

Office of Legislative Research  
Connecticut General Assembly



**EDUCATION**



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This report provides highlights of new laws affecting education enacted during the 2010 regular legislative session. Not all provisions of the acts are included here. Complete summaries of all 2010 public acts passed are available on OLR's webpage: <http://www.cga.ct.gov/olr/OLRPASums.asp>

Readers are encouraged to obtain the full text of acts that interest them from the Connecticut State Library, the House Clerk's Office, or the General Assembly's website: <http://www.cga.ct.gov>.

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## **ACCOUNTABILITY AND ACHIEVEMENT**

### ***State Reconstitution of a Board of Education for a Low-Achieving District***

A new school reform law enhances the State Board of Education's (SBE) authority to replace the board of education for a local or regional school district that, after being designated as a low-achieving district, fails for two consecutive years to make adequate progress toward meeting the student achievement requirements of state and federal law. It overrides state statutes, special acts, and local charters and ordinances to allow the SBE, subject to certain conditions, to authorize the education commissioner, without specific action by the General Assembly, to terminate the existing local or regional board of education for a low-achieving school district and appoint new members. Under the act, the SBE may implement the reconstituted board for up to five years. (**PA 10-111**, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Expanded Public School Information System***

By July 1, 2013, a new law requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to expand the public school information system that already tracks individual

student performance on statewide mastery tests to also:

1. track and report to local and regional school boards, data on performance growth by students, teachers, schools, and school districts;
2. collect available data on enrollment in, and graduation from, higher education institutions, for students who have a unique student identifier in the system; and
3. develop a way to access and share data with the data systems of Connecticut public higher education institutions.

The commissioner must report to the Education Committee annually starting July 1, 2011 and continuing until July 1, 2013 on the SDE's progress in expanding the data system, including the data elements included in the system at the time of each report and those that will be added by July 1, 2013. (**PA 10-111**, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Parents, Governance Councils, and Low-Achieving Schools***

School reform legislation requires school boards with low-achieving schools to create school governance councils made up mostly of students' parents or guardians. The councils are empowered to, among other

things, advise the principal on the school budget before it is submitted to the superintendent, interview candidates to fill principal vacancies, and vote to reorganize low-achieving schools using school reconstitution models included in the act.

SDE, within available appropriations, must monitor schools for two years after reconstitution for progress based on the specified indicators, including student and teacher attendance, dropout rate, disciplinary incidents, length of school day and year, and the number and size of parent-teacher organizations. (**PA 10-111**, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Innovation Schools***

New school reform legislation permits a board of education for a priority school district, acting with or without an external partner, to convert an existing school or establish a new school as an “innovation school” through agreements with the teacher and administrator unions for the purpose of improving school performance and student achievement. It adds innovation schools to the specific models the commissioner may choose for reconstituting low-achieving schools.

The act establishes the requirements for establishing such a school, including a requirement for a plan for the school, developed by a plan committee, that articulates areas

of autonomy and flexibility in curriculum, budget, school schedule and calendar, school district policies and procedures, professional development, and staffing policies and procedures including waivers from or modifications to union contracts. Changes to union contracts must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the bargaining unit’s members employed or to be employed at the school. The innovation plan must include measurable goals regarding school performance and student success and the school must be monitored and evaluated annually by the school superintendent. (**PA 10-111**, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Reports on Governance Councils and Reconstituted Schools***

By July 1, 2011 and every two years thereafter, the school reform law requires the SDE, within available appropriations, to report to the Education Committee on (1) the number of school governance councils started under the act, (2) a comparison of the councils that have initiated reconstitutions with those that have not, and (3) whether there is increased parental involvement at schools with governance councils.

By January 1, 2012, SDE must report on the number of school governance councils established, the number of

schools that have been reconstituted, and the reconstitution models adopted.

By January 1, 2013, SDE must report on (1) the results of the school monitoring, (2) recommended changes in the reconstitution models available, (3) whether school governance councils should continue to recommend reconstitution, (4) a comparison of the models adopted, and (5) the progress of the schools adopting each model based on the act's indicators. (**PA 10-111**, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Parent Trust Fund Transferred***

A new law transfers the Parent Trust Fund from the Department of Social Services to SDE. The education commissioner must use the fund for programs aimed at improving children's health, safety, and education through parents' community involvement. The programs must (1) train parents in civic leadership skills and (2) support increased, sustained parental engagement in community affairs. The act also allows the fund to receive state money. (**PA 10-111**, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Achievement Gap Task Force***

