standards (CGS §§ 10-222n & -222m).

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 2023

§ 3 — ACCESS TO CURRICULUM

*Requires boards of education to make curriculum and associated materials available to parents and guardians under the requirements of the federal Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment*

The bill requires local and regional boards of education to make all curriculum approved by their school district curriculum committee, as well as all associated curriculum materials, available to parents and guardians under the requirements of the federal Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA). PPRA, in part, gives parents and guardians the right to inspect instructional material used by the school district as part of their student’s educational curriculum (excluding academic tests and assessments) (20 U.S.C. § 1232h).

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 2023

§ 4 — ACCESS TO ADULT EDUCATION

*Allows any parent under age 17 to request permission from the local or regional board of education to attend adult education classes*

Current law allows a mother under age 17 to request permission from the local or regional board of education to attend adult education classes. The bill extends eligibility to any parent under age 17.

By law and unchanged by the act, a majority vote of present board members is required to assign the requesting student to adult education.
EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 5 — ELIGIBILITY FOR STATEWIDE REMOTE LEARNING SCHOOL

Requires SDE, when developing a plan for a statewide remote learning school, to narrow the range of students eligible to enroll; also extends the deadline to submit a plan for the school to legislative committees.

Under current law, SDE must develop a plan to create and implement a statewide remote learning school for grades kindergarten to 12. When making the plan, the department must estimate the number of Connecticut students who may be eligible to enroll. The bill limits eligibility to those Connecticut students who are unable to attend school in-person due to a (1) medical diagnosis, including a psychological or physical condition or restriction, or (2) medical exemption to required immunizations, documented by the child’s health care provider.

The bill also extends the deadline for submitting the plan, draft requests for proposals, and any legislation recommendations from July 1, 2023, to January 1, 2024. By law, SDE must submit these items to the Appropriations and Education committees.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 6 — BOARD MEETING AGENDA AND DOCUMENT POSTING

Requires boards of education conducting a board meeting to make the agenda or any associated documents that members may review at the meeting available for public inspection and post them on the board’s website.

The bill requires each local or regional board of education conducting a regular or special board meeting to make available for public inspection (1) the meeting agenda or (2) any associated documents that board members may review at the meeting. The board must also post these items on its website. The bill’s requirements appear to be in addition to those of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA, see Background).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

Background — Freedom of Information Act

Generally, requirements for noticing and conducting public agency meetings are governed by FOIA (CGS § 1-225, et seq.). Among other
things, FOIA requires that the agenda for a regular meeting be available at least 24 hours before the meeting. However, only state agencies must post the agenda online (CGS § 1-225(c)).

Under FOIA, a special meeting is one held to consider business that (1) was unforeseen when scheduling regular meetings and (2) should be addressed before the next regular meeting. Among other things, FOIA requires that notice of a special meeting be given 24 hours before the meeting and specify the business to be transacted. The notice must be posted on the public agency’s website if available (CGS § 1-225(d)).

For both types of meetings, additional requirements apply if the meeting is held solely or in part by electronic equipment (e.g., the meeting notice must include information on how the public may attend the meeting) (CGS § 1-225a).

§ 7 — FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION COUNCIL

Requires the education commissioner to convene a family and community engagement in education council

Duties

The bill requires the education commissioner to convene a family and community engagement in education council.

Under the bill, the council must meet at least quarterly to do the following:

1. advise the commissioner on issues and policies related to family and community engagement in education,

2. provide parent and community feedback on SDE products and initiatives;

3. review and make recommendations on the State Board of Education’s (SBE’s) five-year comprehensive plan, specifically on school-family-community partnership initiatives; and

4. review and make recommendations on effective practices to increase school and district capacity to develop successful
partnerships and families’ capacity to support their children’s education.

Membership

The bill requires the education commissioner to choose the council’s members. The membership must balance representation from the following groups: (1) school and district staff; (2) students’ parents and guardians; and (3) community members who reflect the state’s geographic, economic, ethnic, and racial diversity and bring an authentic parent and community voice to the council.

