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## OLR Bill Analysis

**sSB 1513 (File 851, as amended by Senate "A")\***

### ***AN ACT CONCERNING ASPIRING EDUCATORS.***

#### TABLE OF CONTENTS:

#### SUMMARY

#### §§ 1-3 — EDUCATOR CERTIFICATE SUBJECT AREA ENDORSEMENTS

*Requires the CEPCB to develop and adopt content knowledge requirements for teacher certification subject areas replacing the current subject area test requirement; applies the new content knowledge requirements to various teacher certification laws; adds to the CEPCB's authority*

#### §§ 4-18 — ASPIRING EDUCATORS DEFINITION

*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 reimbursement grant, broadening the pool of eligible people; modifies the scope of various governmental duties, reports, boards, and programs to encompass or target aspiring educators, rather than diverse or minority educators; makes numerous conforming changes*

#### § 19 — THREE KINGS DAY AND EXCUSED ABSENCES

*Requires SBE to expand the definition of "excused absence" to include a student's religious observation of Three Kings Day, or the Epiphany, on January 6 of each year*

#### § 20 — MEMBERSHIP OF SCHOOL SECURITY AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

*Requires each School Security and Safety Committee to include the school's special education administrator*

#### § 21 — AUDITORS OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS TO AUDIT A DISSOLVED REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Requires APA to audit the financial operations of the former Regional District 6 (now merged into Region 20) for the 2023-2024 school year, and for any later expenses incurred by or in the name of Region 6*

#### § 22 — AI EDUCATION TOOL PILOT PROGRAM

*Extends, by one year, the AI education tool pilot program (through FY 26)*

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill makes changes to teacher certification, teacher recruitment programs and related bodies, and other unrelated changes in education

law. A section by section analysis follows.

\*Senate Amendment “A”:

1. adds provisions related to teacher certification that require the Connecticut Educator Preparation and Certification Board (CEPCB) to develop and adopt minimum content knowledge requirements for teacher certification subject area endorsements and add to the CEPCB’s authority;
2. removes requirements from the original bill that Connecticut State Department of Education’s (SDE) Talent Office administer various programs, including the teacher scholarship and residency programs;
3. revises provisions related to aspiring educators;
4. adds provisions regarding Three Kings Day, school security and safety committee membership, an audit of a dissolved regional district, and extending the AI education pilot program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025, except the provisions on auditing a dissolved regional school district and AI education tool pilot program are effective upon passage.

**§§ 1-3 — EDUCATOR CERTIFICATE SUBJECT AREA ENDORSEMENTS**

*Requires the CEPCB to develop and adopt content knowledge requirements for teacher certification subject areas replacing the current subject area test requirement; applies the new content knowledge requirements to various teacher certification laws; adds to the CEPCB’s authority*

This bill requires the CEPCB to develop and adopt minimum content knowledge requirements for teacher certification subject area endorsements that include ways for applicants to prove content knowledge. The bill applies these content knowledge requirements to candidates seeking teacher certification for the first time and to those who hold a certification who are seeking a cross-endorsement in another subject area.

By law, to teach in a public school candidates must (1) satisfy

requirements for subject area content knowledge to obtain their required subject matter endorsement (e.g., elementary education, special education, biology, and art) and (2) obtain an educator certificate. The bill does not specify what the new requirement may be, but it replaces current law's requirement that applicants demonstrate their knowledge in the endorsement they seek by passing the Connecticut State Board of Education (SBE)-approved subject area assessment (e.g., the Praxis or ETS tests).

Additionally, the CEPCB must annually review and revise, as necessary, the requirements, and the revisions must be based on (1) emerging research on alternative approaches to content knowledge assessment and (2) a data-driven evaluation of the requirements' impact on the quality, quantity and demographics of teacher candidates. The board may develop guidance to implement the bill's provisions.

Lastly, the bill makes various minor, technical, and conforming changes.

