



## Acts Affecting Education

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## Notice to Readers

This report provides summaries of new laws (Public Acts and Special Acts) affecting education enacted during the 2018 regular session. OLR's other Acts Affecting reports are, or will soon be, available on OLR's website: <https://www.cga.ct.gov/olr/actsaffecting.asp>.

Each summary indicates the Public Act (PA) or Special Act (SA) number. Not all provisions of the acts are included. The report does not include vetoed acts unless the veto was overridden.

Complete summaries of Public Acts are, or will soon be, available on OLR's website: <https://www.cga.ct.gov/olr/olrsums.asp>. Readers are encouraged to obtain the full text of acts that interest them from the Connecticut State Library, House Clerk's Office, or General Assembly's website: <http://www.cga.ct.gov>.

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## **Curriculum and Instruction**

### ***Holocaust and Genocide Education***

A new law adds Holocaust and genocide education and awareness to the required program of instruction for public schools and requires all local and regional boards of education (“boards of education”) to include this topic in their social studies curriculum ([PA 18-24](#), effective July 1, 2018).

### ***Opioid Use Instruction Requirement***

A new law requires public schools to provide instruction on opioid use and related disorders as part of the state’s required program of instruction ([PA 18-182](#), § 2, effective July 1, 2018).

## **Early Childhood Education**

### ***After School Report***

Under a new law, the After School Committee must report legislative recommendations to expand, finance, and improve summer and after school programs to the Appropriations and Education committees by February 1, 2019 ([PA 18-182](#), § 6, effective July 1, 2018).

### ***Early Childhood Staff Qualifications***

A new law delays the implementation of heightened staff qualifications for state-funded school readiness programs. The heightened education requirements for school readiness staff are set to take place in two phases. The new law delays the start of the first phase from July 1, 2018 to July 1, 2020, and the second phase from July 1, 2021 to July 1, 2023.

The law also requires the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) to complete an analysis of the early childhood staff requirements and submit it, with recommendations, to the Education Committee by January 1, 2020 ([PA 18-123](#), effective July 1, 2018, except the OEC analysis provision is effective upon passage).

### ***OEC Funds for Service-Delivery Pilots and Program Evaluation***

A new law allows OEC to use up to 2% of the appropriations for school readiness and four child care programs for, among other things, service-delivery pilots and program evaluation. School readiness is the state supported preschool program with an educational component ([PA 18-184](#), §§ 2-7, effective July 1, 2018).

## ***School Readiness Grant Funds Allowed for Evaluation and Administration***

The legislature changed the minimum amount of a state school readiness grant that a town can use for program coordination, evaluation, and administration from \$25,000 to 5% of the town's total grant while maintaining the existing \$75,000 cap ([PA 18-172](#), § 5, effective July 1, 2018).

## **Grants and Funding**

### ***Magnet School Transportation Grants***

A new law extends the education commissioner's authority to give (1) *Sheff* magnet school transportation grants through FY 19 and (2) supplemental *Sheff* magnet school transportation grants through FY 18. The authority to award each grant expired on June 30, 2017 ([PA 18-51](#), § 3, effective July 1, 2018).

### ***Per-Student Grant for Vocational Agricultural Centers***

The legislature increased, from \$3,200 to \$4,200, the annual state grant, within available appropriations, for each student attending a regional agricultural science and technology center. These regional centers, which are typically embedded in a local high school, provide high school students with an agricultural education in addition to the comprehensive high school education ([PA 18-81](#), § 52, effective July 1, 2018).

### ***Remaining Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Aid to Towns that Received Displaced Students***

The legislature enacted a new law that, after the distribution of FY 19 ECS grants, requires any remaining funds be distributed to municipalities whose school districts received students during FY 18 who were displaced by Hurricane Maria ([PA 18-81](#), § 37, effective July 1, 2018).

