

# Education Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-5436

**Title:** AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION.

**Vote Date:** 3/20/2024

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/13/2024

**File No.:**

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Education Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

Currently there is a deficit of certified teachers within the Connecticut school system. Out-of-state teachers, paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, and individuals with educational experience have noted that there are too many barriers to become certified teachers and have pointed to outdated regulations. This bill would revise and update the laws governing teacher certification. This in turn would open the pathway for people with educational experience to become certified teachers and fill vacant positions.

## **SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:**

The substitute language corrects a typo in section 4 of the bill and adds a new section 15 that repeals numerous teacher certification regulations effective July 1, 2025, to help create a clear, equitable, and responsive education system.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

[Office of Early Childhood \(OEC\), Commissioner, Beth Bye:](#) states that extending the elementary endorsement to include both kindergarten and PreK will help to ensure that elementary programs will align with early childhood standards and address teacher shortages in early elementary setting. They also state that adding PreK and Kindergarten to the elementary certification will require institutions of higher education to add coursework in early childhood education for elementary teachers, as well as student teaching opportunities in preschool and kindergarten settings. They recommend that this change should come with certain protections, such as requiring NAEYC Accreditation for higher education institutions offering PreK-6 certification to assure teachers are prepared for their roles. Additionally, they

state to add in the institutions that offer the elementary certification, but not currently ECE, would mean eight institutions would need to start the process while the four institutions need to add the elementary program to their application to the NAEYC, which would align with Blue Ribbon Panel efforts and align with the early childhood Unifying Framework as an indicator of quality and accountability for teaching young children.

**State Department of Education (SDE), Commissioner, Charlene Russell-Tucker:**

expresses support for this bill and provides several comments and recommendations. They state the provisions in Sect. 1 will streamline educator licensure by extending the length of an Initial Certificate and allowing educators to move directly to Professional Certificate. They also express support for the opportunity for educators to advance their certificate through multiple measures, rather than requiring all educators to demonstrate expertise in the same manner. Furthermore, they state by ensuring elementary programs will align with early childhood standards, inclusion of PreK and kindergarten in the elementary endorsement will be appropriately supported. They state the provisions in Sect. 4 will allow SDE to indicate changes on current educators' certificates in a more expeditious manner, as well as reduce additional time and paperwork requirements for both educators and SDE staff alike. They state the provisions in Sect. 5 have proven to create a successful pathway to bring additional qualified educators into the fields of science, math, technology education, and world languages. On Sects. 7 and 8, they state these provisions will provide a good opportunity to recruit those who have already demonstrated an interest and commitment to education and the students of CT, as well as benefit students through a more diverse teacher staff. Moreover, they state support for the provisions in Sects 9-11 concerning the semi-autonomous board which includes a strong representation of both K-12 educators and higher education representatives of education preparing institutions. Finally, on Sects. 12-14, they state support for deferring certain tasks assigned to the board to the second year, such as consideration of the transfer program admission criteria to program providers and developing standards for new and continuing program approval beyond those set by CAEP.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**The Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity (CWCSEO),**

**Children's Policy Analyst, TJ Nuccio:** expresses support for this bill stating these collective initiatives are designed to reduce barriers for those entering the teaching profession, address teacher shortages, and foster a more diverse and effective educational workforce. They also state support for a thorough review of outdated certification regulations some of which may disproportionately affect aspiring teachers of color, limiting their access to the profession. Additionally, they state that sunseting any irrelevant certification regulations without compromising the quality of the educators can help create a clear, equitable, and responsive education system.

**Educators for Excellence, Deputy Director of Campaigns, Ernest Bailey:**

expresses support for this bill stating it provides improvements over the current teacher certification system. They express how substitutes, paraprofessionals, and others within the educational workforce experience frustration with the teacher certification system's requirements. They note that this bill would include pathways for both paraeducators and substitute teachers and include aspects making the profession more attractive to out-of-state educators and recently graduated students. They recommend taking the bill to its conclusion and update all outdated regulations.