The legislature established a nine-member task force to study, monitor, and consider effective ways to close the achievement gap between racial and socioeconomic student groups in

Connecticut. The task force must consider at least: (1) systematic education planning, (2) best practices in public education, (3) teacher professional development, and (4) parental involvement in public education. The task force consists of the education commissioner or the commissioner's designee and eight members appointed by legislative leaders. It must report its findings and recommendations to the Education Committee by January 1, 2011. (**PA 10-111**, effective July 1, 2010)

## **ATHLETICS**

### ***Admissions Tax Exemption***

A new law exempts charges for interscholastic athletic events held at Rentschler Field from the 10% admissions tax. (**PA 10-146**, effective July 1, 2010 and applicable to admission charges imposed on or after that date.)

### ***Student Athletes and Head Injuries***

A new law requires any coach of intramural or interscholastic athletics who has an SBE-issued coaching permit to:

1. be periodically trained in how to recognize and respond to head injuries and concussions;

2. take a student athlete out of any interscholastic or intramural game or practice if the athlete shows signs of, or is diagnosed with, a concussion; and
3. keep the athlete out of any game or practice until the athlete has received written clearance from a licensed medical professional to return to play.

SBE may revoke the coaching permit of any coach who violates the act's requirements. (**PA 10-62**, effective on passage for the training requirements and July 1, 2010 for the requirement to remove students from games and practices.)

## **ATTENDANCE AND DISCIPLINE**

### ***Educational Placement of Children in DCF Custody***

A new law creates a presumption that it is in the best interest of a child the Department of Children and Families (DCF) places in out-of-home care under an emergency, temporary custody or commitment order to continue to attend the school he or she attended before the placement. The act applies to (1) all school-age children, (2) three- to five-year olds determined eligible for special education, and (3) children aged 27 months through age five referred for special education determination. It provides mechanisms for parents

to challenge DCF decisions. And it makes DCF responsible for some costs of transporting a child from a placement to school and makes a school ineligible to receive state special education excess cost grants for a child placed in another community who continues to attend his or her original school. (**PA 10-160**, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***In-School Suspension***

A new law gives school authorities the express authority to use a student's past disciplinary problems that have lead to the student being suspended or expelled as a criterion for determining whether an out-of-school suspension is warranted in a particular case. Before determining that an out-of-school suspension is appropriate, the school must have tried to address the problem through means other than an out-of-school suspension or expulsion, including through "positive behavioral support strategies." (**PA 10-111**, effective July 1, 2010)

## **CHARTER SCHOOLS**

### ***State Board Of Education Authority to Issue Charters***

New legislation eliminates an express requirement that, when the SBE issues charters for state and local charter schools, it do so only within available appropriations. The act does not

change the charter school funding mechanisms or the state per-student grant. (**PA 10-111**, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Charter School Enrollment Limits***

New legislation allows SBE to waive statutory enrollment caps on high-achieving charter schools. Under prior law, if a school applied and demonstrated a record of achievement, SBE could waive overall enrollment requirements, but the school's enrollment was still limited no more than 85 students per grade. The act eliminates the 85-student-per-grade limit entirely and requires rather than allows SBE to waive the overall enrollment limits for high-achieving charter schools that apply for such waivers. (**PA 10-111**, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Charter School Facility Grants***

New legislation makes the charter school facility grant program permanent. Under prior law, the grant was available only for FY 08 and FY 09. As before, grants remain subject to available bond authorizations. (**PA 10-111**, effective on passage)

### ***Participation in the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS)***

A new law requires otherwise qualified charter school professionals first employed by any charter school on or after

July 1, 2010 to participate in the TRS. Prior law allowed such participation but did not require it. The act continues voluntary participation for those hired before July 1, 2010. (**PA 10-111**, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Charter Management Organizations***

New legislation requires the SBE, by July 1, 2011, to regulate charter management organizations (CMOs), defined as entities with which a charter school contracts for educational design; implementation; or financial, business, operational, and administrative functions. The regulations must:

1. prohibit a charter school and its CMO from sharing board members with other charter schools and CMOs;
2. require any sharing of management personnel to be disclosed;
3. prohibit unsecured, noninterest bearing transfers of state and federal funds between charter schools or CMOs;
4. define allowable direct and indirect costs and the method CMOs must to calculate per-pupil service fees; and
5. permit CMOs to collect private donations to distribute to charter schools. (**PA 10-111**, effective July 1, 2010)