### ***School Readiness Grants***

Beginning in FY 20, a new law removes the fixed figure \$8,927 per-child cost in the school readiness program and instead allows the OEC commissioner to set rates (per-child cost) for the program. Also, the same new law adds transition to preschool and parental engagement and family supports through the two-generational initiative to an existing list of approved ways the OEC commissioner can use unexpended school readiness funds ([PA 18-184](#), §§ 8 & 9, effective July 1, 2018).

## ***School Security Grants***

The General Assembly enacted a law that authorizes the State Bond Commission to issue an additional \$10 million in school security grants for public and private schools. The same law specifies that the school construction emergency grant program can provide grants for up to \$5 million for multimedia interoperable communication systems ([PA 18-178](#), §§ 18 & 26, effective July 1, 2018).

## ***Tobacco Settlement Fund (TSF) Disbursements to the Smart Start Competitive Operating Grant Account***

The budget act eliminates the required disbursement from the TSF to the Smart Start Competitive Operating Grant Account, which prior law set at \$10 million a year for FYs 20 through 25 ([PA 18-81](#), §§ 60 & 61, effective upon passage).

## ***Youth Bureau Grant Eligibility***

A new law extends youth service bureau grant eligibility to bureaus that applied for grants in FY 18 (prior law covered bureaus that applied for grants in FY 17) ([PA 18-182](#), § 1, July 1, 2018).

## **Health and Safety**

### ***Adult Education Teachers and Background Checks***

The legislature enacted a new law exempting from criminal history and child abuse and registry background checks any person a board of education employs as a noncredit adult class or adult education activity teacher, provided the person is not required to hold a teaching certificate for the position ([PA 18-51](#), § 9, effective July 1, 2018).

### ***Exclusionary Time Out***

A new law creates exclusionary time out as a new way (separate and distinct from seclusion) of removing a child from a classroom. It is defined as a temporary, continuously monitored separation of a student in a non-locked setting away from an ongoing activity for the purpose of calming or deescalating such student's behavior. By law, seclusion is the involuntary confinement of a student in a room that the student is prevented from leaving. The new law requires each board of education to establish, by January 1, 2019, an exclusionary time out policy that meets the law's standards ([PA 18-51](#), § 4, effective July 1, 2018).

## ***Fingerprinting and Criminal History Check Task Force***

A new law establishes a task force to study and make recommendations on the state's system for fingerprinting and processing criminal history records for employees, job applicants, and volunteers of boards of education and other education employers. The report and recommendations must be submitted by January 1, 2019, to the Education and Public Safety and Security committees ([SA 18-25](#), effective upon passage).

## ***Life-Threatening Food Allergies in Schools***

This session, the legislature made several changes to the laws addressing food allergies in schools. A new law allows any student with a medically diagnosed life-threatening allergic condition to possess and self-administer his or her medication. It requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to adopt implementing regulations. The act requires SDE, in consultation with DPH, to, among other things, revise, review, and update its guidelines for managing students with life-threatening food allergies and glycogen storage disease. It additionally requires SDE to update its health and physical education curriculum standards and apply for external funding to raise public awareness about food allergies ([PA 18-185](#), §§ 1-2 & 4-6, effective July 1, 2018, except the provisions relating to SDE's curriculum revisions and funding applications take effect upon passage).

## ***Oral Health Assessments***

A new law requires boards of education to request that students have an oral health assessment prior to public school enrollment, in grade six or seven, and in grade nine or 10. It establishes related requirements on providers authorized to perform the assessments, parental consent, assessment forms, notification, and records access.

Among other things, the new law (1) prohibits a school board from denying a child's public school attendance for not getting an assessment; (2) requires appropriate school health personnel to review the assessment results and, if further attention is needed, requires the superintendent to notify the parents or guardians and make reasonable efforts to ensure that the attention is provided; and (3) requires school boards to provide prior notice to students' parents or guardians if the board hosts a free oral health assessment ([PA 18-168](#), §§ 80 & 81, as amended by [PA 18-169](#), § 44, effective July 1, 2018).