Reporting

The bill requires the council to report to SBE and the Education Committee annually, beginning by January 1, 2025, about its review and recommendations on the five-year plan’s school-family-community partnership initiatives.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 8 — SUPPORT FOR AFTER-SCHOOL GRANT RECIPIENTS

Requires SDE to support after-school grant recipients in new, specified ways; allows the department to increase the amount it retains from the appropriation for this grant program.

By law, SDE may administer an after-school grant program to support programs for students in grades kindergarten through 12 offering educational, enrichment, and recreational activities for children and that have a parent involvement component. Local and regional boards of education, municipalities, and nonprofit organizations are eligible recipients (CGS § 10-16x(a)).

Current law requires SDE to give after-school grant recipients technical assistance, evaluation, program monitoring, professional development, and accreditation support. The bill instead requires the department to collaborate with regional educational service centers (RESCs) to give the recipients (and, in some cases, applicants) more specific and targeted forms of support by doing the following:

1. monitoring and evaluating programs and activities,
2. conducting a comprehensive evaluation of programs’ effectiveness,

3. implementing risk assessments,

4. providing technical assistance and training to eligible applicants, and

5. ensuring program activities are aligned with state academic standards.

The bill also allows SDE to increase the percentage of appropriated grant funds it retains, from 4% to 7.5%, to provide this support.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 9 — SERC REAL ESTATE AND CONTRACTING

Removes SERC from specified state oversight pertaining to real estate and contracting

The bill removes from state law provisions that do the following:

1. require that SERC’s investing, buying, and disposing of real estate be subject to any state agency’s approval, review, or regulation under the laws governing state real property or any other laws and

2. subject SERC to rules, regulations, and restrictions on purchasing, procurement, personal service agreements, and asset disposition that generally apply to state agencies under existing state law.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 10 — FREE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS IN SCHOOL RESTROOMS

Extends the deadline for boards of education to begin providing free menstrual products in restrooms by one year, from September 1, 2023, to September 1, 2024

By law, each local and regional board of education must provide free menstrual products in the following areas that are accessible to students in grades 3-12: women’s restrooms, all-gender restrooms, and at least one men’s restroom. The bill delays the deadline by which boards must
begin providing these products by one year, moving it from September 1, 2023, to September 1, 2024.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§§ 11-28 — LCO TECHNICAL REVISIONS

Makes technical, grammatical, and conforming changes in the education and early childhood statutes.

The bill makes technical, grammatical, and conforming changes in the education and early childhood statutes. Among the conforming changes is the addition of a definition for “reading” in the law on the required public school program of instruction (§§ 18 & 19). This definition aligns with the term’s definition in other education statutes governing public school reading instruction and assessments (CGS §§ 10-14t, -14u, -14hh & -14ii).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except that the additions of the reading definition take effect on July 1, 2023 (§ 18), and effect on July 1, 2025 (§ 19), respectively.

§ 29 & 32 — MAGNET SCHOOL ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS AND REVISING REDUCED ISOLATION STANDARDS

Makes permanent existing magnet school enrollment requirements; allows the education commissioner to revise the magnet school reduced isolation standards.

The bill makes permanent the requirements that a magnet school’s total enrollment (1) have no more than 75% of students from one school district and (2) meets the reduced isolation setting (i.e., desegregation) standards developed by the education commissioner. These requirements are set to expire after the 2023-2024 school year. It also extends the law barring the commissioner from awarding grants to magnet schools that do not comply with these enrollment standards. This ban is set to expire after the 2022-2023 school year and the bill extends it to the 2024-2025 school year.

The bill leaves unchanged an exception that allows the commissioner to award a grant for an additional year or years to a noncompliant school if she finds it appropriate and approves a plan to bring the school into compliance with the residency and reduced isolation setting
standards as existing law requires. (Reduced-isolation standards consider the racial composition of the school’s student body.)

The law sets minimum criteria for the commissioner to use in setting the reduced isolation standards, including (1) at least 20% of a magnet school’s enrollment must be reduced isolation students and (2) a school’s enrollment may have up to 1% below the minimum percentage, if she approves a plan for the school to reach the 20% minimum or the percent she established in the standards. It also requires the commissioner to define “reduced isolation student.”

