



2025 Acts Affecting Education

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Notice to Readers

This report provides summaries of new laws (public acts) significantly affecting education enacted during the 2025 regular legislative session. OLR's other Acts Affecting reports, including Acts Affecting Children and Acts Affecting Higher Education, are, or will soon be, available on [OLR's website](#).

Each summary indicates the public act (PA) 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](#).

Readers are encouraged to obtain the full text of acts that interest them from the [General Assembly's website](#) or the Connecticut State Library.

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Curriculum and Instruction

Posting Curriculum Objectives and Scope

This year, the legislature enacted a law requiring each school board to post curriculum scope, sequence, and objectives on the board's website ([PA 25-174](#), § 219, effective July 1, 2025).

Early Childhood Education and Child Care

Care 4 Kids Prospective Payment System

A new law requires the Office of Early Childhood (OEC), by July 1, 2027, to implement a prospective payment system for the Care 4 Kids child care subsidy program that is based on enrollment rather than attendance ([PA 25-82](#), § 2, effective upon passage).

Child Care Facilities Grants

New legislation requires OEC to establish a competitive grant program for child care facilities' design, construction, and renovations projects. To fund the program, it authorizes up to \$80 million in state bonds with a cap of \$11.5 million for each fiscal year FY 26-FY 32 ([PA 25-174](#), § 121, effective upon passage).

Early Childcare and Education Program Portal

A new law requires OEC to establish and maintain an electronic portal (available through a mobile application and OEC's website) that provides information on the availability of, and allows enrollment in, early childhood programs. The portal must be available by July 1, 2028 ([PA 25-82](#), § 1, effective July 1, 2025).

Early Childhood Education Endowment

A new law establishes the Early Childhood Education Endowment and funds it with transfers from the General Fund's estimated unappropriated surplus (up to \$300 million for FY 25, and the full estimated amount in fiscal years after that, with some exceptions). The law allows OEC to use a percentage of the endowment funds (12% in FYs 26 and 27, and 10% after that) to fund early childhood program and expansion costs and health insurance subsidies for early childhood education employees. Under the new law, families with gross incomes under \$100,000 per year pay nothing for care received through programs funded through the endowment, and for families with gross incomes greater than that, costs are capped at 7% of their annual gross income. The law requires the treasurer to administer the funds, creates the Early Childhood Education Endowment Advisory Board to oversee its administration, and sets other parameters for the funds administration and use ([PA 25-93](#), §§ 1-14, as amended, effective upon passage).

Early Childhood Programming

This session, the legislature passed a law modifying various statutes related to early childhood programming. The law:

1. modifies education and supervision requirements for qualified designated staff members in OEC early care and education programs;
2. eliminates the six-year term limit for State Interagency Birth-to-Three Coordination Council members representing participating state agencies;
3. eliminates an Early Childhood Cabinet annual reporting requirement on state agencies' progress made on tasks specified in the federal Head Start Act; and
4. modifies Early Start CT, including extending by two years the deadline for OEC to establish a sliding fee scale, and increasing the amount OEC can allocate to child care providers for coordination, program evaluation, and administration ([PA 25-143](#), § 1, 4-8, effective July 1, 2025).

Early Start and OEC Grants for Facility Repairs

By law, there is bonding authorized for an OEC-administered grant program for facility improvements and minor capital repairs under certain child care and related programs. This session, the legislature (1) modified the list of eligible programs by adding Early Start CT and removing Even Start and (2) increased the maximum grant amount from \$75,000 to \$100,000 per classroom ([PA 25-168](#), § 313, effective July 1, 2025).

Health Insurance Subsidy Program for Early Care and Education Employees

The legislature enacted a new law that requires Access Health CT (i.e. Connecticut Health Insurance Exchange) to study the need for, and then establish for FY 27, a health insurance subsidy program for employees of early care and education programs. The law also sets certain program requirements and details a process for potential funding through the Early Childhood Education Endowment ([PA 25-93](#), § 15, effective July 1, 2025).

Large Family Child Care Home Endorsement

This session the legislature passed a law that allows family child care homes, where licensed child care is provided in a private family home, to serve a maximum of 12 children (rather than nine) if the OEC grants the licensee a large family child care home endorsement. The law sets conditions for the new endorsement and limits at 30 the number that can be granted in a year ([PA 25-82](#), § 7, effective July 1, 2025).