### ***School-Based Health Center (SBHC) Advisory Committee***

A new law adds three members to the SBHC Advisory Committee, increasing its membership to 20. The act adds to the committee the Department of Children and Families (DCF) commissioner or her designee. It also adds two members, appointed by the public health commissioner, from municipalities that operate SBHCs – one from a municipality with a population of at least 50,000 but under 100,000, and the other from a municipality with a population of at least 100,000 ([PA 18-168](#), § 5, effective October 1, 2018).

### ***School Bus Driver Training for Allergic Reactions***

The legislature passed a law that requires school transportation carriers to train all school bus drivers in how to handle serious food allergy reactions. The training must include instruction on identifying anaphylaxis symptoms and administering epinephrine by a cartridge injector (“EpiPen”). This new law also extends the protections of the “Good Samaritan” law to cover school bus drivers rendering certain emergency first aid in response to a student’s allergic reaction ([PA 18-185](#), §§ 3 & 7, effective July 1, 2018).

### ***Sports Helmet Safety Working Group***

A new law requires the Department of Public Health (DPH) to convene a working group to develop recommendations for creating a system for rating the safety of youth athletic protective headgear and for public disclosure of the ratings. The group must report its findings and recommendations to the Public Health, Education, Children, and General Law committees by January 1, 2019 ([SA 18-15](#), effective October 1, 2018).

### ***Suspended Bus Driver Report Check***

A new law specifies that school bus carriers check the Department of Motor Vehicles’ report of suspended bus drivers once during the first week and again during the third week of each month, rather than twice per month. It also requires carriers to prohibit any employee who appears on the report from driving a school bus immediately after reviewing it, rather than within 48 hours of doing so ([PA 18-164](#), § 12, effective July 1, 2018).

## **Interscholastic Athletics**

### ***High School Athletics Task Force***

A new law establishes a task force to study high school interscholastic athletics programs, including issues relating to governance, financing, and the role of such programs at the high school. It must submit its report to the Education Committee by January 1, 2019 ([PA 18-182](#), § 14, effective upon passage).

## **School Construction**

### ***School Building Project Managers***

The legislature enacted a new law that allows the administrative services commissioner to deny a town's application for a school building project grant if the town designates a regional educational service center as the project manager in the application. By law, there are a number of other criteria that the commissioner must consider when reviewing an application, such as various public health, fire safety, and educational standards ([PA 18-138](#), § 9, effective July 1, 2018).

### ***School Construction Grants***

The legislature authorized 19 new school construction projects totaling \$240 million in state grants related to estimated total project costs of \$485.5 million. The same law (1) increased, due to cost and scope changes, an existing grant commitment by \$32 million for a previously authorized project and (2) provided additional funding, of up to \$73.5 million, for other projects by waiving certain rules and statues ([PA 18-138](#), effective upon passage).

## **School Districts and Boards of Education**

### ***Connecticut-Grown Products Sold to Schools***

A new law requires anyone who sells a Connecticut-grown farm product through the Connecticut farm-to-school program to offer proof that it was produced in Connecticut to the buying school district, school, or educational institution. The proof must include the name of the person or business that produced the product and the name and address of the farm where it was produced ([PA 18-73](#), § 1, effective October 1, 2018).

## ***Exemption from School Districts Enrolling as Medicaid Providers***

A new law creates a process to exempt small school districts, those with fewer than 1,000 students, from enrolling as Medicaid providers and other related state requirements ([PA 18-182](#), § 15, effective upon passage).

## ***Minority Staff Recruitment***

A new law focuses the minority staff recruitment plan that boards of education must create on educators, rather than all staff ([PA 18-34](#), § 7, effective July 1, 2018).