**Achievement First, Superintendent, Karolyn Belcher:** expresses support for this bill stating that the current teacher preparation and certification system contains barriers that prevent the hiring of qualified, diverse, and effective teachers. They state charter schools are facing hiring challenges, roughly 15% of the staff they require, and that students deserve access to impactful high-quality teachers. They note that this bill is a strong start towards this goal, as it eliminates a certification tier thus simplifying the process by which teachers could obtain professional status, broadens grade range for certification endorsements, prioritizes real-world pathways for paraeducators to become teachers, and establishes a new standards board. They recommend two changes to the bill to give it urgency and substance. First, they recommend to sunset most of the regulations in the legislation by 2025 and task the Standards Board with creating a new, clear, and responsive system with clear timelines. Second, they recommend to explicitly require the standards Board of experts to measure the effectiveness of both graduates and Educator Preparation Programs.

**Teach for America-CT, Executive Director, Dr. Dolores Garcia-Blocker:** expresses support for this bill stating it addresses the barriers of teacher certification and sets up the educational system to more rapidly respond to the educator vacancies and an ever-changing ecosystem. They state guarantees are needed for leaders to flexibly deploy teachers in a way that could meet current student needs, and further notes how the current rules and regulations are 26 years outdated. They state this bill systemically improves the school system by broadening certification endorsements within grade bands, prioritizing real-world pathways for paraeducators to become teachers thus allowing districts to address shortages in a timely fashion, eliminating a certification tier thus simplifying the process by which teachers can obtain professional status, and establishing the new Connecticut Educator Preparation and Certification Board. Moreover, they suggest two recommendations for this bill, including to sunset most of the regulations through the legislation, and task the Connecticut Educator Preparation and Certification Board created in said legislation with creating a new, clear, and responsive system and to explicitly require the Connecticut Educator Preparation and Certification Board of experts to measure the effectiveness of both graduates and Educator Preparation Programs.

***The following representatives from Achievement First, Inc. submitted testimony in support of this bill.***

expresses support for this bill stating these provisions are a strong start in ensuring every CT student has access to highly effective and diverse teachers. However, they state that there are two significant and foundational changes that need to be made to give this bill both urgency and substance. First, they suggest to sunset most of the regulations in this legislation by 2025 and task the Standards Board created in this legislation with creating a new, clear, and responsive system with clear timelines. Second, they suggest explicitly requiring the Standards Board of experts to measure the effectiveness of graduates and Educator Preparation Programs.

**Achievement First, Inc., Board Chair, Andrew Boas**

**Achievement First, Inc., Board Chair - Elm City College Preparatory Academy, Richard Ferguson**

**Achievement First, Inc., Board Chair – Amistad Academy, Lorraine Gibbons**

**Achievement First, Inc., Board Chair – Hartford Academy, Erwin Hurst, Sr.**

**Achievement First, Inc., Board Chair – Bridgeport Academy, Rajeev Lakra**

**Achievement First, Inc., Chief Executive Officer, Lisa Margosian**

**Achievement First, Inc., Chief Strategy Officer & Chief of Staff, Michael Rabin**

**Capital Prep, Assistant Superintendent for CT, Dr. Ayanna Carter:** expresses support for this bill stating it presents a crucial opportunity to address the pressing issue of teacher shortages while simultaneously diversifying the pool of educators in the state. Also, they state that the flexibility provided by broadening grade bands for various certification endorsements benefits current educators seeking professional growth and attracts individuals from diverse backgrounds. Moreover, they state that creating real-world pathways for paraeducators to transition into teaching roles harnesses the talent and passion of paraeducators.

**Faith Acts for Education, Executive Vice President of Strategy, Duanecia Evans Clark:** expresses support for this bill, citing one statistic that suggests 60% of districts in CT have less than 5% educators of color, yet students of color make up more than half of the statewide student body. Additionally, they cite a statistic that suggests all students, regardless of race, have better academic outcomes when they have learned from a Black teacher during their elementary school education. For these reasons, they stress the importance of improving the teacher certification processes to attract the best and most diverse teaching force possible.

