
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 1513

AN ACT CONCERNING ASPIRING EDUCATORS.

SUMMARY

This bill makes “aspiring educators,” rather than “diverse” or “minority” educators, eligible for existing law’s diversity teacher recruitment scholarship, teacher residency program, minority teacher recruitment grant, and minority educator loan, potentially broadening the pool of eligible people. It similarly modifies the scope of various governmental duties, reports, boards, and programs to encompass or target aspiring educators, rather than diverse or minority educators.

Under current law, these programs generally target diverse or minority educators or students. “Diverse” or “minority” individuals are those whose race is other than white, or whose ethnicity is defined as Hispanic or Latino by the federal Office of Management and Budget for use by the U.S. Census Bureau of Census. Under the bill, an “aspiring educator” is an individual from a population subgroup that is underrepresented in the teaching profession in Connecticut and has been identified as a teacher shortage area under state law. (The bill does not define subgroup, but the term could include things in addition to race and ethnicity.)

The bill also specifies that certain State Department of Education (SDE) duties, including administering the teacher scholarship and residency programs and approving certain alternate route to certification (ARC) programs, are the responsibility of the department’s Talent Office. ARC programs provide a path to teacher certification other than going through a traditional four-year college teacher preparation program.

The bill requires school boards to submit an aspiring educator recruitment plan to SDE for approval rather than an increasing educator

diversity plan as required under current law.

The bill also makes numerous conforming and technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

§§ 1, 2, 10 & 17-19 — SCHOLARSHIP, RESIDENCY, AND GRANT PROGRAMS

Definition (§§ 1, 2, 10 & 17)

Under current law “diverse” or “minority” individuals are whose race is other than white, or whose ethnicity is defined as Hispanic or Latino by the federal Office of Management and Budget for use by the U.S. Census Bureau of Census. Under the bill an “aspiring educator” is an individual from a population subgroup that (1) is underrepresented in the teaching profession in Connecticut and (2) the SDE commissioner has identified as a teacher shortage area.

Under current law, the SDE commissioner annually determines subjects and geographic areas with teacher shortages based on teacher vacancies, new certificates issued, and classes being taught by people without training specific to the subject. Under the bill, the commissioner must also determine the population subgroups in which a teacher shortage exists and, when doing so, consider the population subgroups that are underrepresented in teaching in the state.

This potentially broadens eligibility for these programs. Although the bill does not define subgroup, presumably subgroup categories could include things in addition to race and ethnicity, such as gender, socio-economic status, disability, or another status.

Aspiring Educator Scholarship (§ 1)

Under current law, the diverse student scholarship program, which the bill renames the aspiring educator scholarship program, awards annual scholarships of up to \$10,000 for students who graduated from high school in an alliance district (see BACKGROUND) and are enrolled in good standing in a teacher preparation program at any four-year institution of higher education. The bill eliminates the requirement that students graduate from an alliance district and replaces it with any

school district in the state, thus broadening eligibility.

Beginning in FY 26, the bill also makes SDE's Talent Office, rather than SDE, responsible for the program's administration, including developing an administration policy for it. The bill requires the office to award the scholarships for FY 26 (which begins July 1, 2025) according to the bill and the policy the office develops, but the bill sets January 1, 2026, for the policy's deadline. By January 1, 2027, the Talent Office must develop and submit an annual report to the Education Committee on the population subgroups of scholarship recipients. Under current law, SDE reports on the race and ethnicity of the diverse students receiving the scholarship.

Residency Year Program for Alliance Districts (§ 10)

Under current law, SDE administers the minority candidate certification, retention, or residency year program to help (1) minority candidates enroll in a residency program to become certified teachers after completing the program and (2) local and regional boards of education hire and retain the minority candidates. The bill renames the program as the maximizing Connecticut's certification, recruitment, or residency year program for aspiring educators and specifically places its administration under SDE's Talent Office.

The bill also broadens eligibility for the program by (1) extending it to aspiring educators, as defined in the bill, rather than minority candidates, and (2) eliminating the requirement that a candidate be employed by a school board as a paraeducator or an associate instructor.

Under the bill, as under existing law, participation in the program is mandatory for alliance districts and optional for other districts. Participating district school boards must partner with a residency program operator to enroll and place eligible candidates in the district as part of the program. Boards may apply to the state for funds to cover certain expenses associated with enrolling candidates in a residency program, hiring them after their completion, or retaining them.

The bill also extends to FY 26 the requirement for the education

commissioner to hold back a portion of an alliance district's education cost sharing grant (specifically, up to 10% of the FY 21 increase over the district's FY 20 amount). As under existing law, the funds must be used to give the district payments for any of its residency program costs.

Grant Programs (§§ 18 & 19)

Current law requires the Office of Higher Education (OHE) to award grants to minority students in teacher preparation programs, graduate school, or an ARC program for up to \$5,000 for two years. It also requires OHE to administer a minority educator loan reimbursement grant program for certified minority teachers working for a school district.

