
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5437

AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATION MANDATE RELIEF.

SUMMARY

This bill establishes a 10-member Educator Professional Development Mandate Review Advisory Council to advise and provide annual reports to the Education Committee on the (1) implementation of existing mandates for educator professional development and in-service training, (2) cost of these mandates to educators and local and regional boards of education, and (3) impact of any proposals to add to or revise these requirements.

Separately, the bill requires that (1) the manner and frequency of in-service training for certified educators be determined by the school board's professional development and evaluation committee and (2) at a minimum, the required subject matter be provided at least once every five years. It also eliminates specified subject matter from in-service training that, generally, is addressed by other training requirements (e.g., social-emotional learning).

For public and private educational facilities, the bill (1) delays, from January 1, 2025, to July 1, 2026, PA 23-170's requirement for certain organic materials generators to separate the materials and recycle them and (2) limits the requirement to educational facilities located within a 20-mile radius of a permitted source-separated organic material composting facility.

Additionally, the bill makes several changes to high school graduation requirements. Among other things, it delays, from the graduating class of 2025 to the graduating class of 2027, the requirement to complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), institutional financial aid application, or signed waiver. It also

eliminates (1) the prohibition on partisan political activities counting toward elective credit for community service and, (2) beginning with the graduating class of 2027, the option for school boards to require students to complete a one-credit mastery-based diploma assessment.

Lastly, the bill requires that student success plans give consideration to enrollment opportunities in the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (§§ 7, 9 & 10). By law, school boards must create a student success plan for each public school student beginning in sixth grade. The plan must include the student’s career and academic choices in grades 6-12.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024, except that a conforming change is effective July 1, 2025.

§ 1 — EDUCATOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MANDATE REVIEW ADVISORY COUNCIL

Under the bill, the council’s reports to the Education Committee must be submitted annually beginning January 1, 2025. They must include recommendations for legislation (if any) as well as the following:

1. a review of all existing professional development and in-service training mandates in state and federal law;
2. costs incurred by school boards to provide professional development and in-service training; and
3. how the boards provide and implement the development and training, including who completes and receives them and how frequently they are offered.

Under the bill, the council consists of 10 legislative appointees as shown in the table below.

Table: Council Membership

<i>Appointing Authority</i>	<i>Criteria</i>
House speaker	Representative of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education
Senate president pro tempore	Representative of the Connecticut

<i>Appointing Authority</i>	<i>Criteria</i>
	Association of Public School Superintendents
House majority leader	Representative of the Connecticut Association of Schools
Senate majority leader	Representative of the Connecticut Association of School Business Officials
House minority leader	Member of a local or regional school board
Senate minority leader	Representative of the Connecticut Federation of School Administrators
Education Committee House chairperson and ranking member (one each)	Public school paraeducator in Connecticut
Education Committee Senate chairperson and ranking member (one each)	Public school teacher in Connecticut

The bill requires appointing authorities to make their initial appointments by August 1, 2024, and fill any vacancies. The initial terms end on January 31, 2029, and subsequent terms last for five years. The bill allows members to serve multiple terms.

The bill requires the House speaker and Senate president pro tempore to select the council's chairpersons from among its members. The chairpersons must schedule the first meeting, which must be held by October 1, 2024. The Education Committee's administrative staff must serve as the council's administrative staff.

§§ 2-5 — IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Existing law requires school boards to provide an in-service training program for teachers, administrators, and pupil personnel who hold the initial educator, provisional educator, or professional educator certificate. The bill requires that (1) the manner and frequency of in-service training be determined by the school board's professional development and evaluation committee and (2) at a minimum, the required subject matter be provided at least once every five years.

Additionally, the bill eliminates requirements that the training include (1) identification and prevention of and response to bullying, (2) culturally responsive pedagogy and practice, and (3) the principles and practices of social-emotional learning and restorative practices.

Generally, training on these subjects is required by other statutes (e.g., certified employees' professional development programs must include culturally responsive pedagogy and practice (CGS § 10-148a)). The bill also makes conforming changes.

§ 6 — LARGE ORGANIC MATERIALS GENERATORS

Beginning January 1, 2025, PA 23-170, § 5, expands the scope of the law requiring certain organic materials generators to separate the materials and recycle them. Among other things, it requires public and private educational facilities (and other newly included entities) that generate an average projected volume of at least 26 tons of source-separated organic materials (e.g., food scraps) per year to (1) separate the materials from other solid waste and (2) recycle them at a permitted source-separated organic material composting facility that has capacity and is willing to accept them.

For public and private educational facilities, the bill (1) delays the implementation of this requirement to July 1, 2026, and (2) limits it to educational facilities located within a 20-mile radius of a permitted source-separated organic material composting facility.

§§ 7 & 8 — HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

FAFSA Completion

Beginning with the graduating class of 2025, current law requires students to complete a FAFSA, institutional financial aid application (if the student does not have legal immigration status), or signed waiver in order to graduate from high school. The bill delays the requirement by two years, to the graduating class of 2027.

The bill also exempts endowed academy students who are not state residents from this requirement. The state has three endowed academies that function as public high schools under state law (i.e., Gilbert School, Norwich Free Academy, and Woodstock Academy).

Credit Requirements

Beginning with the graduating class of 2027, the bill eliminates the option for school boards to require students to complete a one-credit

mastery-based diploma assessment (i.e., a “capstone”) in order to graduate from high school.

Additionally, existing law requires students, beginning with the graduating class of 2027, to complete a half-credit of personal financial management and financial literacy, which may count as either a humanities credit or an elective credit. The bill provides a third option by allowing this requirement to count as a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics credit.

Community Service

Existing law allows school boards to offer, and count towards high school graduation requirements, one half-credit in community service. Among other things, students must complete at least 50 hours of actual service performed outside of school hours.

The bill eliminates current law’s (1) prohibition on partisan political activities counting as community service and (2) requirement that the State Board of Education give community service recognition awards to students who complete 50 or more hours of community service.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Change of Reference - APP
Yea 43 Nay 1 (03/20/2024)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 52 Nay 0 (04/04/2024)