**Milestone C LLC, Chief Executive Officer, David Conelias:** expresses support for this bill and suggest to sunset most of the regulations in this legislation by 2025 and task the Standards Board created in this legislation with creating a new, clear, and responsive system with clear timelines. Second, they suggest explicitly requiring the Standards Board of experts to measure the effectiveness of graduates and Educator Preparation Programs.

**Derby Public Schools, Superintendent, Matt Conway:** expresses support and feedback on this bill, stating that the provisions in Sect. 1(a) provides educators with greater flexibility in meeting certification requirements while maintaining professional development standards. Additionally, they state that the provisions in Sect. 1(2) simplifies the certification process; however, they make comment that it is vital to ensure rigorous standards are kept for Initial Certificate holders to maintain the quality of education in the state. Moreover, they state that the provisions in Sect. 2(f)(1)(A) are a positive step toward ensuring consistency and continuity in early childhood education, and the provisions in Sect. 2(3) provide educators with greater flexibility to teach across a broader range of grade levels while still maintaining expertise in the subject matter. They also state that the provisions in Sect. 5(7) ensures that educators possess the requisite subject matter knowledge and expertise; however, they suggest ensuring that equitable opportunities are available to all educators to pursue cross-endorsements. Lastly, concerning Sect. 6, they suggest ensuring safeguards are in place to uphold the integrity and standards of the certification process.

**CT Education Association, President, Kate Dias:** expresses support for various provisions in this bill. However, they also suggest recommendations to uplift the teaching profession to attract more qualified educators into the state's schools, such as tasking the new standards board with addressing appropriate assessment methods for educators and creating pathways for establishing professional progress.

**Education Reform Now CT, Executive Director, Amy Dowell:** expresses support for this bill; however, they state there are still two significant, foundational changes needed for this bill to have the need impact it intends. First, they state this bill should sunset most of the regulations concerning educator preparation and certification by 2025, and task the new standards board

with a clear timeline to create a new and responsive system. Second, they state this bill must require the standards board to measure the quality and effectiveness of educator preparation program graduates and educator programs themselves.

**Special Education Equity for Kids of CT (SEEK), Legislative Chair, Andrew Feinstein:** expresses support for this bill stating it clears away some of the unnecessary steps that a candidate must go through to be certified, expands the certification categories, and removes other unnecessary burdens. However, they express several concerns concerning teacher certification. They state the Certification Board lacks the membership to address the changing demands of the teaching profession, in that it is too closely tied to the Department of Education to keep teacher preparation and certification up to date. They also express concern that this bill does not address special education preparation and certification.

**Educator, Dan Gonet:** expresses support for this bill stating it will help address the issue of under-representation of Black and Hispanic educators as it will encourage fully certified individuals from across the country to consider applying for certification in CT.

**Relay Graduate School of Education, National Vice Provost for Teacher Preparation, Dr. Rebecca Good:** expresses support for this bill and provides several recommendations to strengthen its language and efficacy. First, they recommend adding a provision that sunsets the current regulations by July 2025; they state without a sunset date, the recommendations in this bill may create an even more cumbersome certification process that would then need to be untangled in a future legislative session. Second, they suggest requiring that the CT Educator Preparation and Certification Board (CEPCB) subsume as much of the CECC membership possible. Lastly, they suggest tasking the CEPCB with measuring the effectiveness of educator preparation programs (EPP).

**School and State Finance Project, Director of Community Engagement, Erika Haynes:** expresses support for this bill stating it makes both immediate changes within the system, exemplified through the broadening of endorsement areas within grade bands, and long-term process changes, including setting up the CEPCB, positioning the state to better respond to a rapidly changing external environment, and maintaining up-to-date rules and regulations governing teacher certification. Additionally, they state this bill also expands pathways into the teaching profession, responding to year-after-year requests from paraeducators to allow them to move into the career of classroom educator. However, they recommend a provision that sunsets the current rules and regulations as a commitment that these changes will happen.