New Competitive Grant to Support In-District or Regional Special Education Programs

Starting with FY 27, a new legislation creates a competitive grant program to support in-district and regional special education programs and services for students with disabilities. School boards may use grant funds to enhance and improve existing in-district programs or cover start-up costs for creating new programs, among other things. The law establishes an application process and criteria for awarding the grants ([PA 25-93](#), § 19, effective July 1, 2025).

Removal of General Administrative Payment for Certain Birth-to-Three Providers

This session, the legislature passed a law that removes a requirement for OEC to pay Birth-to-Three early intervention providers a \$200 general administrative payment for each child (1) with an individualized family service plan (IFSP) on the first day of the billing month and (2) whose plan accounts for less than nine service hours during the billing month, as long as the provider delivers at least one service during the month ([PA 25-168](#), § 310, effective July 1, 2026).

Reporting Requirements for Care 4 Kids Providers

New legislation expands the reporting requirements for day care providers to remain eligible for Care 4 Kids payments. The new law requires a provider to also report (1) its business entity type and (2) the names of its officers, directors, and owners, or, in the case of a provider affiliate that is receiving payments, the names of the affiliate's officers, directors, and owners ([PA 25-82](#), § 3, effective July 1, 2025).

Education Oversight

Office of the Educational Ombudsperson

The legislature enacted a law that establishes the Office of the Educational Ombudsperson to serve students and families from early childhood to adult education. The law places the office under the direction of a commissioner-appointed ombudsperson and in the Office of Governmental Accountability for administrative purposes only. The new office must, among other duties, receive, review, and attempt to resolve any complaints from students and their families ([PA 25-93](#), § 27, effective July 1, 2025).

Grants and Funding

Advanced and Dual Credit Courses

This session, the legislature passed a law that requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to administer two programs to support advanced and dual credit courses and programs within available appropriations. Specifically, the law requires SDE to (1) create a fee-waiver grant program to expand opportunities for high-need high school students to access advanced courses or programs where school boards can apply to SDE to be reimbursed for any fees for high-need students who enroll in these courses or programs, and (2) pay the State Education Resource Center up to \$500,000 per fiscal year for programming that directly supports school boards in articulating and expanding dual credit courses ([PA 25-168](#), § 309, effective July 1, 2025).

Changes to the ECS Grant Phase-In Schedule

By law, the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant has a multi-year phase-in schedule of (1) incremental increases for underfunded towns and (2) incremental decreases, or years with no change in funding, for overfunded towns. The FY 26-27 budget and implementer act delays by two years the start of an existing statutory ECS schedule to phase-in grant funding reductions for overfunded towns. It holds these towns “harmless” (i.e. maintaining the same funding) for FYs 26 and 27.

The act leaves unchanged the existing provision that begins to fully-fund the underfunded towns in FY 26 ([PA 25-168](#), § 299, and [PA 25-174](#), §218, effective July 1, 2025).

Charter School Capital Grants Priority

A new law requires the education commissioner to give preference to charter school capital improvement grant applications that do not provide matching funds from nonstate sources if the school’s accountability index (AI) score meets or exceeds the state-wide average AI score for at least two of the previous three school years ([PA 25-174](#), § 147, effective July 1, 2025).

Choice Program Grants for Magnet Schools and Vo-Ag Centers

New legislation makes permanent the choice program grants for interdistrict magnet schools and regional agricultural science and technology centers (i.e. “vo-ag centers”), which were set to expire at the end of FY 25. The same act adds a new method to determine grants for newly established magnet schools that begin operating on or after July 1, 2024 ([PA 25-168](#), §§ 307 & 308, effective July 1, 2025).

Enfield Base Year for the Alliance District Program

A new law changes the base year used to determine how much of Enfield's ECS grant is withheld under the alliance district program. Under prior law, FY 22 was Enfield's base year, but the new law changes it to FY 12, which makes more of the town's ECS funding fall under the alliance district procedures (e.g., releasing the funds after approval of the alliance district plan) ([PA 25-168](#), § 314, effective July 1, 2025).