***Applicability (§§ 1, 2 & 16)***

The bill applies the new content knowledge requirements to candidates seeking teacher certification for the first time and to those who hold a certification and are seeking a cross-endorsement in another subject area. Specifically, it applies to teacher certification candidates or certified teachers in the following situations:

1. a person who does not hold a valid teacher certificate (new candidates);
2. a certified teacher seeking to add an additional subject area endorsement;
3. a person applying for an elementary education certification (current law specifies the assessment is in math, but the bill leaves specifics up to the CEPCB);
4. a certified teacher seeking a cross endorsement in a teacher shortage area determined by the education commissioner;

5. a certified teacher seeking a cross endorsement (but excludes special education, teaching English to speakers of other languages, bilingual, remedial reading, remedial language arts, or school library media specialist);
6. a certification applicant to teach in a subject shortage area or to teacher in computer science; and
7. minority teacher candidate fellows' program.

By law, every year the education commissioner determines a list of teacher shortage areas based on vacancies reported by school districts (see *Background – Teacher Shortage Areas*).

### ***CEPCB Authority (§ 3)***

Under current law the 16-member CEPCB has a broad charge of modernizing and aligning educator preparation and certification to attract and retain diverse professionals into teaching. Among other things, the board must develop standards and proposals for regulations or legislation relating to relating to educator preparation and certification. The bill also requires the board to develop requirements and guidance for the same topics.

By law, the CEPCB and SBE each develop standards and proposals for regulations and legislation relating to educator preparation and certification, and each board is required to either approve or reject the proposals of the other.

The bill also narrows the scope of the CEPCP annual report to the legislature, so it no longer includes the status of the SBE standards and proposals for regulations and legislation regarding educator certification but will continue to include those of the CEPCP. The first report is due to the Education Committee by January 1, 2026.

The bill also makes numerous conforming changes.

### ***Background — Teacher Shortage Areas***

The following is a selection of teacher shortage areas as determined

by SDE for the 2024-25 academic year:

1. all grades: bilingual education, special education, and speech and language pathology;
2. grades 4-12: math, science; and
3. grades 7-12: history and social studies, world languages.

#### **§§ 4-18 — ASPIRING EDUCATORS DEFINITION**

*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 reimbursement grant, broadening the pool of eligible people; modifies the scope of various governmental duties, reports, boards, and programs to encompass or target aspiring educators, rather than diverse or minority educators; makes numerous conforming changes*

The bill makes “aspiring educators,” rather than “diverse” or “minority” educators, eligible for existing law’s diversity teacher recruitment scholarship, teacher residency program, and minority educator loan reimbursement grant, 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 in one of the three types of teacher shortage areas the education commissioner identifies. Taken together, these areas broaden the pool of eligible people.

#### ***Teacher Shortage Areas (§ 5)***

Under current law, the two types of shortage areas are geographic and subject matter, and the commissioner annually determines these shortage areas based upon several things, including teacher vacancies in a particular subject or geographic area, the number of new educator certificates issued in the respective areas, and classes being taught by

persons without training for the subject. The bill adds a third shortage area of population subgroups that are underrepresented in the teaching profession in the state as the commissioner determines using teacher data already collected in the state-wide public school information system (see *Background – Public School Information Center*). (The bill does not define “subgroup,” but the term could include things in addition to race and ethnicity, such as gender, socio-economic status, disability, or other status.)

The bill also makes numerous conforming and technical changes.

### ***Aspiring Educators Recruitment Plan (§§ 14 & 15)***

Current law required each school board to submit an increasing educator diversity plan by March 15, 2024, to the education commissioner for approval. It requires the commissioner to reviews plans for approval and returns any unapproved plan to the school board with instructions to revise it. Any board required to revise plan had to do so and resubmit it by May 15, 2024. School boards had to 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. Boards have until March 15, 2026, to submit their aspiring educator plans, and if the commissioner 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 plans on its website.

### ***Additional Changes to Related Education Law (§§ 4, 6-13 & 16-18)***

The bill makes numerous other changes, principally to modify the scope of various duties, reports, boards, and programs to aspiring educators, rather than diverse or minority educators, and to make the corresponding change to the name of the related program or board.

In a number of the sections the only changes are the terminology,

names, or related conforming changes and they are not shown in the table below (§§ 6, 8, 11, 12 & 16-18).

The table below shows the additional changes not described above.

