

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 23-160—sHB 6882

Education Committee

**AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATION MANDATE RELIEF AND OTHER
TECHNICAL AND ASSORTED REVISIONS AND ADDITIONS TO THE
EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION STATUTES**

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

[§ 1 — EDUCATION MANDATE WORKING GROUP](#)

Requires CBE to convene an 11-member working group to recommend to the legislature repealing or amending obsolete or duplicative education mandates; sets January 1, 2025, deadline for the recommendations

[§ 2 — IN-SERVICE TRAINING](#)

Requires the existing school district in-service training on school violence prevention to be aligned with DESPP school security and safety plan standards; adds a new training requirement on emergency responses to students who have seizures; requires boards to allow paraeducators and other noncertified employees to voluntarily participate in in-service training programs for certified employees

[§ 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 board of education to attend adult education classes

[§ 5 — ELIGIBILITY FOR STATEWIDE REMOTE LEARNING SCHOOL](#)

Narrows enrollment eligibility for the statewide remote learning school for which existing law requires SDE to develop a creation and implementation plan; extends the deadline to submit the 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 SDE commissioner to convene a family and community engagement in education council

[§ 8 — SUPPORT FOR AFTER-SCHOOL GRANT RECIPIENTS](#)

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

Requires SDE to support after-school grant recipients in new, specified ways; increases the amount SDE may retain from the grant program appropriation to provide program support

§ 9 — STATE EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER REAL ESTATE AND CONTRACTING

Removes SERC from state oversight relating to specified real estate and contracting transactions

§ 10 — FREE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS IN SCHOOL RESTROOMS

Extends the deadline for boards of education to begin providing free menstrual products in school restrooms by one year 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 REVISING REDUCED ISOLATION STANDARDS

Makes permanent existing magnet school enrollment requirements; extends by two years a provision barring the SDE commissioner from awarding grants to magnet schools that do not comply with these requirements; requires the education commissioner to revise the magnet school reduced isolation standards as needed; requires the standards to comply with the Sheff decision and related stipulations and orders

§ 30 — SUNSETS TARGETED MAGNET SCHOOL GRANT

Sunsets an obsolete, targeted RESC-magnet school grant

§ 31 — REINSTATES BAN ON MAGNET SCHOOL TUITION

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

§ 33 — GRANTS TO ASSIST SHEFF PROGRAMS

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

§ 34 — TECHNICAL CHANGES TO THE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MILITARY CHILDREN COMPACT

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 requirements that certain excess funds be used exclusively to increase early childhood educators' salaries; changes awarding of a school readiness grant in priority school districts from annual to biennial

§ 39 — SMART START COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

Removes the FY 24 sunset date for the smart start competitive grant, making the program permanent; eliminates a grant prioritization requirement based on allocation of preschool program spaces to children who are eligible for free and reduced price lunch

§ 40 — PARENT CABINET

Requires OEC to establish a parent cabinet to advise the agency

§ 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 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 — STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CURRICULUM COORDINATOR

Requires the education commissioner to employ at least one curriculum coordinator

§ 1 — EDUCATION MANDATE WORKING GROUP

Requires CABE to convene an 11-member working group to recommend to the legislature repealing or amending obsolete or duplicative education mandates; sets January 1, 2025, deadline for the recommendations

The act 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 the State Department of Education (SDE) and local or regional 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 these mandates, 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 (1) developing 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) repealing or amending any statutes or regulations.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

Working Group Membership

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

The 11-member working group includes the Education Committee chairpersons and ranking members, or their 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 July 31, 2023. 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, to be held by August 30, 2023.

Public Input

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

§ 2 — IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Requires the existing school district in-service training on school violence prevention to be aligned with DESPP school security and safety plan standards; adds a new training requirement on emergency responses to students who have seizures; requires boards to allow paraeducators and other noncertified employees to voluntarily participate in in-service training programs for certified employees

The act requires the in-service training on school violence prevention, which boards of education must provide to teachers, administrators, and other certified school employees, to be in a manner set forth in the board's school security and safety plan, which by law must be based on standards developed by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) (see *Background — School Security and Safety Plans*).