High-Usage Tutoring Matching Grant Program

The FY 26-27 budget and implementer act requires SDE, within available appropriations, to establish and annually administer a competitive high-usage tutoring matching grant program for school boards to accelerate student learning. The grant must cover a two-year period and can be awarded to any program that provides "high-usage" tutoring that meets certain criteria (e.g., has one tutor per group of four or fewer students and is provided at least three times a week). In creating this program, SDE must develop (1) a grant application to be used by school boards and (2) criteria for reviewing and approving grant applications ([PA 25-168](#), § 316, effective July 1, 2026).

Local Food for Schools Incentive Program

A new law makes various changes to the Local Food for Schools Incentive Program (LFSIP), which reimburses eligible entities for purchases of locally or regionally sourced food for eligible meal programs. The changes include, among other things, (1) expanding the program to include child care providers; (2) making SDE, rather than the Department of Agriculture, the lead administering agency; and (3) requiring SDE to use some of its annual LFSIP appropriation for supplemental services (e.g., outreach, training, and technical assistance) ([PA 25-168](#), § 300, effective July 1, 2025).

Requirement to Reduce Education Grants

The budget implementer act requires that certain education grants be proportionately reduced if their amount appropriated does not fully fund them according to their statutory formulas. This requirement applies to (1) grants for adult education programs and health services for private school students in FY 26; (2) grants for regional educational service center (RESC) operations and bilingual education in FYS 26 & 27; and (3) school transportation grants permanently ([PA 25-168](#), §§ 302-306, effective July 1, 2025).

Health and Safety

Antidiscrimination Protection for Sexual Assault and Trafficking Victims

This session, the legislature passed a new law that, among other things, makes sexual assault victim status and trafficking in persons victim status protected classes under the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities antidiscrimination laws. In doing so, the new law specifically requires all educational, counseling, and vocational guidance programs and all apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs of state agencies, or in which they participate, to be open to all qualified people, without regard for a person's status as a sexual assault or human trafficking victim ([PA 25-139](#), § 13, effective October 1, 2025).

Bail Enforcement

A new law prohibits bail bondsmen and surety bail bond or bail enforcement agents from taking or trying to take the principal on a bond into custody on the premises, grounds, or campus of a school or higher education institution ([PA 25-25](#), effective October 1, 2025).

Criminal Background Checks for Private Special Education Provider Employees

A new law requires private special education providers to do employee and prospective employee criminal background and child abuse and neglect registry checks and take related steps (the requirements are the same as the existing ones for other nongovernmental school operators) ([PA 25-93](#), § 21, effective July 1, 2025).

Emergency Response Communications Systems

This session, the legislature passed a law allowing the school security infrastructure competitive grant program to be used for reimbursing the purchase of hardware associated with emergency response communications systems and personal emergency communication devices. Under existing law, eligible entities include towns (for their public schools), private schools, and certain licensed child care centers, among others ([PA 25-102](#), effective July 1, 2025).

Epinephrine and Glucagon Administration

This session, new legislation expands how epinephrine and glucagon can be administered to include nasal sprays and other USDA-approved medical equipment. The expansion, which includes training requirements and immunity provisions, applies to various statutes related to emergency

treatments of allergic reaction response in places such as schools, camps, child care facilities, and other programs ([PA 25-143](#), §§ 19-28, effective July 1, 2025).

Hearing on Local Food Programs

A new act authorizes the Environment Committee to hold an informational hearing to get information on the funding and administration of certain programs, including the (1) CT Grown for CT Kids Grant program, which helps school boards develop farm-to-school programs, and (2) local food for schools incentive program, which reimburses eligible boards for purchasing locally and regionally sourced food for eligible meal programs ([PA 25-152](#), § 19, effective July 1, 2025).

Indoor Air Quality Inspections

By law, school boards must conduct a uniform inspection and evaluation of their schools' heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system over the course of a period that ends June 30, 2031. A new law changes the start of this period from July 1, 2026, to July 1, 2022, which allows inspections done between July 1, 2022, and July 1, 2026, to count for the requirement. By law, certain deadlines may be waived under certain conditions ([PA 25-174](#), § 148, effective July 1, 2025).

Interactions Between School Personnel and Immigration Authorities

A new law requires (1) public school superintendents to designate at least one administrator at each school to be responsible for interacting with federal immigration authorities and (2) boards of education to update their school security and safety plans with procedures on interacting with immigration authorities. The law (1) allows the designated administrator to request certain information from the immigration authorities, including whether they have a judicial warrant, and (2) gives school staff protection against discipline for following its provisions ([PA 25-1](#), §§ 1-4, effective upon passage except the security and safety plan provision is effective July 1, 2025).