## ***Revisions to the Student Data Privacy Act***

The legislature made numerous changes to the student data privacy law, which restricts how website, online service, and mobile application operators who contract with boards of education can process, use, and access student data. Among its provisions, the law requires (1) the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Commission for Educational Technology to develop a student data privacy terms-of-service agreement addendum that may be used in contracts between boards of education and operators pursuant to the privacy law and (2) boards of education to annually report to the commission on the use of any online services that are not under a contract that meets the privacy law requirements. It also adds a new member to the Student Data Privacy Task Force ([PA 18-125](#), effective July 1, 2018, except the provisions regarding the agreement addendum and the task force are upon passage).

## ***School Governance Councils***

A new law specifies that elementary, middle, and high school governance councils may include students' parents or guardians who are public officials ([PA 18-42](#), § 8, effective July 1, 2018).

## ***Study of School Ability to Search Electronic Devices***

The legislature created a working group to study and make recommendations on the search and seizure of students' personal electronic devices. The group must submit its findings and recommendations to the Education Committee by January 1, 2019 ([SA 18-28](#), effective upon passage).

## ***Vo-Ag Center Enrollment***

The legislature passed a law that prohibits a board of education from denying certain students enrollment in an agricultural science and technology education center ("vo-ag center") ([PA 18-182](#), § 16, effective upon passage).

## **Special Education**

### ***Contracts Required for Private Special Education Providers***

The legislature enacted a law that requires, starting July 1, 2019, any board of education to have a written contract, instead of an agreement, with a private special education provider in order to receive a state reimbursement grant for special education costs (known as the excess cost grant). Under the excess cost grant program, the state reimburses a board for a student's special education costs that exceed four and a half times the average per pupil educational cost of that school district ([PA 18-183](#), § 1, effective July 1, 2018).

### ***Special Education Services Documentation***

A new law requires SDE to develop standards and a process for documenting privately provided special education services that includes the use of standard forms or other electronic reporting systems. The forms or systems must allow the provider to document the frequency, type, and scope of services provided to individual students. The law also requires private providers to submit their operating budgets to SDE by October 1 of the school year in which they are providing the service ([PA 18-183](#), §§ 4 & 5, effective July 1, 2018).

### ***Student Data Privacy and Special Education***

A new law creates an exception, under certain conditions, to the student data privacy law for boards of education when special education students use a necessary online service or application and the service or application operator cannot meet the privacy law contract requirements ([PA 18-125](#), § 2, effective July 1, 2018).

### ***Truancy Interventions for Students with Disabilities***

The legislature passed a law that requires SDE to include truancy intervention models that address the needs of students with disabilities as part of the intervention models it already must provide to boards. The same law requires school districts' chronic absenteeism and prevention plans to collect data on chronic absenteeism and truancy of students with disabilities ([PA 18-182](#), §§ 3 & 4, effective July 1, 2018).

## **State Board of Education and SDE**

### ***Diversity and SBE's Five-Year Education Plan***

A new law requires the State Board of Education's (SBE) five-year education plan to include a statement that the state's teacher workforce should reflect the state's racial and ethnic diversity. It also requires SDE to identify and utilize or support a number of practices and programs to boost minority teacher recruitment ([PA 18-34](#), §§ 1 & 6, effective July 1, 2018).

### ***Free Retake of Teacher License Exam Agreement***

The legislature passed a new law that requires SDE to enter into a memorandum of understanding with teacher licensure test vendors to allow some test takers to get a free retake of the exam under certain conditions ([PA 18-34](#), § 9, effective upon passage).

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

A new law waives, for FY 18, the penalty for violating the prohibition on a town reducing its budgeted amount for education, as long as the town meets certain criteria. In general, a town is prohibited from budgeting less for education than it did in the previous FY unless it can demonstrate specific changes within its school district (such as reduced student enrollment). This prohibition is referred to as the MBR.