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD/SCHOOL READINESS**

### ***School Readiness Grant Phase-Outs***

New legislation changes the school readiness grant phase-out requirements for a certain group of towns. It allows towns that are not priority school district towns, but are on the list of the 50 poorest towns, to continue to receive an annual school readiness grant even if they no longer meet the requirements. The change begins for FY 11 and applies to towns that were eligible for the grant and received one in FY 10. The existing three-year phase-out requirement remains in place for priority school districts. The phase-out also continues for the 50 poorest towns (excluding priority district towns) if the phase-out began in FY 09. (**PA 10-151**, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***School Readiness Grant Competitive District Account***

New legislation establishes a school readiness competitive district grant account as a separate, nonlapsing account within the General Fund, which the education commissioner must spend for grants to competitive school districts to make slots available in preschool school readiness programs. Under the new law, a

“competitive school district” is a district with more than 9,000 students that is also a priority school district or a district in a town on the list of 50 poorest in the state. (**PA 10-151**, effective July 1, 2010)

## **GRANTS AND FUNDING**

### ***School Construction Projects***

The legislature authorized \$416.6 million in grant commitments for 29 new local school construction and interdistrict magnet school projects. The act also reauthorizes and increases grant commitments for four previously authorized projects with significant changes in cost and scope and waives certain statutory and regulatory requirements to make specified school construction projects eligible for state grants under certain conditions. (**PA 10-108**, effective on passage)

### ***Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR)***

New legislation allows any town that had fewer students enrolled in its schools in the 2009-10 school year than it did in 2008-09 to reduce its MBR for FY 10 by \$3,000 times the difference in the two enrollments. Thus, for example, if a district had 800 students enrolled in 2008 and 750 students in 2009, it could budget \$150,000 less (\$3,000 x 50) in FY 10 than it did

in FY 09 and still meet its MBR for FY 10 (**PA 10-151**, effective on passage).

### ***ECS Grant for East Hartford***

A new law requires East Hartford to receive an Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant at least equal to its fixed grant entitlement for FY 09. (A “fixed entitlement” is a town’s full ECS formula grant, excluding prior year adjustments.) (**PA 10-151**, effective on passage)

## **INTERDISTRICT MAGNET SCHOOLS**

### ***Sheff Magnet School Start-Up Grants***

The legislature authorized \$4.6 million in general obligation bonds to SDE for capital start-up cost grants for new interdistrict magnet schools needed to help the state meet the goals of the 2008 *Sheff v. O’Neill* school desegregation settlement. (**PA 10-108**, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Special Operating Grants for Two Interdistrict Magnet Schools***

A 2009 law set separate, higher per-pupil grants for two regional educational service center (RESC)-operated magnet schools (Wintergreen Interdistrict Magnet School in Hamden and Thomas Edison Magnet Middle School in Meriden) whose enrollment of students from a

single town exceed 55%. For FY 11, new legislation reduces (1) Wintergreen’s grant for each student from a district enrolling between 55% and 70% of the school’s students (Hamden) from \$4,894 to \$4,263 and (2) Edison’s grant for each student from a district enrolling between 55% and 80% of the school’s students (Meriden) from \$4,250 to \$3,833.

By law, as for all magnet schools in same category, Wintergreen and Edison receive state grants of \$6,730 per-student for each enrolled student from outside of Hamden and Meriden, respectively. The act sunsets these grant amounts after FY 11 instead of requiring the state to pay them permanently. This change already applies to the comparable per-student grants for other magnet schools in the same category. (PA 10-179, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Supplemental Magnet School Transportation Grants for FY 10***

A new law allows the education commissioner to provide supplemental transportation grants for FY 10 to the Hartford school district and the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) to transport students who live outside Hartford to interdistrict magnet schools operated by CREC or the Hartford school district. The

Office of Policy and Management secretary must approve the grants. (PA 10-179, effective on passage)

Another new law allows the commissioner, within available appropriations, to provide supplemental transportation grants to any RESC for interdistrict magnet school transportation for FY 10. As under prior law, in order to provide the grant, the commissioner must review and approve the RESC's total interdistrict magnet school transportation budget, including all revenue and expenditure estimates. (PA 10-151, effective on passage)

## **SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS**

### ***Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) for School Administrators***

New school reform legislation requires SDE to review and approve proposals for school administrator ARC programs and specifies minimum criteria for approval including (1) entities that may offer administrator ARC programs; (2) admission criteria, including a requirement that an applicant have at least 40 months of Connecticut teaching experience with at least 10 months of teaching in a public school; (3) that participants serve a one-year residency as an administrator; and (4) that program graduates obtain a master's degree within five years

of receiving their initial administrator certificates. (PA 10-111, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Waiver of Superintendent Certification***