Priority School District Mental Health Pilot Program

A new law requires SDE, within available appropriations, to create a pilot program to allow at least 100,000 students in priority school districts to use an electronic mental and behavioral health awareness and treatment tool (through a website, mobile application, or other online service). SDE must select the tool and create the program by January 1, 2026. During the program's first year, its objectives are to (1) build partnerships between priority school districts and community mental and behavioral health service providers and (2) launch a digital marketing campaign to raise awareness and engagement among students. During the second year, its objectives are to (1) refer students to mental and behavioral health care providers, as needed, and (2) enhance students' engagement

with mental and behavioral health tools, including coping strategies and clinician support ([PA 25-97](#), § 51, effective upon passage).

School-Based Health Clinic Billing

The FY 26-27 budget and implementer act requires the Transforming Children's Behavioral Health Policy and Planning Committee, in collaboration with the education and social services departments, to develop a framework and operational guidelines to streamline billing for Medicaid-eligible school-based behavioral health services. The committee must report to the Appropriations, Education, and Human Services committees on the framework and guidelines it develops by October 1, 2026 ([PA 25-168](#), § 344, effective upon passage).

School Security Infrastructure Grant Program Assessments and Funding

By law, the School Security Infrastructure Grant Program reimburses approved applicants for security infrastructure, related training, or entrance security devices. Applicants must have an assessment of their schools, which under prior law was completed via the National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities' Safe School Facilities Checklist. A new law instead requires applicants to use guidelines established by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection's (DESPP) Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security that are based on best practices for school security infrastructure.

Existing law also authorizes \$107 million in bond funding for the program. Prior law required DESPP to use at least \$5 million for school security projects that involved the use of multimedia, interoperable communications systems. The act removes this requirement and instead grants DESPP the discretion to use up to \$5 million in bond funding for those projects ([PA 25-157](#), §§ 8 & 9, effective October 1, 2025, except the limitation on DESPP's use of funds is effective upon passage).

Libraries

Library E-Book Contracts

This year, the legislature enacted a law that prohibits publicly funded libraries from entering or renewing contracts and licensing agreements for electronic literary materials (such as eBooks) that contain certain provisions that prevent, limit, or restrict the library from performing certain customary operational or lending functions. However, the prohibition only applies after other states with a combined population of at least seven million have enacted a substantially similar law.

Once effective, the new law will prohibit provisions in these contracts and agreements that, among other things, (1) restrict the number of times the library may loan electronic literary material over the course of the agreement if it also restricts the library's loan period for the material, and (2) limit the number of licenses the library can buy on the day the material is made available for public purchase ([PA 25-9](#), effective July 1, 2025).

School and Public Library Removal Policies

This session the legislature enacted a law requiring school boards and public library boards of trustees or other governing bodies to each adopt policies addressing whether books or other material should be removed from a library. Specifically, the policies must address (1) collection development and maintenance, (2) library display and programs, and (3) library material review and reconsideration. Prior law required public libraries (but not school libraries) to adopt collection development, collection management, and collection reconsideration policies to be eligible for state grants. The new law instead requires they adopt policies meeting its requirements to maintain their eligibility ([PA 25-168](#), §§ 321-323, effective upon passage).

Magnet Schools

Magnet School Capital Expenses Grants for Goodwin Magnets

The legislature amended two existing SDE bond authorizations for capital expenses grants at magnet schools operated by RESCs. The act expands the authorization to allow grants to magnet-school operator Goodwin University Education Services ([PA 25-143](#), §§ 11 & 12, effective upon passage).

Magnet School Enrollment Standards and Magnet Student Residency for ECS Grants

A new law makes permanent the requirement that the education commissioner consider whether a Sheff magnet school meets the reduced-isolation (i.e. desegregation) enrollment standards required under Sheff to award per-student operating grants to the school. Sheff magnet schools help the state meet its obligations under the *Sheff v. O'Neill* Connecticut Supreme Court desegregation decision. The law also makes permanent the requirement that a magnet school student count as a student for the town where the student lives (rather than in the town that hosts the magnet school) for ECS grant calculations ([PA 25-143](#), § 9, effective July 1, 2025).