The new law waives the state penalty for violating the MBR for FY 18 if a town meets the following requirements:

1. the town's FY 18 ECS grant was reduced due to (a) reductions in allotments authorized in the 2017 budget act (PA 17-2, June Special Session, §§ 13 & 14) or (b) withholdings or reductions in state assistance to help pay for rental rebate assistance (CGS § 12-170f(d)) and
2. the town subsequently reduced its FY 18 budgeted appropriation for education in an amount up to its ECS grant reduction ([PA 18-1](#), effective upon passage).

### ***Safe Haven Law Instruction***

The legislature enacted a law that requires SBE to assist boards of education in including instruction related to Connecticut's "safe haven law," which allows a parent to voluntarily give up custody of an infant, age 30 days or younger, to an emergency room without being subject to arrest for abandonment. The same law requires DCF to provide instructional materials related to safe haven to SBE and boards of education ([PA 18-182](#), §§ 2 & 13, effective July 1, 2018).

## ***Statewide Reading Plan***

A new law (1) requires SDE to include in its statewide reading plan the alignment of reading instruction with the two-generational initiative and (2) allows OEC, in its two-generational initiative, to consider the alignment of state and local support systems around the statewide reading plan for students in kindergarten to grade three ([PA 18-129](#), effective July 1, 2018).

## **Teachers and Other Education Employees**

### ***Extended Duration of Non-Renewable Certification***

The legislature enacted a new law that extends the temporary non-renewable teacher certification from one to three years ([PA 18-51](#), § 7, effective July 1, 2018).

### ***Flexibility Regarding Reading and History Requirements for Teacher Certification***

A new law requires that SBE adopt teacher credential regulations that allow for certain semester hour coursework requirements to be substituted by their equivalent. The requirements that may be substituted for are (1) for an initial educator certificate with an elementary endorsement, completion of at least three semester hours of a U.S. history survey course and (2) for an initial educator with an early childhood through grade three or an elementary endorsement, completion of at least six semester hours of a comprehensive reading instruction course ([PA 18-51](#), § 8, effective July 1, 2018).

### ***Income Tax Revenue Diverted to the Retired Teachers' Health Insurance Premium Account***

The budget act requires \$16.1 million of the income tax revenue diverted to the Budget Reserve Fund for FY 18 to be transferred to the retired teachers' health insurance premium account. The transferred amount must be in addition to any other statutorily required contributions or payments to the account ([PA 18-81](#), § 22, effective May 14, 2018).

### ***Minority Teacher Recruitment Task Force***

A new law authorizes (1) the chairpersons of the Minority Teacher Recruitment Task Force to appoint a new member to the task force who will serve as the third chairperson and (2) the Commission on Equity and Opportunity executive director to appoint three members of the task force, instead of the executive director, or her appointee, serving on the task force ([PA 18-34](#), § 5, effective July 1, 2018).

### ***New Alternative Route to Teacher Certification***

The legislature enacted a new law that requires SDE to develop, or review and approve, a new alternate route to certification program for people in certain professions to be teachers, including paraeducators, charter school teachers, veterans, and others ([PA 18-34](#), § 2, effective July 1, 2018).

### ***Reemployment Pay for Retired Teachers and Administrators***

A new law extends, by two years from 2018 to 2020, a provision allowing certain retired teachers and administrators to exceed the annual earnings limit without having to pay back the excess to the Teachers Retirement System ([PA 18-42](#), § 9, effective upon passage).

### ***Revoking, Suspending, or Placing a Teacher's Credential on Probation***

The legislature passed a new law that allows SBE to, in addition to its authority to revoke, suspend a teacher's certificate, permit, or authorization ("credential") or to place a teacher's credential on probation in certain discipline cases. Under prior law, SBE could only revoke a credential. The new law bans a person from employment in a public school if his or her credential has been denied or suspended, but, if SBE places a credential on probation, the teacher may continue in the profession under conditions the commissioner sets ([PA 18-51](#), § 5, effective July 1, 2018).

### ***School Social Workers***

A new law specifies that if someone holds a professional educator certificate with a school social worker endorsement, the person may use the title "school social worker" to describe his or her activities while working at a public or private school, even if the person is not a DPH-licensed social worker ([PA 18-168](#), § 10, effective October 1, 2018).