The bill authorizes the commissioner to revise the standards as needed and adds the requirement that they comply with the Sheff decision and any related stipulations or orders. (It also allows the commissioner to revise, as needed, the alternative reduced-isolation enrollment percentages for the 2018-2019 school year. Those percentages expired in 2019, so it is unclear if this has any legal effect.)

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 30 — SUNSETS TARGETED MAGNET SCHOOL GRANT

Sunsets a targeted magnet school grant

The bill retroactively sunsets a targeted magnet school grant at the end of FY 22 (June 30, 2022). The grant applies to a magnet school operated by a regional educational service center (RESC) that (1) began operations in the 2001-2002 school year and (2) for the 2008-2009 school year enrolled at least 55% but not more than 80% of the school’s students from a single town. (The school, Edison Magnet School in Meriden, no longer exists in that form; it was moved to Waterbury and reconstituted as ACES at Chase and is eligible for other magnet grants.)

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 31 — REINSTATES BAN ON MAGNET SCHOOL TUITION

Reinstates the ban on Sheff-decision host K-12 magnet schools charging tuition to sending school districts

The bill reinstates for FY 23 the prohibition on Sheff K-12 magnet schools operated by local or regional boards of education charging
tuition to school districts sending students to the magnets. The ban had expired after the 2018-19 school year (although in practice, none of these schools had begun charging tuition). Sheff magnet schools are schools operating under the Sheff v. O’Neill state Supreme Court decision and related stipulations and orders (see BACKGROUND).

The bill, as under existing law, (1) applies the ban to preschool programs and kindergarten through grade 12 and (2) includes an exception that allows the Hartford school district to charge tuition for any student enrolled in the Great Path Academy, which it operates in Manchester.

**BACKGROUND — Sheff v. O’Neill State Supreme Court Decision**

In this 1996 decision, the state’s Supreme Court ruled that the state had a constitutional obligation to remedy the educational inequities in the Hartford schools caused by racial and ethnic isolation (238 Conn. 1 (1996)). The court ordered the state legislature and the governor to craft a solution and legislation was passed to create voluntary desegregation in Hartford by creating magnet schools and using other programs such as Open Choice.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

**§ 33 — GRANTS TO ASSIST SHEFF PROGRAMS**

*Allows the commissioner to award grants from existing Sheff settlement funds for four specific purposes*

The bill allows the commissioner, in order to help the state meets its Sheff desegregation obligations, to award grants from funds appropriated for the Sheff settlement for academic and social student support programs at (1) magnet schools, (2) the Open Choice program, (3) the interdistrict cooperative program, and (4) the state technical education and career high schools.

By law, unchanged by the bill, the commissioner can transfer Sheff money for grants for unspecified purposes for the same programs, also including grants to state charter schools.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023
§ 34 — INTERSTATE COMPACT ON EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MILITARY CHILDREN

Makes technical changes to the Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children

The bill makes two technical changes in the statute addressing the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§§ 35 & 37 — LOWERING ELIGIBILITY AGE FOR SCHOOL READINESS

Lowers the eligibility age of children for the School Readiness preschool program to birth, rather than age three

The bill lowers the eligibility age of children for the Office of Early Childhood’s (OEC) School Readiness preschool program. Under current law, eligible children are those ages three or four, and children age five who are not eligible to enroll in school (by law a child must reach age five before January of the school year to attend school that year). The bill lowers the entry age to birth.