The legislature gave the education commissioner additional authority to waive the requirement that a school superintendent hold a superintendent certificate issued by the SBE, if a waiver is requested by the superintendent's employing board of education. To receive a waiver under the new authority, the applicant must have at least three years of successful experience in a public school in another state in the 10 years prior to the waiver application date. The experience must be as a certified administrator with a superintendent certificate issued by another state. (PA 10-111, effective July 1, 2010)

## **SCHOOL BUSES**

### ***Penalties for School Bus Violations***

New legislation imposes a civil penalty of up to \$2,500 on school districts, private school transportation contractors, or people acting on their behalf, that file false reports or statements with the motor vehicles (DMV) commissioner relating to the maintenance, repair, or use of a school bus or motor vehicle used to transport

students. Each false statement is subject to a separate penalty. It also imposes the same fine for each violation of DMV's school bus or school transportation vehicle requirements. It requires the DMV commissioner to adopt regulations governing the inspection, registration, operation, and maintenance of the motor vehicles used to transport any student, rather than just special education students. (PA 10-110, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Funding for Seat Belts on School Buses***

New legislation requires the DMV to administer a program to help participating school districts pay for school buses equipped with lap/shoulder (three-point) seat belts. DMV must do so by increasing certain fees by \$50 and using the increase to offset a portion of the sales tax school bus companies pay for seat belt-equipped school buses.

School districts may apply to DMV for the funding between July 1, 2011 and December 31, 2017. They must meet certain conditions, including (1) providing written notice of the availability and proper use of seat belts to the parents or legal guardians of each student who uses a school bus and (2) teaching students the proper use of the seat belts. (**PA 10-83**, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Vocational-Technical School Buses***

Starting July 1, 2010, a new law requires the SBE to replace any vocational-technical (V-T) school bus that is 12 years old or older or any bus that has been ordered out of service by DMV for two years in a row for the same problem. It requires the V-T system superintendent to report annually, starting by July 1, 2011, to the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) secretary and the Education and Finance committees on V-T bus replacements, including the number of buses replaced in the previous school year and the number to be replaced in the coming school year.

The act also requires SBE to arrange for DMV to inspect V-T school buses by July 15, 2010 and annually thereafter. (**PA 10-76**, effective July 1, 2010, except for the bus inspection requirement, which effective on passage)

## **SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

### ***Secondary School Reform***

The legislature set higher standards for earning high school diplomas by increasing the minimum credits necessary to graduate from 20 to 25, starting with the graduating class of 2018. Beginning with 7<sup>th</sup> graders in the 2012-13 school year (the graduating class of 2018), local boards must provide adequate

support and remedial services for students. For those unable to successfully complete any of the required courses or exams, the student support and remedial services must provide an alternate way to meet the requirements. SDE must provide grants, within available appropriations, to school districts to assist them to implement the new standards and support services and SDE and boards of education must provide periodic status reports on the implementation of the higher standards.

The legislation also (1) authorizes SDE to create a board examination series pilot program to allow students in grades 9 through 12 to graduate from high school by passing a series of exams instead of meeting the regular high school graduation requirements and (2) permits school boards to award credit toward graduation requirements for the successful completion of online coursework, if the board has adopted an online course policy that meets standards the act sets. (PA 10-111, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Online Credit Recovery Program***

New legislation requires any board of education for a school district with a dropout rate of 8% or greater in the previous school year to establish an online credit recovery program for students who are identified as being in

danger of failing to graduate. These students must be allowed to complete online district-approved coursework toward meeting high school graduation requirements. Each school in the school district must designate, from among existing staff, an online learning coordinator to administer and coordinate the online credit recovery program. (PA 10-111, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Parent-Teacher Conferences***

Starting with the 2010-11 school year, new legislation requires each school district's mandatory policy for encouraging parent-teacher communication to require districts to hold two flexible parent-teacher conferences per year. (**PA 10-111**, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Advanced Placement Courses***

Starting July 1, 2011, a new law requires local and regional boards of education to provide high school level courses for which an advanced placement (AP) examination is available through the College Board. The act also requires SBE to develop guidelines to help school districts train teachers to teach AP courses to a diverse student body. (PA 10-111, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Domestic Violence Training***