**ReadyCT, Executive Director, Shannon Marimón:** expresses support for this bill and provides several recommendations to enhance its strength and efficacy, particularly in Alliance Districts. First, they recommend providing for the timely sunset of the current teacher certification regulations by July 1, 2025. Second, they recommend requiring that the CEPCB absorb as much of the CECC membership as possible. Lastly, they recommend tasking the CEPCB with measuring the effectiveness of educator preparation programs (EPP).

**CT Association of Boards of Education (CABE), Executive Director, Patrice McCarthy:** expresses support for this bill stating it creates a framework with streamlined pathways to the teaching profession and expands the scope of educator practice by reducing the number of individual endorsements. They also state this bill establishes the CEPCB to work in collaborating with SDE on developing guidance, regulations and legislative recommendations

which will allow for alignment of certification criteria with research-based learning goals for students. However, they express concern with Sect. 15, stating it is important that the Board have access to professionals whose responsibility it will be to support the Board's work, as the duties of the Board are too important to rely on the good will of members to contribute these resources. Additionally, they express concern with Sect. 13, stating it fails to repeal the existing certification regulations. They reiterate that the Council's proposal to repeal the regulations effective June 2025 strikes the balance between a sense of urgency and the opportunity for thoughtful deliberation.

**CT Charter Schools Association, Interim Executive Director, Kara Neidhardt:** expresses support for this bill stating these provisions make evidence-based adjustments to the process that would lower the barrier to entry for excited, highly qualified future classroom teachers. However, they state that there are two significant and foundational changes that need to be made to give this bill both urgency and substance. First, they suggest to sunset most of the regulations in this legislation by 2025 and task the Standards Board created in this legislation with creating a new, clear, and responsive system with clear timelines. Second, they suggest explicitly requiring the Standards Board of experts to measure the effectiveness of graduates and Educator Preparation Programs.

**Educators for Excellence, Executive Director, Daniel Pearson:** expresses support for this bill, highlighting as particularly important the provisions that limits licensure tiers, broadens the grade bands, prioritizes real-world pathways for paraeducators and support staff, and establishes a new standards board. However, to strengthen this bill, they suggest sunsetting current regulations and implementing the new regulations in their entirety; and incorporate an ongoing system improvement and quality assurance from key stakeholders to ensure that the educator certification process remains up to date.

**New Haven Public Schools, Teacher, Emilio Reales:** expresses support for the provisions that eliminate edTPA as a requirement for all Educator Preparation Programs. However, they also express concern with several provisions in this bill. They state that teacher preparation professors should have a voice on the new Board, legislators should focus on real solution to improve teacher diversity, test fees should be waived to increase teacher diversity, that this bill does a disservice to teachers and educators by removing the coursework that will best prepare them to be excellent educators, and that flexible routes to certification already exist, including ARC and DSAP.

**New London Public Schools, Superintendent, Cynthia Ritchie:** expresses support for this bill and calls for immediate attention to two needs that must still be addressed. They urge the committee to sunset most of the old regulations through this legislation, and task the CT Educator Preparation and Certification Board with creating a new, clear, and responsive system.

**Central Connecticut State University, Interim Dean – School of Education, Paula Talty:** expresses support for this bill stating these provisions address the current teacher shortage challenges in a comprehensive and systematic way and will enable them to respond to the constantly evolving field of education, as well as the needs of teachers and the schools they serve. However, they state that there are two significant and foundational changes that need to be made to give this bill both urgency and substance. First, they suggest to sunset most of the regulations in this legislation by 2025 and task the Standards Board created in this

legislation with creating a new, clear, and responsive system with clear timelines. Second, they suggest explicitly requiring the Standards Board of experts to measure the effectiveness of graduates and Educator Preparation Programs.