Magnet School Tuition Charges

The FY 26-27 budget and implementer act sets a method for determining tuition rates for new magnet school programs that began operating on or after July 1, 2024, based on average tuition

charged in the same region (existing law otherwise prohibits magnet schools from charging more than 58% of the amount they charged in FY 24). Under the new law, the education commissioner determines the average tuition amount ([PA 25-168](#), §§ 318-320, effective July 1, 2025).

Sheff Region Magnet School Transportation Grants

Starting with FY 26, a new law eliminates the supplemental grant and the per-pupil grant and instead requires that Sheff magnet school transportation grant amounts equal the actual cost of transportation services. Under the new law, the grant must be made within available appropriations and subject to a comprehensive financial review ([PA 25-143](#), § 13, and [PA 25-168](#), § 312, effective July 1, 2025).

School Buses/Transportation

Billing Standards for Special Education Transportation Costs

Under a new act, SDE must develop billing standards for the costs that special education transportation providers charge to school boards for special education transportation services to and from outplacements. SDE must develop the standards by January 1, 2027, and all costs that special education transportation providers charge to school boards for special education transportation to and from outplacements must align with them beginning with the 2027-28 school year ([PA 25-67](#), § 4, effective July 1, 2025).

Model Transportation Contract for Special Education Outplacements

This session, the legislature passed a law requiring SDE to establish a model contract that boards of education can use to contract with special education transportation service providers for transportation services to and from special education outplacements. SDE must make the model contract available to boards of education by July 1, 2026 ([PA 25-93](#), § 23, effective July 1, 2025).

Outplacement Transportation Route Mapping

A new law requires SDE to conduct a request for information (RFI) for contractors to create and annually update bus routes for special education students traveling to and from outplacements in the state. SDE must report the RFI's results to the Education and Transportation committees by July 1, 2027 ([PA 25-93](#), § 18, effective July 1, 2025).

Reduced Fare for Public Buses

A new law requires the Department of Transportation to give up to a 50% fare discount for state-owned or -controlled public buses to veterans, people ages 65 or older, people ages 18 or younger,

and people with disabilities. Additionally, it allows school boards to purchase passes for use on these buses at the discounted rate. School boards may distribute the passes at no cost to public school students in grades 9-12 under their jurisdiction, or sell them to these students at cost or for a reduced cost ([PA 25-65](#), § 37, effective October 1, 2025).

School Construction

District Repair and Improvement Project Program

New legislation creates the District Repair and Improvement Project (DRIP) program to give school boards and other public school operators (PSO) grants to help with the costs associated with constructing, renovating, repairing, and enlarging public school buildings, grounds, and infrastructure. The act authorizes up to \$60 million in bonds (\$30 million each in FY 26 and FY 27) for the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to administer the DRIP program. The OPM secretary must allocate amounts for the program using a formula where, generally, 20% goes to each PSO equally, 50% is proportional to certain student enrollment percentages, and 30% is proportional to specific grand list percentages ([PA 25-174](#), § 131, effective July 1, 2025).

Heat Pump School Grants

A new law adds air source and ground source heat pump purchase and installation to the list of school construction project grant applications that the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) commissioner can approve at any time without putting them on an annual school construction priority list for the legislature's approval. The commissioner may already approve applications for projects such as remedying code violations and fire damage; replacing roofs; or fixing a certified school indoor air quality emergency ([PA 25-125](#), § 8, July 1, 2025).

Priority List Grant Commitments

As it does every year, the legislature passed a law approving school construction grant commitments. It authorized eight school construction grant commitments totaling \$172.4 million toward total estimated project costs of \$265.7 million. It also reauthorized one project resulting in an additional \$50.7 million grant commitment ([PA 25-174](#), § 141, effective upon passage).

School Construction Bonus Reimbursement Rates

A new law applies the existing 15-percentage-point reimbursement rate increase for projects that include early childhood space to the entire project, not just to the portion of the building used for early childhood education. It also establishes a new 15-percentage-point reimbursement rate bonus for new buildings or renovation or expansion school construction projects that include plans

for expanding or creating in-district special education programs and services ([PA 25-174](#), §§ 142 & 143, effective upon passage).

