
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 7216

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND CAREER SYSTEM.

SUMMARY

This bill makes various changes to statutes related to the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS), including:

1. allowing the CTECS executive director to enter into cooperative agreements with a nonprofit training institute that provides building trades training to underserved populations, rather than with private career schools;
2. requiring the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) secretary to review and approve requests to fill instructional staff positions by 30 days after the CTECS superintendent submits the statement of staffing needs;
3. expanding the Mary Ann Handley Award, Connecticut's debt-free community college program, to include applicants enrolled at a CTECS adult education program; and
4. requiring CTECS to submit a report, each semester, on the Mary Ann Handley Award amount each student enrolled in the system's adult education program qualifies for, and the Board of Regents to provide funding that covers the total amount of awards to CTECS.

The bill also makes minor, technical, and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

The bill authorizes the CTECS executive director to enter a cooperative arrangement with an in-state nonprofit training institute

that provides building trades training to underserved populations, rather than with private career schools as under current law. These agreements can be to provide general education; vocational, technical, technological, or postsecondary education; and work experience.

Under existing law, the CTECS executive director can also enter into these arrangements with school boards, higher education institutions, job training agencies, and employers.

OPM APPROVAL TIMELINE FOR INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

The bill requires the OPM secretary to review and approve a request to fill CTECS instructional staff positions by 30 days after the date the system's superintendent submits the statement of staffing needs.

By law, the CTECS superintendent must submit to the executive director the system's education budget, which, among other details, must include a statement on the staffing needs for CTECS' schools. The executive director must ask the OPM secretary to create or fill staff positions, and OPM must give priority to any request for instructional staff (as identified in the superintendent's statement of staffing needs).

MARY ANN HANDLEY AWARD EXPANSION

The bill expands eligibility for the Mary Ann Handley Award, Connecticut's debt-free community college program, to include students who are enrolled in an adult education program at a CTECS school. Additionally, while the program is administered by the Board of Regents for Higher Education, the bill requires this to be done in consultation with the CTECS superintendent.

Currently, the program is only for eligible applicants who enroll at a regional community-technical college in a program that leads to a degree or certificate. The bill makes several conforming changes to expand the program to include CTECS adult education students.

By law, to be eligible for an award, applicants must have graduated high school, be enrolled full or part-time in an eligible program, be classified as an in-state student, meet academic progress requirements while enrolled, have completed the FAFSA, and have accepted all other

available financial aid. The program provides eligible students with awards equaling the greater of (1) the unpaid portion of the tuition and fees, minus financial aid, or (2) \$500 for full-time students or \$300 for part-time students. An award is available for the student's first 72 credit hours in a qualifying program.

Qualifying Adult Education Program Student Report and Awarding of Funds

The bill also requires that each semester, beginning fall 2025, the CTECS superintendent submit a report to the Board of Regents. This report must include the number of qualifying students enrolled in the system's adult education programs, the award amount each student qualifies for, and the financial aid amount each student receives.

Under the bill, the board is required to pay the total amount of awards that students qualify for to CTECS, which then must distribute the appropriate portion to each individual student.

By law, the board makes awards under the program within available appropriations.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference - APP
Yea 32 Nay 13 (03/24/2025)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable
Yea 43 Nay 10 (04/24/2025)