**Table: Additional Changes**

<b>Sec.</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Current Law</b>	<b>Bill</b>
4	Scholarships for students enrolled in college teacher preparation program	Limits eligibility to those who graduate from an alliance district (36 lowest performing districts as measured by the accountability index)  Authorizes the commissioner to create scholarship repayment criteria for those who are not employed as a certified teacher in a school district after graduation  Requires annual report on the recipients' race and ethnicity	Expands eligibility to graduates of any public high school  Additionally, authorizes the commissioner to create repayment criteria for those who committed to teach in a subject matter shortage area but are not doing so  Requires next report by January 1, 2027, to be about recipients' population subgroups
7	Educator workforce task force	Task force terminates on January 1, 2026	Extends the task force to July 1, 2030
9	Minority teacher report requirement	Requires SDE to submit an annual report on the effectiveness of teacher recruitment efforts	Requires report to specifically include effectiveness of residency program (see below)
10	Minority teacher recruitment survey	Requires SDE to annually survey students in teacher recruitment programs run by regional educational service centers or at a public college or university in the state	Expands survey's scope to include programs offered by local and regional school boards
13	Educator residency year program	Eligible candidates must be employed by a school board as a paraeducator or an associate instructor	Eliminates the specific employment requirement

**Background — Public School Information System**

SDE must administer this system to (1) establish a standardized electronic data collection and reporting protocol to comply with state and federal reporting requirements, (2) improve the exchange of information from school-to-school and district-to-district, and (3) maintain the confidentiality of individual student and teacher data. In addition to students and teachers, the system includes data on individual schools and districts and preschool children (CGS § 10-10a(b) & (c)).

**§ 19 — THREE KINGS DAY AND EXCUSED ABSENCES**

*Requires SBE to expand the definition of “excused absence” to include a student’s religious observation of Three Kings Day, or the Epiphany, on January 6 of each year*

By law, SBE defines “excused absence” and “unexcused absence” for school boards to carry out state truancy law and to calculate school and district chronic absenteeism rate. The bill requires SBE, by October 1, 2025, to expand the definition of “excused absence” to include a student’s religious observation of Three Kings Day, or the Epiphany, on January 6 of each year.

**§ 20 — MEMBERSHIP OF SCHOOL SECURITY AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

*Requires each School Security and Safety Committee to include the school’s special education administrator*

By law, each school board must establish a school security and safety committee at each of its schools to develop and help administer a school security and safety plan based on standards developed by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection in consultation with SDE. The committee must consist of a teacher and administrator from the school, a local police officer, a parent or guardian of an enrolled student, and others. The bill requires one member to be the school’s special education administrator (presumably, this could also be the administrator already required to be a member; the school board may add other committee members).

**§ 21 — AUDITORS OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS TO AUDIT A DISSOLVED REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

*Requires APA to audit the financial operations of the former Regional District 6 (now merged into Region 20) for the 2023-2024 school year, and for any later expenses incurred by or in the name of Region 6*

The bill requires the Auditors of Public Accounts (APA) to audit the financial operations of the former Regional District 6 (now merged into Region 20) for the 2023-2024 school year, and for any later expenses incurred by or in the name of Region 6. APA must submit the completed audit to the chief executive officer of each of the three member towns of the dissolved regional board by October 1, 2026.

Also, the bill authorizes the chief executive officer of each member town to pay any outstanding expenses owed by the regional board, and these expenses will be allocated to the three member towns in accordance the proportional formula in state law (based on the percentage to students from each member town) unless the chief executive officers unanimously agree on an alternative way to divide the expenses.

The bill specifically states an audit must be done for any regional board of education that (1) has been dissolved pursuant to state law and (2) for which the regional school district of the board had a total of three member towns, each with a population of at least 1,000 and not more than 4,000, and a combined total population for the member towns of at least 6,000, but fewer than 10,000.

**§ 22 — AI EDUCATION TOOL PILOT PROGRAM**

*Extends, by one year, the AI education tool pilot program (through FY 26)*

The bill extends the artificial intelligence (AI) education tool pilot program through FY 26 (currently, it is set to expire at the end of FY 25).

Unchanged by the bill, the education commissioner must select five local or regional boards of education to participate in the pilot program. This must (1) include at least one rural school district, one suburban district and one urban district and (2) reflect the state's racial and ethnic diversity. Grants must assist boards in implementing an existing AI tool, selected by the commissioner, for educators and students to use in the

classroom.

**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)