School Construction Project Waivers and Modification

The bond act exempts school construction projects in 18 towns (including projects by the state or a different entity) and one regional school district from certain statutory and regulatory requirements to allow them to, among other things, (1) qualify for state reimbursement grants; (2) receive higher reimbursement percentages for the grants; or (3) have their project reauthorized due to a change in scope or cost ([PA 25-174](#), §§ 149-176, effective upon passage).

School HVAC Grants

A new law repeals the school construction HVAC grant and instead merges it with an existing school construction grant that awards grants for a broader range of school building projects (such as roof replacements and addressing building code violations) ([PA 25-174](#), §§ 140 & 144, effective upon passage).

Special Education

Behavioral Health Support Services Grant for Special Education Students

This session the legislature created a new SDE grant program, beginning with FY 26, to help school boards provide support services for special education students that have experienced trauma or have behavioral health needs. The grant must be available to each school board that partners with a community services provider, including a family service center, to give special education students and their families support services such as trauma-informed care coordination and family outreach ([PA 25-93](#), § 26, effective July 1, 2025).

Changes to the IEP Form

A new law requires SDE, by January 1, 2026, to update the state's IEP (individualized education program) form to remove the requirement to list the people who will implement the IEP ([PA 25-67](#), § 21, effective July 1, 2025).

Creation of Special Education Programs List

This session, the legislature passed a law requiring SDE, in consultation with Office of the Child Advocate, to develop a list of certain special education programs in the state by December 1, 2026, and then update it at least annually. The list must include all programs offered by a (1)

RESC; (2) SDE-approved special education private provider; or (3) local or regional school board that accepts out-of-district placements, and it must describe each program's physical location, the services provided, ages served, and approved classroom size. SDE must also (1) post the list to its online public database and (2) send it to each local and regional school board ([PA 25-93](#), § 20, effective July 1, 2025).

Due Process Hearings

The legislature made several changes to the special education due process hearing laws. Among other changes, the new law (1) requires parties to disclose all claims they will raise at the hearing during the prehearing conference; (2) specifies that hearing officers must consider all evaluations presented during the hearing; (3) requires hearing officers to limit hearing length to four days, unless good cause is shown; and (4) requires hearing decisions to contain specific findings of fact that generally relate to the requirement that special education students are educated in the least restrictive environment ([PA 25-67](#), §§ 18 & 19, effective July 1, 2025).

Establishing a Special Education Services Rate Schedule and Requiring Contracts to Conform to the Schedule

The legislature enacted a law that requires SDE to set rates that special education and related services providers can charge to school boards for services, including separate paths to set rates for (1) private special education providers and (2) public special education and related services providers. The law also requires that any contract for special education services entered into or amended on or after July 1, 2026, and subject to the new law's provisions must be in accordance with the rate schedule.

Also beginning July 1, 2026, it requires that "reasonable costs" for special education services are the permitted charges under the rate schedule and applies this definition to special education laws. Additionally, beginning July 1, 2025, the law prohibits the presumption that "reasonable costs" are the actual costs incurred by special education providers ([PA 25-67](#), §§ 3, 5 & 24, effective July 1, 2025).

Instructional Support Partners

A new law allows school boards to hire or designate an instructional support partner in every school or school building beginning in the 2026-27 school year. These instructional support partners must support teaching staff and students with disabilities and spend at least 50% of their time performing this position's duties. The law also requires SDE to host quarterly instructional support partner trainings ([PA 25-93](#), §§ 28 & 29, and [PA 25-174](#), § 205, effective July 1, 2025).

Licensure Standards for Private Special Education Providers

The legislature enacted a law that requires SDE to develop licensure standards for private special education providers and submit them with implementation recommendations to the Education Committee by January 1, 2026. The standards must include, among other things, the application and review process for getting licensed and minimum requirements tailored to the specific types of special education services provided ([PA 25-67](#), § 8, effective July 1, 2025).

Limits on Transferring Out-of-District Special Education Students

A new law prohibits entities that receive an out-of-district placement of a special education student through an agreement with a sending school board from transferring the student to any other school or facility unless certain conditions are met. The limited conditions include if the student's planning and placement team (PPT) finds that the transfer better fits the student's educational needs ([PA 25-67](#), § 10, effective July 1, 2025).

Model Contract for Special Education Providers or RESCs

A new law requires SDE to establish model contracts for placing a student with an education commissioner-approved private special education provider or a RESC. By July 1, 2026, SDE must make the model contracts available to school boards ([PA 25-67](#), § 11, effective July 1, 2025).