[CT NAACP, Vice President – Education Chair, Jason Teal:](#) express support for this bill stating an alternative route does not mean the bar will be lowered to fill teacher shortages, and demonstration of student learning and evaluation from supervisors are a much better indication whether one can teach. They also list three critical areas that require attention. First, they suggest allowing ARCs to accept experience in lieu of program requirements. Second, they suggest mandating the CEPCB to assess the effectiveness of graduates and educator preparation programs. Third, they suggest sunseting outdated regulations and empowering the CEPCB to develop a modernized, responsive system.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

[Central Connecticut State University \(CCSU\), Associate Professor, Michael Bartone, Ph.D.:](#) expresses opposition to this bill and provides several comments and recommendations. Firstly, they state opposition to the idea of lowering teaching certification standards to confront the teacher shortage in this state; they recommend increasing the number of credits and courses required to teach content, especially for elementary teacher candidates. Secondly, they encourage a piece of legislation that would provide for working with teacher preparation to develop internships where school districts and cooperating teachers work with teacher preparation programs. Finally, they make comment that teacher residency programs can be beneficial, however, they state these programs can only be effective if schools and cooperating teachers are willing to disrupt the essentialist model of teaching. They also express that, to confront the teacher shortage, the legislature should center its attention on working conditions teachers face, not their certification process.

[Parent, Robin Beauchemin:](#) expresses opposition to this bill stating their son, who has double deficit dyslexia, went undiagnosed and untreated for eight years by their respective school district as a consequence of inadequate teacher training. They suggest an amendment is made to reinstate Conn. Gen. Stat. 10-145d Section (i).

[AFT-CT, Teacher, Lauren Mancini-Averitt:](#) expresses opposition to this bill because stating that the new proposed board would have no experience teaching K-12 education in public schools and would be under qualified for the position in general. They state that the bill is a "rush job" and would not produce the desired goal of teacher diversity in the state. They also list ideas that would enhance diversity in the classroom in Connecticut, stating that in 2016 and 2018 the state of Connecticut made a step towards diversity in the classroom when they waived some test fees and reduced testing requirements. They also list their "real solutions for teacher diversity." Their "solutions" are to provide stipends to "aspiring teachers while they complete their student teaching," citing that the lack of payment is a barrier for aspiring teachers to participate in student teaching programs. Another "solution" is that Connecticut "should provide an honorarium to the host teacher who hosts the student teacher." They state this initiative would ensure that a teacher stays in a role for a long period of time and that they would provide "high-quality mentoring." They also state that this would improve classroom conditions "so that teachers will avoid burnout" and stay in the profession especially in "high-needs school districts." She states that it behooves the state to fund the state colleges and universities "to stop the tuition hikes and program cuts." Moreover, they state that the aforementioned tuition

hikes and program cuts lead to less students and more specifically less first generation and underrepresented students due to program cuts. Finally, she states that this bill "does a disservice to teachers and educators," and further states that "this legislation would collapse elementary and secondary school certification and preparation." They express that "Connecticut already has flexible routes to certification" whereupon they cite the ARC program which is an accelerated program for adults who want to become teachers.

**Early Childhood Higher Education Faculty Consortium, Teacher Educator, Paige Bray Ed. D.:** expresses opposition to this bill stating that including PreK and kindergarten in elementary certification disregards the distinct knowledge and content area of early childhood education. Additionally, they state this action fails to acknowledge the integrated, early intervention component so important in early education. Moreover, they state that the July 1, 2024, action date does not reflect the findings or pacing of the Blue Ribbon Panel to build a quality, early childhood workforce and educational opportunities for students. They also express concern with the provisions in Lines 422-424, stating these neither support early childhood nor early intervention/early childhood special education as they do not address the Division of Early Childhood early intervention standards, prepare educators to work with the family system, and has a practical approach that is not historically inclusive or a racial point of view or asset-based, capacity-building intervention that contemporary disabilities studies inform. Lastly, they state that NAEYC accreditation is a key requirement for early childhood programs as the processes assured research-informed, developmentally appropriate practices that center children and families in early care and education.

**Parent, Susan Dwyer:** expresses opposition to this bill stating teachers and administrators must be properly trained and certified, yet this bill would diminish educator competency by lessening the standard for teacher certification.