A new law requires local and regional school boards, as part of the in-service training they must offer to certified employees, to include information on preventing teen dating violence and domestic violence. It also requires SBE to help boards to include domestic violence and teen dating violence as a separate topic in their in-service training programs for certified professional employees. (PA 10-91, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Noncertified School Employees and In-Service Training***

A new law expressly allows school boards to permit paraprofessionals and other noncertified employees to participate voluntarily in the in-service training programs for certified personnel. (PA 10-91, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Nonlapsing Account***

A new law overrides special acts, local charters, and ordinances to allow a town board of finance, board of selectmen in a town with no board of finance, or other appropriating authority for a school district to retain and deposit in a nonlapsing account up to 1% of the annual school district's total budgeted appropriations for education for any year, starting with FY 11. (PA 10-108, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Shared Service Agreements Between Boards of Education***

This session, the legislature established a grant payable in FY 12 to any municipality whose board of education makes a cooperative arrangement with at least one other board of education to provide school transportation resulting in a savings in FY 11. The grant, which is payable to the participating municipalities, is in addition to existing student transportation reimbursements to school districts. The one-time grant is one-half of the difference between the school transportation reimbursement the districts would have received in the absence of a cooperative agreement and the reimbursement after the cooperative agreement. In addition to cooperative arrangements that boards of education may enter under existing law, the act also permits two or more boards to establish a shared service agreement. (PA 10-167, effective on passage for the school transportation incentive program and October 1, 2010 for the shared services agreement provision.)

### ***Joint Purchase of Employee Health Insurance***

New legislation permits two or more municipalities or local or regional boards of education to enter into a written agreement to act as a single entity to provide

medical or health care benefits for their employees under certain conditions. The agreement is subject to any union contract the municipality or board has with its employees and the municipality's legislative body must approve the agreement when certain conditions exist between the municipality and board of education. **(PA 10-174, effective October 1, 2010)**

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

### ***Supplemental Special Education Excess Cost Grants***

By law, the state reimburses school districts for the costs of special education and related services for any student that exceed a specified local contribution. For FY 10 and FY 11, if total grants payable exceed the budgeted authorization for them, reimbursements must be proportionately reduced. A new law provides supplemental grants to most school districts for FY 10 and FY 11 for these costs and lists the additional grant amount each district will receive. **(PA 10-179, effective July 1, 2010)**

### ***Applied Behavior Analysis Services***

Starting July 1, 2012, a new law requires school districts to use only behavior analysts licensed or certified in accordance with its requirements to provide applied behavior analysis for students with autism

spectrum disorders who require the services (1) according to a special education individualized education program or (2) under an educational plan established for a child with a disability that requires a reasonable accommodation but who is not eligible for special education. The act also establishes standards for people who may provide applied behavioral analysis services if the education commissioner finds there are not enough licensed or certified personnel available. **(PA 10-175, effective July 1, 2010)**

### ***Special Education Advisory Council***

New legislation revamps the Advisory Council for Special Education by:

1. reducing its statutorily specified membership and updating the members' qualifications;
2. requiring appointees to reflect the ethnic and racial diversity and types of disabilities found in the state;
3. requiring the terms of all current council members to expire on June 30, 2010; and

4. requiring that, for terms starting July 1, 2010, the appointees of the commissioners of education, developmental services, and children and families serve initial terms of three years and thereafter serve the same two-year terms as the other appointees. (**PA 10-175**, effective on passage)

## **STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### ***School-Based Health Centers***

A new law requires each Connecticut licensed health insurer, at the request of one or more school-based health centers, to offer to contract with the center or centers to reimburse covered health services to the insurer's enrollees. This offer must be made on terms and conditions similar to contracts offered to other health care service providers. (**PA 10-118**, effective on passage)

### ***Child Day Care Centers and Group Day Care Homes In Public Schools***

New legislation requires the Department of Public Health (DPH) to adopt regulations establishing physical plant requirements for licensed child day care centers and licensed group day care homes that exclusively serve school-age

children. In doing so, DPH must consider those located in private or public school buildings. The act requires DPH to implement policies and procedures while in the process of adopting these regulations. (**PA 10-90**, effective on passage)

### ***Homeless Children and Education***

New legislation requires SDE, in collaboration with other appropriate departments, to fully use the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Act to protect homeless children from school failure and dropping out and improve their access to higher education opportunities. (**PA 10-133**, effective on passage)