The bill makes aspiring educators, as defined in the bill, eligible for the program, rather than minority students (see § 1).

By law, reimbursement grants are up to \$5,000 year for up to 10 years, but the total cannot exceed 10% of the person's loans.

§§ 11 & 12 — ASPIRING EDUCATORS RECRUITMENT PLAN

Under current law, each school board must submit an increasing educator diversity plan by March 15, 2024, to the education commissioner for approval. The commissioner must review plans for approval and return any unapproved plan to the school board with instructions to revise it. Any board required to revise its plan must do so and resubmit it by May 15, 2024. School boards must implement their plans beginning with the 2024-25 school year.

The bill eliminates this requirement and instead requires each board to adopt an aspiring educator recruitment plan, rather than an educator diversity plan, and requires SDE's Talent Office to review them. Boards have until March 15, 2026, to submit their aspiring educator plans and if the Talent Office requires a plan revision it must be resubmitted by May 15, 2026. School boards must implement the new plans beginning with the 2026-27 school year. The bill does not require any plan be in place for the 2025-26 school year.

As under current law, school boards must post their plans on their websites and SDE must post all of the plans on its website.

§§ 3-9 & 13-17 — ADDITIONAL CHANGES TO RELATED EDUCATION LAW

The bill makes numerous other changes, principally to (1) modify the scope of various duties, reports, boards, and programs to aspiring educators, rather than diverse or minority educators, and (2) transfer certain related responsibilities from SDE to SDE’s Talent Office. The table below shows these changes as well as additional changes not described above.

Table: Additional Changes

Sec.	Topic	Current Law	Bill
3	Educator apprenticeship initiative	SDE administers the program	SDE’s Talent Office administers the program
4	Task Force to Diversify the Educator Workforce	Requires the task force to develop strategies to increase the recruitment and retention of minority teachers Task force terminates on January 1, 2026	Renames as the Aspiring Educator Workforce Task Force Requires it to develop strategies to increase the recruitment and retention of aspiring educators, rather than minority teachers Extends life of task force to July 1, 2030
5 & 9	Increasing Educator Diversity Policy Oversight Council	Advises the education commissioner on various efforts to recruit and retain diverse educators Places council in SDE Requires council to develop strategies to add at least 250 new diverse educators per year	Renames as the Aspiring Educator Policy Oversight Council Applies to efforts and strategies involving aspiring educators, rather than diverse educators Places council within SDE’s Talent Office
6	Minority teacher report requirement	Requires SDE to submit an annual report on the effectiveness of minority teacher recruitment efforts	Specifies that the Talent Office must prepare report Requires report to be about aspiring educator recruitment Requires report to specifically

Sec.	Topic	Current Law	Bill
			include effectiveness of residency program (see § 10)
7	Minority teacher recruitment survey	Requires SDE to annually survey students in minority teacher recruitment programs run by regional educational service centers or at a public college or university in the state	Specifies that the Talent Office must do the survey Requires report to be about aspiring educator recruitment Expands survey's scope to include programs offered by local and regional school boards
8	Diverse educator recruitment duties	Requires SDE and the Oversight Council to take numerous steps to enhance diverse teacher recruitment (e.g., establishing partnerships for recruitment and reviewing relevant research and successful practices)	Requires Talent Office to perform these duties with the Oversight Council Changes diverse educator references to aspiring educators
13-15	ARC programs for (1) administrator certification, (2) support staff to obtain teacher certification, and (3) those working alternate professions to obtain teacher certification	SDE reviews and approves proposals for these ARC programs	Requires Talent Office, rather than SDE, to review and approve proposals
16	OHE ARC program development	Requires OHE to consult with SDE to develop ARC programs	Requires OHE to consult with SDE's Talent Office to develop ARC programs
17	Regional Educational Service Center Minority Recruiting Alliance Pilot Programs	Obsolete pilot program	Changes minority references to aspiring educators

BACKGROUND

Accountability Index

The “accountability index” for a school district or an individual

school is the score resulting from multiple weighted measures that (1) include the mastery test scores (i.e. performance index) and, if appropriate, high school graduation rates and (2) may include academic growth over time, attendance and chronic absenteeism, postsecondary education and career readiness, enrollment in and graduation from institutions of higher education and postsecondary education programs, civics and arts education, and physical fitness (CGS § 10-223e(a)).

Alliance Districts

The Alliance District program requires each of the state’s 36 lowest performing school districts (as measured by the accountability index, see above) to submit an improvement plan to SDE for approval before the department releases the district’s alliance funding (i.e. a portion of the annual education cost sharing grant that these districts receive). The plan must detail how it intends to use its alliance funding and how this will increase student achievement.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Change of Reference - APP
Yea 31 Nay 14 (03/24/2025)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 41 Nay 12 (04/24/2025)