**Central Connecticut State University, Professor of Early Childhood and Elementary Education, Drew Michael McWeeney:** expresses opposition to this bill stating the provisions that add PreK certification to elementary education teacher certification totally disregards the distinct knowledge and content area of PreK education, such as the integrated, early intervention component. Instead, they suggest adding non-integrated kindergarten to the current elementary education certification. They oppose adding non-integrated and/or integrated PreK to the current elementary education certification.

**Parent, Alissa Heizler-Mendoza:** expresses opposition to this bill stating it only addresses short-term solutions to the teacher shortage issue and does not analyze the root cause of teachers concerns nor deliver effective long-term solutions.

**Teacher, Donna Pallanti:** expresses opposition to this bill stating that removing the requirement for a master's degree lowers the prestige and quality of the teaching profession. They also express opposition to combining endorsement levels, stating this change will require nig alterations to program curricula that offer secondary endorsements which would strain small EPPs who will need to hire additional faculty and find appropriate resources. Lastly, they state this bill allows shortcuts to certification which will decrease the quality of teachers in the classroom as well as teacher retention.

**Central Connecticut State University, Professor & Chair of Sociology, Fiona Pearson:** expresses opposition to this bill stating that alternative pathways already exist and several of



the recommendations made would reduce the quality of these existing programs. They state instead of diluting the quality of existing teacher preparation programs, attention should be focused on the working conditions in PreK-12 schools and the lack of current investment in the states PreK-12 educational system and public colleges and universities. Additionally, they recommend providing stipends to student teachers and honorariums for the experienced teachers training candidates. Finally, they request that if any new board is created, that it includes four members from CSU-AAUP, representing early childhood, elementary, and secondary education.

[Decoding Dyslexia CT, Founder, Allison Quirion](#): expresses opposition to this bill and urges the committee to strike Sects. 10 and 14, and instead establish a Certification Reform Task Force charged with completing the due diligence activities necessary to inform, guide, and support the development of recommended statutory and regulatory changes related to educator certification reform. They also recommend striking Sect. 9 of this bill, stating due diligence did not occur before the CECC arrived at its recommendations and therefore this bill lacks the necessary specificity to prevent unintended consequences that would prohibit CT from being able to attract and retain effective and diverse professionals for employment in public schools.

[Anonymous](#): expresses their opposition to this bill stating that it has many flaws and would ask for consideration with consulting teachers as well as those training teachers in "college and university programs."

***The following testimony is provided on behalf of the faculty in the Educational Studies and Teacher Preparation Department of Fairfield University.***

Expresses opposition to this bill stating several concerns with the CT Educator and Certification Modernization Framework. First, they state this bill is a shortsighted solution to the detriment of educators and students. They state it is responding to the teacher shortage crisis in a manner that predicts and expects continuation of a crisis instead of exploring resources to strengthen the profession and help it to recover and grow. Second, they state this bill will reduce the value of a CT certification, damaging the reputation of CT as a state that prepares highly qualified educators. Third, they state this bill will result in an influx of educators who are grossly underprepared to teach which will leave people cycling through positions quickly. Fourth, they state this bill disregards the training teachers need to address the literacy crisis and the students' right to read which has direct societal correlations to the state's justice systems and societal welfare. Fifth, they state this bill will have negative implications for CT's economy and the health of its colleges and universities by exacerbating the trend of university-based educator preparation program closures resulting in a loss of jobs, residents, and community resources. Sixth, they state by eliminating all state assessments, this bill makes certification too easy, does not hold candidates to any standard or criteria for readiness to teach, and does not align with the accrediting bodies aligned with each teaching certification area in order to effectively meet initial teaching standards. Seventh, they state this bill will produce educators who are not prepared to be in a classroom which will increase educator burnout and decrease retention rates. Lastly, they state by adding PreK to elementary certification and adding 4, 5, and 6 to secondary certification without including additional funding, this bill will cause EPPs to have to cover additional content and require fieldwork for additional grade levels without the necessary funding to create new programming.