### ***Steps to Improve School Breakfast Program Participation***

A new law requires SDE to administer a child nutrition outreach program to (1) increase participation in the federal School Breakfast, Summer Food Service, and Child and Adult Care Food programs and (2) secure federal reimbursement for the programs. (**PA 10-133**, effective July 1, 2010)

## **TEACHERS AND TEACHERS' RETIREMENT**

### ***Teacher Evaluations***

New school reform legislation requires school districts to evaluate teachers partly on multiple indicators of their students' academic growth. It requires SBE, by July 1, 2013, to develop guidelines for a model teacher evaluation program that includes student academic growth and requires local school district evaluation programs to be consistent with those guidelines. The guidelines must, at a minimum, include:

1. ways to measure student academic growth;
2. consideration of "control" factors tracked by the expanded public school data system that could influence teacher performance, such as student characteristics, attendance, and mobility; and
3. minimum requirements for evaluation instruments and procedures.

The act also establishes a Performance Evaluation Advisory Council to help SBE develop the model teacher program evaluation guidelines and the expanded public school information system to support it. **(PA 10-111**, effective July 1, 2010)

## ***Tenure in Priority School Districts***

A new law allows any certified teacher or administrator employed by a local or regional board of education in a priority school district and who previously had tenure with another board of education in this state or another state to attain tenure after 10 months of employment in the priority school district rather than 20 months. (PA 10-111, effective on passage)

### ***Professional Development, Technical Assistance, and Evaluation***

A new law expands the entities eligible for state funding to provide professional development services, technical assistance, and evaluation activities to local and regional boards of education, state charter schools, vocational-technical schools, school readiness providers, and other educational entities, as the education commissioner determines. It allows funding to go to such state education organizations as those representing school superintendents, boards of education, and elementary and secondary schools. Previously, only RESCs could receive such funds. (PA 10-111, effective on passage)

### ***Retired Teachers' Health Services Costs for FY 10***

An act to mitigate the FY 10 deficit reduces an FY 10 appropriation to the TRB for retired teachers' health services costs by \$179,228, from \$188,661 to \$9,433. The funds were appropriated to cover a deficiency for FY 09 and were carried over for expenditure for the same purpose in FY 10. (**PA 10-3**, effective on passage)

### ***Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) Clarifying Changes***

New legislation specifies (1) that a member who completes the 10 years of credited service needed for deferred vested retirement after turning age 60 may begin receiving benefits immediately upon retirement instead of only starting at age 65 and (2) how an employing board of education and a TRS member, if appropriate, must pay for additional TRS service credit purchased in connection with a retirement incentive plan. (PA 10-22, effective on passage)

### ***Teachers' Retirement Board Benefit Error***

A new law requires the TRB to pay a member benefits based on the estimate TRB provided, if the member retires based on a benefit estimate that is in error by 10% or more. (**PA 10-57**, effective on passage)

### ***Teachers' Retirement Board Health Care Consultant Fees***

A new law allows the TRB to pay up to \$150,000 in annual professional consultant fees for administering the TRB's health care coverage for qualifying retired teachers from the Retired Teachers' Health Insurance Premium Fund instead of from the General Fund. (**PA 10-57**, effective on passage)

### ***Employment of Retired Teachers***

New legislation expands opportunities for school districts to reemploy retired teachers who are collecting TRS pensions without triggering a benefit reduction. It allows retired teachers to be reemployed (1) by any school district for any amount of time, instead only for less than a full school year, at 45% of the maximum pay for the assigned position and (2) at full salary for up to one full school year with a possible extension to a second year if they teach any subject, not just a shortage area subject, in a priority school district or if they are employed by the SBE in a subject shortage area. The act also makes changes in the procedures for notifying TRB of a retired teacher's reemployment. (PA 10-111, effective on passage)

## **VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOLS AND VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS**

### ***Closing a Vocational-Technical (V-T) School***

The General Assembly established procedures for SBE to close or suspend operations at a V-T school for more than six months. The new law allows the SBE to take such an action only after a vote at a duly called meeting. In addition, SBE must (1) hold a public hearing at the school after school hours at least 30 days before taking the vote and (2) before the hearing, develop a comprehensive plan addressing a number of issues related to closure or suspension and mail the plan to all school parents and employees. (PA 10-76, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***State Board of Education Membership***

As of July 1, 2010, new legislation expands the SBE from 11 to 13 members and requires that the board include at least two members who (1) have experience in manufacturing or in a trade taught in the V-T system or (2) are alumni of, or taught at, a V-T school. In addition, starting April 1, 2011, the new law requires at least one board member to have either agriculture experience or be an alumnus of, or taught at, a regional agricultural science and technology education (vo-ag)

center. Finally, it requires one of these new members to chair the board's vocational-technical school subcommittee. (PA 10-76, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Bond Commission Votes on V-T System Bond Authorizations***