By law, School Readiness is a nonreligious, state-funded program that (1) meets state standards, (2) provides at least 450 hours and 180 days of developmentally appropriate learning per year, and (3) is open to age-eligible children.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§§ 36 & 38 — SCHOOL READINESS AND CHILD CARE GRANTS

Removes a requirement that certain excess funds be used exclusively to increase salaries of early childhood educators; changes annual awarding of a school readiness grant from annual to biennial

Excess Grant Award Flexibility

Under current law, state-licensed school readiness programs that operate full-day, year-round programs and receive school readiness per-pupil state grants must use any grant amount exceeding $8,927 per child exclusively to increase the salary of individuals directly responsible for teaching or caring for children in school readiness program classrooms.
Current law also has a similar excess-funds salary provision for state-contracted child care facilities that was set to begin with FY 24. This applies to child care facilities’ contracts with the state for a grant for (1) an amount at least equal to the per-child cost set in state law for each child ages three to five, and not yet eligible to enroll in school, and (2) a $13,500 per-child grant for children ages three and younger who are in toddler or infant care and not in a preschool program. The amount per child that is over the amount of the per-child cost stated in the FY 23 contract must be used exclusively to increase salaries of early childhood educators employed at these child care facilities.

The bill repeals both of these excess-funds salary provisions.

**Biennial Grant Award**

The bill also changes school readiness grants for priority school districts from an annual to a biennial award beginning in FY 23. As under current law, awards depend on available funding and a satisfactory annual evaluation.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 2023

**§ 39 — SMART START COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM**

Removes the FY 24 sunset date (i.e., June 30, 2014) for the smart start competitive grant, thus making the program permanent

The bill removes the FY 24 sunset date (i.e., June 30, 2014) for the smart start competitive grant to provide funds for capital and operating expenses for school districts to expand or establish preschool programs. The bill makes the program permanent with no end date.

Under current law, the OEC commissioner must prioritize school boards (1) that demonstrate the greatest need to establish or expand a preschool program and (2) whose plan allocates (a) at least 60% of the spaces in the preschool program to children who are members of families at or below 75% of the state median income or (b) 50% of the spaces to children who are eligible for free and reduced price lunches (FRPL). The bill eliminates the option for the commissioner to give priority to boards that reserve spaces for FRPL-eligible children.
EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 40 — PARENT ADVISORY CABINET

Requires OEC to establish a parent advisory council

The bill expands OEC’s statutory duties to include establishing a parent advisory cabinet. The cabinet must advise OEC on ways to:

1. strengthen partnership and communication with families,
2. bring awareness to gaps and barriers to services,
3. increase access to services for families, and
4. help improve the lives of young children and families in the state.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 41 — CARE 4 KIDS INCOME LEVEL ELIGIBILITY

Requires the OEC commissioner to establish a two-tiered income eligibility limit for Care 4 Kids that conforms with federal regulations

The law generally sets the family income eligibility limit for Care 4 Kids child care subsidies at 50% of the statewide median income (SMI) and additionally gives the OEC commissioner the authority to increase the family income eligibility limit up to 85% of SMI, the maximum level allowed under federal law. (In practice, OEC has set the eligible income level at 60% of SMI.)

Conforming with Federal Regulations

The bill requires the commissioner to establish a two-tiered income eligibility limit that conforms with federal regulations.

The regulations require that if OEC establishes a maximum income level at less than 85% SMI, then it must provide a graduated phase-out by implementing the original eligibility tier plus a second tier set at 85% SMI or lower, while staying above the agency’s initial eligibility threshold (for Connecticut 60%) that must account for the typical household budget of a low-income family. It must also provide a justification that the second tier threshold is (1) sufficient to accommodate increases over time in family income and that promote
and support family economic stability and (2) reasonably allows a family to continue accessing child care services without disruption. Also, the second tier must be used when the recipient is considered for redetermination.

The limit applies to both applicants for and current recipients of the subsidy.

The bill also eliminates a provision that requires the commissioner set the maximum income eligibility at 55% of SMI for applicants and recipients who qualify based on their loss of eligibility for temporary family assistance.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 42 — PUBLIC SCHOOL OPERATOR DEFINITION FOR INSURANCE PURPOSES

Expands the definition of the types of public school operators that can join in health care benefit agreements with other school operators or municipalities

Current law allows a school board or a municipality to join together with other school boards or municipalities through a written agreement to form a single entity in order to provide medical or health care benefits for their employees.

The bill expands what kinds of entities can participate by allowing “public school operators” to be part of these agreements. It defines “public school operator” as a local or regional board of education, a regional educational service center, the governing council of a state or local charter school, or an operator of an interdistrict magnet school program, as described in law.