[Fairfield University, Interim Dean, Evelyn Bilius Lolis, PhD.](#)

[Fairfield University, Associate Dean, Joshua Elliot, EdD.](#)  
[Fairfield University, Associate Professor, Anne Campbell, PhD.](#)  
[Fairfield University, Associate Professor, Bryan Ripley Crandall, PhD.](#)  
[Fairfield University, Assistant Professor Elementary Education, Nicole Fletcher, PhD.](#)  
[Fairfield University, Associate Professor Special Education, Alyson Martin, EdD.](#)  
[Fairfield University, Associate Professor Special Education, Emily Shamash, EdD.](#)  
[Fairfield University, Assistant Dean, Laura Whitacre, MA.](#)

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF GENERAL COMMENT:**

[House Republicans, House Minority Leader, Vincent Candelora:](#) requests the Education Committee to consider a five-year waiver to persons that are not certified to teach but hold a master's degree or higher in the field which they propose to teach. They state this offered solution would provide experienced professionals the opportunity to fill educational gaps and combat the state's teacher shortage.

[CT General Assembly, State Representative, Irene Haines:](#) recommends adding language that promotes trades and requires the task force to investigate trade experience as a qualifying factor in becoming a certified teacher. They state that this would not only address the teacher shortages but also allow these professionals to seek a new career where they can teach their craft to students who will value their experience.

[CT Business and Industry Association, Advocacy Outreach Manager, Paul Amarone:](#) expresses their recommendation to add language to the bill and states their appreciation for the original language of this bill, referencing the importance of filling the current certified teacher vacancies. They state that the CBIA supports Sect. 10 of this bill; however, expresses that the language is vague. They state that it is unclear if the advisory board is tasked with developing recommendations for whether a bachelor's degree equivalent should be offered to allow candidates with industry experience to be issued an educator certification and endorsement to teach trade courses. They state that it is critical to consider the educational aspects of the trades, as the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System reported waitlists at many of their schools, partly due to less educators to teach trades. They further note how skilled entry level workers are highly sought assets for many companies. As such, they state the CBIA's underlined recommended language change as:

"Sec. 13. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2024) (a) The Connecticut Educator Preparation and Certification Board, established pursuant to section 10 of this act, shall (1) conduct a review of the existing regulations and statutes relating to educator preparation and certification to identify obsolete or conflicting provisions of such regulations and statutes, (2) review the state's current approach to assessing whether candidates for certification have demonstrated minimum content knowledge within their endorsement areas for purposes of section 10-145f of the general statutes, as amended by this act, [and] (3) develop recommendations as to whether alternative approaches should be offered to allow candidates to demonstrate such minimum content knowledge, and (4) develop recommendations as to whether a bachelor's degree equivalent should be offered to allow candidates with industry experience to be issued an educator certification and endorsement for trades courses. Not later than January 31, 2025, the board shall submit a report on its findings, as well as any recommendations for legislation, to the State Board of Education and the joint standing committee of the General Assembly

having cognizance of matters relating to education, in accordance with the provisions of 11-4a of the general statutes."

**New Haven Federation of Teachers (NHFT), President, Leslie Blatteau:** expresses several comments and concerns on this bill. Firstly, they state concern that there is a skewed ratio in the CT Educator Certification Council as there is a low number of active classroom teachers and educator preparation professors. They also state concern that there are not enough provisions in this bill to effectively ensure the educator workforce is representative of the students in their schools, nor do they and ensure Black and brown educators get to and remain in public school classrooms. They suggest directly supporting first-generation college students, low-income people and people of color entering the profession with stipends while they work full-time in a student-teaching position with no compensation. In addition, they suggest to fully fund CT state colleges and universities and work to stop tuition hikes and program cuts to confront the teacher shortage in this state.

**New Haven Public Schools, Special Education Teacher, Frances Decapua:** expresses concern with ETS, the testing company that administers the Praxis test, stating they were refused accommodations for the test, despite them legally requiring such accommodations. Further, they state that for-profit testing companies and others who want to exploit public schools should not shape the laws that impact the state's schools and students.