New legislation requires that, when there is enough of an aggregate balance of bonds authorized but unallocated for general maintenance and capital and trade equipment for any V-T school, the State Bond Commission vote at its August and February meetings annually on whether to allocate at least \$2 million from those authorizations. If, at the time of the commission's August and February meetings, pending general maintenance and trade and capital equipment transactions exceed \$2 million, the act allows the V-T system superintendent to ask for, and requires the bond commission to vote on, whether to allocate more than \$2 million. If the unallocated balance is less than \$2 million, the commission must vote on whether to allocate the remaining unallocated balance. (PA 10-76, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***V-T Budget and Expenses***

Starting with FY 11, new legislation makes the V-T system a separate budgeted agency from SDE. It requires the V-T system superintendent, twice a year, to submit the operating budget and

expenses for each V-T school to the OPM secretary, the Office of Fiscal Analysis director, and the Education Committee. It also requires the superintendent to post the operating budget of each school for the current year on the V-T system website and the school's website. (PA 10-76, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Defining V-T School Attendance Regions***

New legislation requires the SBE, by July 1, 2011, to develop recommendations defining regions across the state for purposes of student attendance in the regional V-T school system. The board must submit the recommendations to the Education Committee. (PA 10-76, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Annual Meeting on V-T Curriculum and Workforce Needs***

A new law requires the Education, Higher Education and Employment Advancement, and Labor committees to meet annually, by November 30, with the vocational-technical school system superintendent, the Office of Workforce Competitiveness director, the labor commissioner, and other appropriate people to consider information each official must submit to the committees by November 15 annually on (1) general economic and workforce trends and needs, (2) the

adequacy of resources available to the V-T system and (3) recommendations for V-T school curriculum changes. It eliminates the statewide V-T school system advisory council that was charged with considering many of the same issues. (PA 10-76, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Vocational Agriculture Shellfish Beds***

New legislation allows the agriculture commissioner to designate shellfish areas necessary for conducting educational activities to regional agricultural science and technology education centers and appears to exempt the centers from the required minimum \$4-per-acre lease fee and 10-year lease term. The shellfish areas are those (1) owned by the state, (2) placed under state jurisdiction by the town of West Haven, or (3) within the state's exclusive jurisdiction but undesignated. The designated areas must (1) be no greater than 50 acres each of restricted relay grow-out beds and approved harvest beds and (2) not be in production at time of designation. The educational activities that may be conducted include grow-out activities related to commercial scale aquaculture in the state's waters. (**PA 10-78**, effective October 1, 2010)

### ***LPN Programs at Vocational-Technical Schools***

By January 1, 2011, a new act requires the education commissioner and the V-T school system superintendent to establish and administer licensed practical nurse (LPN) programs at six V-T schools, distributed on an equitable geographic basis throughout the state. The requirement applies unless the education commissioner notifies the Education Committee by November 1, 2010 that he will not establish the programs and the reasons why. If the appropriation for the programs is too little to cover their costs, the act allows program tuition to be increased to cover the shortfall. (PA 10-3, effective on passage)

### **HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKER TRAINING**

#### ***UConn Health Center Facilities Plan***

A new law provides funding, with certain conditions, to (1) construct a new patient bed tower and renovate academic, clinical, and research space at UConn's John Dempsey Hospital (JDH) and (2) develop regional health network initiatives. It also establishes provisions for transferring, from JDH to Connecticut Children's Medical Center, licensure and control of 40 neonatal intensive care unit beds.

The total project cost is \$362 million. The act authorizes \$237 million in state GO bonds to fund the project, of which \$207 million will be issued under the UConn 2000 infrastructure improvement program. It also reallocates \$25 million in existing UConn 2000 funds and requires a \$100 million contribution of federal, private, or other nonstate money. The \$237 million in new bonds cannot be issued and the bed tower construction cannot start if the \$100 million is not received by June 30, 2015.

The act also extends enterprise zone benefits to certain businesses in Bristol, Farmington, Hartford, and New Britain. These benefits include property tax exemptions, business tax credits, and sales tax exemptions for replacement parts. (PA 10-104, effective on passage, except for the provision on enterprise zones, which is effective July 1, 2010.)