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

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

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 act also requires boards to allow paraeducators and other noncertified employees to voluntarily participate in their in-service training programs for certified employees. Under prior law, boards had discretion whether to allow these noncertified employees or paraprofessionals to attend. (A separate law requires school districts to provide professional development training for paraeducators.)

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

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 §§ 10-222m & 10-222n).

§ 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 act requires local and regional boards of education to make all curriculum approved by their school district curriculum committee, and 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 board of education to attend adult education classes

Prior law allowed only mothers under age 17 to request permission from the local or regional board of education to attend adult education classes. The act 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

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

Narrows enrollment eligibility for the statewide remote learning school for which existing law requires SDE to develop a creation and implementation plan; extends the deadline to submit the plan for the school to legislative committees

By law, SDE must develop a plan to create and implement a statewide remote learning school for grades kindergarten to 12. Prior law required the department, when developing the plan, to estimate the number of Connecticut students who could be eligible to enroll but it did not prescribe the eligibility requirements other than residency. The act limits eligibility to those Connecticut students who are unable to attend school in-person due to a health care provider-documented (1) medical diagnosis, including a psychological or physical condition or restriction, or (2) medical exemption to required immunizations.

The act also extends the deadline for submitting the plan, draft requests for proposals, and any legislative recommendations on plan implementation 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 act 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 act's requirements appear to be in addition to those of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA, see *Background — FOIA*).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

Background — FOIA

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 beforehand. 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 generally requires that notice of a special meeting be given 24 hours prior 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 partially by electronic equipment (e.g., the meeting notice must have information on how the public may attend) (CGS § 1-225a).

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

§ 7 — FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION COUNCIL

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

The act requires the SDE commissioner to convene a family and community engagement in education council and sets the council's duties, membership, and reporting requirements.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

Duties

Under the act, the council must meet at least quarterly and has the following responsibilities:

1. advise the commissioner on issues and policies related to family and community engagement in education;
2. give parent and community feedback on SDE products and initiatives;
3. review and make recommendations on the State Board of Education's (SBE) five-year comprehensive plan, specifically on school-family-community partnership initiatives; and
4. review and make recommendations on effective practices to increase (a) school and district capacity to develop successful partnerships and (b) families' capacity to support their children's education.

Membership

The act requires the SDE 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 act 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.

§ 8 — SUPPORT FOR AFTER-SCHOOL GRANT RECIPIENTS

Requires SDE to support after-school grant recipients in new, specified ways; increases the amount SDE may retain from the grant program appropriation to provide program support

By law, SDE may administer an after-school grant program to support programs for students in grades kindergarten to 12 offering educational, enrichment, and recreational activities and that have a parent involvement component. Local and

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

regional boards of education, municipalities, and nonprofit organizations are eligible recipients (CGS § 10-16x(a)).

Prior law required SDE to give after-school grant recipients technical assistance, evaluation, program monitoring, professional development, and accreditation support. The act instead requires the department to collaborate with regional educational service centers (RESC) 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 that program activities align with state academic standards.

The act also increases, from 4% to 7.5%, the percentage of the appropriated grant funds SDE may retain to provide this support.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 9 — STATE EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER REAL ESTATE AND CONTRACTING

Removes SERC from state oversight relating to specified real estate and contracting transactions

The State Education Resource Center (SERC) is a quasi-public agency empowered to, among other things, provide (1) professional development services; (2) technical assistance and evaluation activities; and (3) policy analysis and other assistance to boards of education, SDE, and other educational entities and providers (CGS §§ 10-357a to -357g).