The bill makes a conforming change to specify that the agreement is subject to any applicable collective bargaining agreement and, in cases where there is an existing agreement between a school operator and a municipality or the municipality and the school operator have separate plans, the municipality’s legislative body must approve the agreement.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023
§§ 43 & 44 — CHARTER SCHOOLS AND THE EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS OF THE STATE

Explicitly places charter schools under the educational interests of the state law that includes a complaint process if a party believes the school is not meeting the educational interests of the state.

By law, charter schools are required to follow all federal and state laws governing public schools, with limited exceptions. The bill explicitly adds that state laws governing public schools includes the educational interests of the state. It also allows complaints to be brought to SBE in situations where a resident or a parent alleges the failure or inability of a charter school to implement the educational interests of the state. This complaint provision currently applies to local and regional boards of education.

The existing exceptions allow (1) charter schools to seek an enrollment lottery waiver from SBE to pursue a school that has a special student body such as (a) students with a history of behavioral and social difficulties, (b) English language learners, or (c) students of a single gender and (2) the commissioner to waiver certain teacher certification requirements for charter school staff.

**Educational Interests of the State and Complaint Process**

By law, the educational interests of the state include the requirement to implement the educational state mandates and that each:

1. child must have equal opportunity to receive a suitable program of educational experiences as prescribed in law;

2. school district must finance, at a reasonable level at least equal to the minimum budget requirement required by state law, an educational program designed to provide suitable educational experiences; and

3. school district shall provide educational opportunities for its students to interact with students and teachers from other racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds and may provide these opportunities with students from other communities.

Complaints must be made to SBE in writing and SBE may initiate a
complaint on its own. If after an investigation, during which the school board or charter school is given the opportunity to present its case, SBE can require the school board or charter to develop and plan to address the situation or take other reasonable steps.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 45 — SDE CURRICULUM COORDINATOR

Requires the education commissioner to employ at least one curriculum coordinator

The bill requires the education commissioner to employ at least one curriculum coordinator. It requires the coordinator to provide curriculum materials and assist local and regional boards of education to include certain subject areas when developing instructional programs.

The bill requires the coordinator to assist with a number of subject areas in existing law, including:

1. financial literacy in high school (CGS § 10-16pp),
2. cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) as part of the health and safety curriculum (CGS § 10-16qq),
3. African American and black studies and Puerto Rican and Latino studies as part of the curriculum (CGS § 10-16ss),
4. black and Latino studies course offered in high school (CGS § 10-16uu),
5. Native American studies as part of the social studies curriculum (CGS § 10-16vv),
6. Asian American and Pacific Islander studies as part of the social studies curriculum (school years beginning on or after July 1, 2025) (CGS § 10-16ww), and
7. Holocaust and genocide education and awareness as part of the social studies curriculum (CGS § 10-18f).
These subject areas overlap with many of the subjects in the statutorily required program of instruction that all districts must provide (see BACKGROUND)

**BACKGROUND — Required Program of Instruction**

By law, the required program of instruction includes, among other subjects, the arts; health and safety, including CPR instruction; language arts, including reading and writing; mathematics; physical education; science; and social studies, including citizenship, geography, government, history, Holocaust and genocide awareness, African American and black studies, Puerto Rican and Latino studies, Native American studies, and Asian American and Pacific Islander studies (CGS § 10-16b). (A separate law specifies the minimum high school graduation requirements.)

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

**BACKGROUND — Related Bills**

sSB 1028 (File 440), favorably reported by the Education Committee, includes provisions that are very similar to sections 29-34 of the bill.

sHB 6686 (File 404), favorably reported by the Education Committee, includes provisions identical to those found in sections 35-40.

sHB 5003 (File 575), §§ 2 & 4, favorably reported by the Education Committee, includes identical provisions regarding charter schools and complaints to SBE and the magnet school grant law.

HB 6758 (File 277), § 2, favorably reported by the Education and Appropriations committees, includes the same SDE staffing provision as section 45.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 44  Nay 0  (03/24/2023)