### ***Teacher Certification and Cross Endorsement***

A new law makes changes in teacher certification rules regarding initial certifications, cross endorsements for those already holding a certification, and certain licensure exam exceptions for out-of-state teachers to make it easier, in certain areas, to obtain certification or cross endorsement ([PA 18-34](#), §§ 4 & 8, effective July 1, 2018).

### ***Teacher Permit for Veterans' Spouses***

A new law requires SBE, upon receipt of a proper application, to issue a three-year “military spouse teacher permit” to military spouses who have taught for at least two years under an appropriate certificate issued by another state, the District of Columbia, a U.S. territory or possession, or Puerto Rico. The law applies to any armed forces member’s spouse who has received orders to come to Connecticut ([PA 18-144](#), effective July 1, 2018).

### ***Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) Study Panel***

The legislature established a six-member panel to conduct a study of the Commission on Fiscal Stability and Economic Growth’s proposal to reform the TRS. The panel must report the results, which may include recommendations to reform the TRS, to the Appropriations Committee by January 1, 2019 ([PA 18-81](#), § 58, effective upon passage).

### ***Temporary Teacher Certification Endorsement for Kindergarten***

A new law authorizes the education commissioner to grant a teacher, with a certification endorsement for grades one through six, an endorsement to teach kindergarten for one year if the teacher meets certain requirements. This exception may be extended for one additional year if the teacher can demonstrate that he or she is enrolled in a program to meet the appropriate kindergarten endorsement requirements ([PA 18-51](#), § 6, effective July 1, 2018).

### ***Timeframe for Mandated Reporters of Abuse and Neglect***

A new law reduces, from 72 to 48 hours, the amount of time a mandated reporter has to report the suspected abuse or neglect of a person (1) with an intellectual disability or (2) served by the Department of Social Services’ Division of Autism Spectrum Disorder Services. Mandated reporters include teachers and certain others working in schools, among others ([PA 18-96](#), effective July 1, 2018).

## **Technical High Schools and Careers**

### ***Delay of the Technical High School System Becoming an Independent Agency***

The legislature passed a law that delays, by one year, the transition of the Technical Education and Career System (TECS) (formerly known as the technical high school system) into an independent state agency, separate from SDE ([PA 18-182](#), §§ 7-12 & 17-21, effective upon passage except the provision making TECS a separate state agency is effective July 1, 2020).



## ***Mobile Manufacturing Labs***

A new law requires the economic and community development commissioner, in collaboration with the labor commissioner and the Manufacturing Innovation Advisory Board, to issue a request for proposals to operate “mobile manufacturing training labs.” The labs must support manufacturing careers by providing various services, such as continuing education for manufacturing employees and advanced manufacturing demonstrations to middle and high school students ([SA 18-24](#), effective upon passage).

## ***Workforce Pipeline Training***

A new law, which creates the Apprenticeship Connecticut Initiative, requires the labor commissioner to issue a request for qualifications (RFQ) in order to seek proposals from regional industry partnerships for a workforce pipeline training program to serve the workforce needs of manufacturers and other employers. To be eligible, a regional industry partnership must include at least one educational institution, such as a vocational-technical school or an institution of higher education, or at least one employer located in the region. Prior to the deadline the commissioner establishes for responses to the RFQ, each regional work force development board must submit a report to the General Assembly that states the most pressing work force needs within the board's region ([PA 18-178](#), § 45, effective date July 1, 2018).

## **Higher Education**

### ***Accreditation of Private Occupational Schools by OHE***

A new law provides the OHE executive director greater discretion to accept or reject third-party accreditation of private occupational schools by a U.S. Department of Education-recognized agency without finding reasonable cause. It also requires any initial application received by OHE that remains incomplete six months after submittal to expire, prohibiting OHE from approving it ([PA 18-36](#), effective July 1, 2018).