New Special Education Grant

The legislature passed a new law that entitles each school board to a new per-student special education and expansion development grant based on town wealth and the number of special education students in the school district. The law also imposes restrictions on how the funds must be used and creates a penalty for improper use. Additionally, the law exempts the grant funds from counting under the minimum budget requirement law ([PA 25-67](#), §§ 6 & 7, effective July 1, 2025).

Private Special Education Contract Requirements

A new law adds requirements to contracts with private special education providers and conditions on contract expenditures to be eligible for reimbursement under a state grant. It also authorizes placements in nonapproved facilities under certain conditions and specifies when they are eligible for state reimbursement ([PA 25-93](#), § 16, effective July 1, 2025).

Prohibition on Increasing Special Education Service Charges During the School Year

Beginning with the 2025-26 school year, a new law generally prohibits a charging entity (such as a private provider of special education services) from increasing its charges to a school board for special education services (i.e. services required under a student's IEP), except in response to a change in the student's IEP or certain other exceptions ([PA 25-67](#), § 2, effective July 1, 2025).

Requirement for Special Education Providers to Provide Base Tuition and Costs

The legislature enacted a new law that requires any written contract entered or amended between a school board and a private special education provider to require the provider to submit a base tuition and cost for services to the school board for each school year services are provided. It also requires each RESC that provides special education services to annually submit a base tuition and cost for services provided ([PA 25-143](#), §§ 16 & 17, effective July 1, 2025).

Special Education Eligibility for Children with Developmental Delays

A new law allows children with developmental delays to qualify for special education through age eight without falling under one of the specific disability categories in the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Under prior law, children with developmental delays qualified only if they were age three through five. By law, a developmental delay means a significant delay in physical, communication, cognitive, social-emotional, or adaptive development measured by appropriate diagnostic methods ([PA 25-67](#), § 1, effective July 1, 2025).

Special Education Family Guide

The legislature enacted a new law that requires SDE, by July 1, 2026, and in consultation with the Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center, to develop, annually update, and post on its website a special education family guide to help parents and guardians understand special education laws and processes ([PA 25-93](#), § 24, effective July 1, 2025).

Special Education Provider Staffing Changes Notification

A new law requires RESCs and private special education providers to notify parents or legal guardians, school boards, and SDE about certain special education staffing changes including vacancies, long-term (i.e. more than 10 consecutive school days) absences, and assignments of long-term substitutes, that impact how they provide special education services ([PA 25-93](#), § 22, effective July 1, 2025).

Special Education Students and Open Choice

The legislature passed a new law that places certain duties on school districts that send or receive Open Choice students who require special education services. The act requires the receiving district (the district where the student attends school) to hold the PPT meeting for each out-of-district student and invite representatives from the sending district to the meeting. Open Choice is a voluntary interdistrict attendance program that allows students from the Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, Danbury, and Norwalk school districts to attend suburban schools, and vice versa, on a space-available basis ([PA 25-143](#), § 10, effective July 1, 2025).

Special Education Training, Education, and Testing Grant Program

This session the legislature passed a law establishing the special education training, education, and testing competitive grant program to give grants to educators and paraeducators who commit to working in an alliance district school (these are the state's lowest performing school districts) for three years. The law requires SDE to administer the program to help educators and paraeducators, including teacher preparation program enrollees, educator professional certification candidates, teachers and paraeducators employed by a school board, and prospective paraeducators, cover the costs associated with professional training, education, and testing requirements related to providing special education and related services ([PA 25-93](#), § 25, effective July 1, 2025).

Special Education Workload Analysis Model

Under a new law SDE must, in consultation with the Building Educational Responsibility with Greater Improvement Networks (BERGIN) Commission and the OPM secretary, develop a proposed statewide special education workload analysis model for teachers and school service providers implementing student IEPs. The model must set standards limiting teachers' and providers' workloads and consider, among other things, the level of services students receive and the time required to provide them ([PA 25-67](#), § 16, effective July 1, 2025).

Unannounced On-Site Visits of Special Education Providers

A new law requires SDE, beginning by July 1, 2027, to do unannounced on-site visits of RESCs and private special education providers. The education commissioner must notify the providers of site visit findings and any required corrective actions. If corrective actions are required, the law requires providers to show proof of compliance within 30 days after receiving the finding (a school board will be fined up to \$100 a day for each day of noncompliance) ([PA 25-67](#), § 9, effective July 1, 2025).