The act removes from state law provisions that did the following:

1. required that certain SERC real estate transactions (e.g., investment, purchase, and disposition) be subject to any state agency's approval, review, or regulation under the laws governing state real property or any other laws and
2. subjected SERC to rules, regulations, and restrictions on purchasing, procurement, personal service agreements, and asset disposition that generally apply to state agencies under 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 school restrooms by one year to September 1, 2024

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

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§§ 11-28 — LCO TECHNICAL REVISIONS

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

The act 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). It 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 reading definition additions take effect on July 1, 2023 (§ 18), and on July 1, 2025 (§ 19), respectively.

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

Makes permanent existing magnet school enrollment requirements; extends by two years a provision barring the SDE commissioner from awarding grants to magnet schools that do not comply with these requirements; requires the education commissioner to revise the magnet school reduced isolation standards as needed; requires the standards to comply with the Sheff decision and related stipulations and orders

The act 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 were 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 was set to expire after the 2022-2023 school year; the act extends it to the 2024-2025 school year.

The act 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 or 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 act requires the commissioner to revise the standards as needed and adds the requirement that they comply with the *Sheff v. O’Neill* state Supreme Court decision (see *Background — Sheff v. O’Neill State Supreme Court Decision*) and any related stipulations or orders. (It also allows the commissioner to revise, as

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

needed, the alternative reduced-isolation enrollment percentages for the 2018-2019 school year. Those percentages expired in 2019, so it is unclear whether this has any legal effect.)

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

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 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 programs such as Open Choice.

Background — Related Act

PA 23-204, § 333, includes the same provisions requiring the commissioner to revise the reduced isolation standards as needed to comply with the *Sheff* decision.

§ 30 — SUNSETS TARGETED MAGNET SCHOOL GRANT

Sunsets an obsolete, targeted RESC-magnet school grant

The act 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 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, reconstituted as ACES at Chase, and is eligible for other magnet grants.)

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

Background — Related Act

PA 23-204, § 341, also repeals the same obsolete magnet school grant.

§ 31 — REINSTATES BAN ON MAGNET SCHOOL TUITION

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

The act reinstates for the 2023-24 school year 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 — Sheff v. O’Neill State Supreme Court Decision* above for §§ 29 &

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

32).

The act, 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.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

§ 33 — GRANTS TO ASSIST SHEFF PROGRAMS

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

The act allows the SDE commissioner, to help the state meet its *Sheff* desegregation obligations, to award grants from funds appropriated for the *Sheff* settlement for academic and social student support programs offered by (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 act, the commissioner can transfer *Sheff* money for grants for unspecified purposes for the same programs, including grants to state charter schools.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

Background — Related Act

PA 23-204, § 334, makes the same change regarding the grants.

§ 34 — TECHNICAL CHANGES TO THE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MILITARY CHILDREN COMPACT

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

The act makes two technical changes in the statute on 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 act lowers the eligibility age of children for the Office of Early Childhood's (OEC) school readiness preschool program. Under prior law, eligible children were those aged three or four, and children aged five who were not eligible to enroll in kindergarten (by law a child must reach age five before January of the school year to attend kindergarten that year; PA 23-159 changes this to age five by September of the school year on July 1, 2024). The act lowers the entry age to birth.

The school readiness program is a nonreligious, state-funded program that (1)

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

meets OEC standards and (2) provides at least 450 hours and 180 days of developmentally appropriate learning per year.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

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

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

Excess Grant Award Flexibility

Under prior law, state-licensed school readiness programs that operate full-day, year-round programs and receive school readiness per-pupil state grants had to use any grant amount exceeding \$8,927 per child exclusively to increase salaries of individuals directly responsible for teaching or caring for children in school readiness program classrooms.

Similarly, prior law also had an excess-funds salary provision for state-contracted child care facilities that was set to begin in FY 24. This applied to child care facilities' contracts with the state for a grant of (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 kindergarten 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 exceeding the amount of the per-child cost stated in the FY 23 contract had to be used exclusively to increase salaries of early childhood educators employed at these child care facilities.

The act repeals both excess-funds salary provisions.