### ***Annual Reports Relating to Military Veterans and Licensure***

A new law requires licensing authorities to submit annual reports about service members and veterans who receive credit for military training or experience when applying for a credential to the the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. By law, they must already submit these reports to the Veterans’ Affairs Committee and the Labor Department. It also requires the Board of Regents (BOR) and UConn’s Board of Trustees (BOT) to send modified versions of these reports to the Higher Education committee ([PA 18-37](#), effective July 1, 2018).

## ***Education-Related Benefits for Veterans with Qualifying Conditions***

By law, veterans with honorable discharges are eligible for certain benefits and a new law extends these benefits to more veterans. It extends eligibility for tuition waivers for the state's public colleges and universities to veterans who (1) were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable or for bad conduct and (2) have a qualifying condition. Under the new law, a "qualifying condition" means a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury made by, or a military sexual trauma experience disclosed to, an individual licensed to provide care at a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facility. The law also makes such veterans eligible for (1) a state high school diploma exam fee waiver; and (2) an honorary high school diploma, if the veteran withdrew from high school for military service in World War II, the Korean Hostilities, or during the Vietnam era, and consequently did not receive a diploma ([PA 18-47](#), §§ 6-10, effective October 1, 2018).

## ***Institutional Aid for Undocumented Students***

A new law allows certain students without legal immigration status, including honorably discharged veterans, access to institutional aid to attend a state public higher education institution (i.e., UConn and the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities). The act extends eligibility to these students if they meet certain residency, age, and criminal history requirements and file with the institution an affidavit about their intent to legalize their immigration status.

Veterans are eligible for this institutional financial aid immediately, while non-veterans are eligible on the earlier of January 1, 2020 or when Congress provides a "pathway to citizenship" for students without legal immigration status ([PA 18-2](#), effective upon passage).

## ***Program Approval for Independent Institutions of Higher Education***

A new law (1) extends for two years, until July 1, 2020, the existing exemption for certain nonprofit, independent higher education institutions from OHE's approval process for new programs and program modifications and (2) limits the new program exemption to 12 programs per year. It also adds new filing requirements for eligible institutions, requiring them to file an OHE-created form prior to students enrolling in any new or modified program ([PA 18-33](#), effective July 1, 2018).

## ***Student Loan Ombudsman***

A new law requires the banking commissioner, by January 1, 2019, to report to the Banking Committee on the status of the student loan ombudsman. By law and within available appropriations, the banking commissioner must designate a student loan ombudsman to assist student loan borrowers ([PA 18-173](#), § 95, effective October 1, 2018).

## Additional Minor Changes

### *Various Acts*

In addition to the acts summarized above, a number of other acts make minor changes affecting education. These acts include the following:

1. [PA 18-15](#) (adds “school counselor” to state laws that mention “guidance counselor”; both terms are recognized by SDE for professional certificate endorsements, but the guidance counselor endorsement is no longer issued for new endorsement applications);
2. [PA 18-34](#), § 3 (adds a new member to the teacher Performance Evaluation Advisory Council and requires the council to work collaboratively with the Minority Teacher Recruitment Task Force);
3. [PA 18-51](#), §§ 1 & 2 (makes minor changes to magnet school enrollment data requirements and the grant payments);
4. [PA 18-103](#) (makes technical and grammatical changes to statutes concerning higher education);
5. [PA 18-139](#), § 12 (removes the economic and community development commissioner from the list of officials who must meet with the Education, Higher Education and Employment Advancement, and Labor and Public Employees committees each November to discuss state workforce needs, occupational trends, and the employment status of graduates of the state’s Technical Education and Career System (formerly known as the technical high school system); and
6. [SA 18-7](#) (allows a board of education to enter into a memorandum of understanding with a neighboring town’s board of education to share classrooms and other resources to educate and support recently-enrolled students who have been displaced as a result of natural disasters in Puerto Rico).

JM:cmg