#### ***UConn Health Network Initiatives***

The 2010 budget act changes certain bond authorizations for the UConn health network initiatives described in PA 10-104. It allocates \$5 million for a simulation and conference center at Hartford Hospital and specifies that the center will be run exclusively by Hartford Hospital. It also allocates \$5 million for a primary care institute at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center and a total of \$10 million

for (1) an institute for clinical and translational science at the UConn Health Center, (2) a comprehensive cancer center, and (3) a UConn-sponsored health disparities institute. (PA 10-179, effective on passage)

### ***Green Industry Education and Employment***

A new law requires higher education institutions in Connecticut to publicize green technology initiatives in higher education and to collaborate in furthering these initiatives. (PA 10-156, effective October 1, 2010)

### ***Aid for Students Entering Green Jobs Fields***

New legislation authorizes reimbursements, with certain conditions, for student loans and training grants for Connecticut residents with educational backgrounds and jobs related to green technology, life science, or health information technology and holding jobs related to these fields. The most a student may receive under the act and any other state program is \$10,000 for a bachelor's degree and \$5,000 for an associate's degree. (PA 10-75, effective on passage)

### ***Short-Term, Noncredit Workforce Development Initiative***

New legislation to promote jobs authorizes \$1 million in bonds to address the training needs of unemployed Connecticut residents. It requires the Community-Technical Colleges Board of Trustees to develop short-term, noncredit programs providing job-related skills and workforce credentials. The board must also establish an advisory committee to identify workforce needs and recommend how to address them. (PA 10-75, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***Support for Veterinary Medicine Education***

New legislation requires the Department of Higher Education (DHE) to establish the Kirklyn M. Kerr program to support students studying veterinary medicine. A student must be (1) a Connecticut resident, (2) enrolled in an accredited veterinary graduate school, and (3) make a written commitment to either work as a veterinarian in Connecticut for five years following graduation or repay any support received. The act authorizes DHE to award up to five four-year awards per student class, with the awards worth up to \$20,000 per year. (PA 10-3, as amended by PA 10-179, effective on passage)

### ***Recommendations for Curricular Improvements***

New legislation requires the Office of Workforce Competitiveness and various officials to consult with one industry member from each creative cluster in (1) reviewing, evaluating, and recommending improvements for certificate and degree programs at the V-T schools and the community-technical colleges to make sure they meet business and industry's employment needs and (2) developing ways to strengthen ties between skill standards for education and training and business and industry's employment needs. (PA 10-55, effective October 1, 2010)

### ***Veterans' Tuition Waiver***

A new law specifies that, for purposes of the veterans' tuition waiver, which the law requires UConn, the Connecticut State University system, and regional community-technical colleges to give to eligible veterans, "service in time of war" excludes time spent attending a military service academy. The act requires that, within 30 days of its passage, the institutions' boards review current and prospective students' eligibility for the waiver to ensure compliance. (PA 10-66, effective on passage)

### ***Funds Reallocated Within CSUS 2020***

The 2010 state bond act shifts \$5 million in general obligation bond authorizations between two projects enumerated in Phase I of the Connecticut State University System (CSUS) 2020 plan, a system-wide capital improvement program. It does so by increasing the authorization for telecommunications infrastructure upgrades by \$5 million and reducing the authorization for land and property acquisition by the same amount. (PA 10-44, effective July 1, 2010)

### ***CSUS Doctoral Degree in Nursing Education***

A new law specifically authorizes the Connecticut State University System to award doctoral degrees in nursing education. (PA 10-8, effective on passage)

### ***Student Employees and State Code of Ethics***

New legislation exempts student employees at public institutions of higher education from certain provisions of the State Code of Ethics. The exemptions apply to students whose employment is derived from their status as students at those institutions but not to regular employees at a college or

university who take classes on a part-time basis. (**PA 10-101**, effective October 1, 2010)

***Mortgage Crisis Job Training Program***

A new law authorizes \$1.3 million in bonds for the existing Mortgage Crisis Job Training Program, which provides rapid, customized employment services, job training, repair training, and job placement assistance to borrowers who are unemployed, underemployed, or in need of a second job. (**PA 10-75**, effective July 1, 2010)

**PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

***Procedure for Establishing a Public Library***

A new law allows all municipalities to establish and fund public libraries either by action of their legislative bodies or by a petition of at least 50 voters followed by referendum approval. Under prior law, cities could establish libraries only by city council action and towns and boroughs could do so only by a petition and referendum. (**PA 10-108**, effective June 1, 2010)

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