Biennial Grant Award

The act also changes school readiness grants for priority school districts from an annual to a biennial award beginning in FY 25. Unchanged by the act, 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 for the smart start competitive grant, making the program permanent; eliminates a grant prioritization requirement based on allocation of preschool program spaces to children who are eligible for free and reduced price lunch

The act removes the FY 24 sunset date (i.e., June 30, 2024) for the smart start competitive grant program, which provides funds for capital and operating expenses for school districts to expand or establish preschool programs. Consequently, it makes the program permanent.

Prior law required the OEC commissioner to prioritize school boards (1) that demonstrated the greatest need to establish or expand a preschool program and (2)

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

whose plan allocated (a) at least 60% of the preschool program spaces to children from families at or below 75% of the state median income or (b) 50% of the spaces to children eligible for free and reduced price lunches (FRPL). The act eliminates the prioritization requirement for boards that reserve spaces for FRPL-eligible children.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

Background — Related Act

PA 23-204, § 332, makes the same change to the smart start program.

§ 40 — PARENT CABINET

Requires OEC to establish a parent cabinet to advise the agency

The act adds establishing a parent cabinet to OEC's statutory duties. 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

Existing 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 allows the OEC commissioner 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.) The act requires the commissioner to establish a two-tiered income eligibility limit to conform with federal regulations (45 C.F.R. § 98.21(b)).

The regulations require that if the state's maximum income level is set at less than 85% SMI, then OEC must provide a two-tiered income limit for new applicants and current recipients by implementing (1) the original eligibility tier plus (2) a second tier set between the agency's initial eligibility threshold (for Connecticut 60%) and 85% SMI, accounting for the typical household budget of a low-income family. It must also provide a justification that the second tier threshold (1) is sufficient to accommodate increases in family income over time and promotes and supports family economic stability and (2) reasonably allows a family to continue accessing child care services without unnecessary disruption. The second tier must be used when the recipient is considered for redetermination.

The act also eliminates a provision requiring the commissioner to set the maximum income eligibility at 55% of SMI for applicants and recipients who

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

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

Prior law allowed a school board or a municipality to join with other school boards or municipalities through a written agreement to form a single entity to provide medical or health care benefits for their employees. The act expands what kinds of entities can participate by allowing a broader range of “public school operators” to be part of these agreements. Under the act, a “public school operator” is a local or regional board of education, a RESC, the governing council of a state or local charter school, or an operator of an interdistrict magnet school program.

The act makes conforming changes to specify that the agreement is subject to (1) any applicable collective bargaining agreement and (2) the approval of the municipality’s legislative body in cases where (a) there is an existing agreement between a school operator and a municipality or (b) the municipality and the school operator have separate plans.

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 must follow all federal and state laws governing public schools, with limited exceptions (see *Background — Charter School Exemptions*). The act explicitly requires charter schools to uphold the educational interests of the state. In doing so, it also allows residents or parents to bring a complaint to SBE if they feel the charter school has failed, or is unable, to implement the educational interests of the state. These provisions already applied to local and regional boards of education.

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

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

3. school district must 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 (CGS § 10-4a).

District residents or parents and guardians of enrolled students who have been unable to resolve a complaint with a school board may make a complaint to SBE in writing, or SBE may initiate a complaint on its own. After an investigation during which the school board presents its case, SBE may require the school board to develop a plan to address the situation or take other reasonable steps. If the board fails to address the situation, SBE can seek a court order to compel the board to act (CGS § 10-4b).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

Background — Charter School Exemptions

By law, charter schools are exempted from certain standards that apply to public schools. The exemptions 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 waive certain teacher certification requirements for charter school staff (CGS §§ 10-66bb(j) & 10-66dd(b)).

§ 45 — SDE CURRICULUM COORDINATOR

Requires the education commissioner to employ at least one curriculum coordinator

The act requires the education commissioner to employ at least one curriculum coordinator. The coordinator must provide curriculum materials and help local and regional boards of education develop certain instructional programs.

The act requires the coordinator to assist with 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 (for 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.

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023