**Quinnipiac University, Dean – School of Education, Anne Dichele:** highlights that this bill fails to implement a sunset date of June 2026 per the CECC's recommendations, which would allow for adequate deliberation but provide also for the needed urgency as well. They state that the regulations, per the current language, do not provide for a system of setting criteria for high quality that provides for both solid, basic skills, and flexible, research-based, contextually relevant change.

**Hobson & Motzer, Inc., President, Bruce Dworak:** recommends including language to this bill that highlights the need to develop recommendations as to whether a bachelor's degree equivalent should be offered to allow candidates with industry experience to be issued an educator certification and endorsement for trade courses. As such, they state the recommended language change as:

"Sec. 13. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2024) (a) The Connecticut Educator Preparation and Certification Board, established pursuant to section 10 of this act, shall (1) conduct a review of the existing regulations and statutes relating to educator preparation and certification to identify obsolete or conflicting provisions of such regulations and statutes, (2) review the state's current approach to assessing whether candidates for certification have demonstrated minimum content knowledge within their endorsement areas for purposes of section 10-145f of the general statutes, as amended by this act, [and] (3) develop recommendations as to whether alternative approaches should be offered to allow candidates to demonstrate such minimum content knowledge, and (4) develop recommendations as to whether a bachelor's degree equivalent should be offered to allow candidates with industry experience to be issued an educator certification and endorsement for trades courses. Not later than January 31, 2025, the board shall submit a report on its findings, as well as any recommendations for legislation, to the State Board of Education and the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, in accordance with the provisions of 11-4a of the general statutes."

**The CT Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS), Executive Director, Fran Rabinowitz:** states this bill will serve the teaching profession very well and recommends a phase-in of the elimination of obsolete regulations, with the most obsolete regulations by FY 2025 and the rest of the lesser obsolete regulations by FY 2026. They state that the creation of the new Board will create a locally focused entity that will partner with SDE to modernize and align educator preparation, certification, and evaluation.

**CT American Federation of Teachers (AFT), Educator, Rose Reyes:** expresses concern with several provisions of this bill, including that the new Board has much authority but insufficient representation and states there is no need for a new Board. They also state that the pathways to obtain initial certification in this bill does not seem different from what already exists with the ARC program. Further, they state collapsing content endorsement from grades 4-8 to 4-12 is not based on good pedagogy and may be inappropriate. Also, they state concern that cross endorsement access continues to be inequitable and still perpetuates a state shortage. They recommend strengthening the existing body (CACTPS) that includes real time educators; eliminating WEP/GPO to tap into experienced professionals; adequately funding for stipends, mentors, public colleges and universities; and recognizing that certification is not the only obstacle facing the teaching profession, and conversations about current working conditions need to be prioritized.

**American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE-CT), President, Katherine Roe:** makes comments on several provisions of this bill. Regarding Sect. 4, they state opposition the removal of the required master's degree as it would de-professionalize teaching and could impact reciprocity or inadvertently reinforce inequity amongst districts. Regarding Sect. 8, they state that PreK pedagogy and Elementary Education are developmentally unique, thus the inclusion of PreK into the Elementary Certification will require significant revision of EPP Elementary Education curriculum. They state that returning the Elementary licensure to include only kindergarten is more developmentally appropriate while still addressing school districts needs for flexibility in teacher assignment.

**University of Hartford, Dean of Education, Nursing and Health Professions, Cesarina Thompson:** states that removal of the master's degree requirement could impact reciprocity or inadvertently reinforce inequity amongst districts. Additionally, they state by programs being mandated to achieve NAEYC accreditation, EPPs will have to meet requirements of another distinct accrediting body beyond CAEP and that teacher candidates will have to take additional coursework and spend additional time in preschool settings to meet requirements, thus lengthening the time it takes for teacher candidates to complete their programs and become certified. Instead, they suggest resuming the past practice of including kindergarten in Elementary Education certification which would be more pedagogically appropriate and would provide flexibility in teaching assignments.

**Reported by: Ben McSheehy & James Magson      Date: 4/8/24**