State Department of Education & State Board of Education

Early College Courses

This session, the legislature passed a law setting requirements regarding the notification, availability, and operation of various types of early college courses, including transitional, dual, postsecondary-credit, and concurrent enrollment courses. These include having SDE annually notify public school students' parents about the availability of early college courses and develop a model agreement between secondary schools and postsecondary institutions for providing these courses to students ([PA 25-99](#), §§ 5-6, effective July 1, 2025, except the SDE notification provision is effective January 1, 2026).

Phase-Out of Commissioner's Network of Schools

The legislature passed a new law that sunsets the education commissioner's network of schools program by prohibiting the commissioner from adding any more schools to the program after July 1, 2025. But the law permits already participating schools to finish their three-year terms and they may choose to continue in the program for an additional year or two. Under the program, the commissioner can select up to 25 low-achieving schools to participate and receive intensified State Board of Education (SBE) supervision and direction ([PA 25-93](#), §§ 41 & 42, and [PA 25-175](#), §§ 4 & 5, effective July 1, 2025).

Presentation of State Five-Year Plan Updates

Under a new law, the education commissioner must make an annual presentation on the progress of SBE's five-year education plan, and SBE must use these presentations to inform the plan's implementation ([PA 25-93](#), § 31, effective July 1, 2025).

Students

Contacting Local Homeless Education Liaisons Before Expulsion and Suspension Hearings

This session, the legislature passed a law requiring districts to contact their local homeless education liaisons prior to an expulsion or suspension hearing to determine if the student is homeless. If so, the entity conducting the hearing (the school board or an impartial hearing board) must consider the impact of homelessness on the student's behavior, and a student cannot be expelled without a plan to alleviate this impact ([PA 25-93](#), §§ 38-39, effective July 1, 2025).

Education Services for Military-Connected Students

This act requires local and regional school boards to take steps to ensure a minimally disruptive transition of a military-connected student receiving certain services. The new law also allows a military-connected student to stay enrolled in their current school when a service member relocates on orders ([PA 25-15](#), §§ 7-8, effective July 1, 2025).

Functional Behavior Assessments Before Student Out-of-District Placement

This session, the legislature passed a law generally requiring school boards to do a functional behavior assessment and develop or update a behavioral intervention plan for students with challenging behavior before placing them out-of-district. The functional behavior assessments involve gathering and analyzing data to identify the reasons for a student's behavior that negatively impacts school climate or interferes, or is at risk of interfering, with an individual's learning or safety at the school ([PA 25-67](#), § 13, effective July 1, 2025).

Health Care Career Promotion

A new law requires the education commissioner, by January 1, 2026, to add radiologic technology, nuclear medicine technology, and respiratory care to an existing plan (developed by the state's chief workforce officer) on promoting health care career options to middle and high school students. The plan must promote these professions through (1) career day presentations; (2) partnerships with in-state education programs; (3) counseling programs to inform high school students about, and recruit them for, these professions; and (4) job shadowing and internship experiences for high school students ([PA 25-162](#), § 3, effective upon passage).

Learner Engagement and Attendance Program

Beginning in FY 27, a new law requires SDE to administer the learner engagement and attendance program (LEAP) and give school boards grants to implement a home visitation program to reduce chronic absenteeism in the school district. (In practice, SDE has operated LEAP since 2021.) Within available appropriations, SDE must award grants to at least 10 schools each year ([PA 25-168](#), § 316, effective July 1, 2025).

Updates to SDE's Chronic Student Absenteeism Prevention and Intervention Plan

This session, the legislature passed a law expanding on SDE's chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan by adding new required and permissible components and requiring SDE to review the plan biannually. By law SDE must develop, in consultation with the Interagency Council for

Ending the Achievement Gap, a chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan to be used by school boards. This legislation requires SDE to review, and revise as needed, the plan biannually, and when making revisions, SDE must (1) incorporate the findings from the disconnected youth report and (2) include the truancy policies and procedures that school boards must adopt by law ([PA 25-93](#), § 34, effective July 1, 2025).

Studies and Reports

Background Checks Report for Early Childhood Educators

A new law requires OEC, in consultation with DESPP, to develop a report on background checks for early childhood educators, including ways to improve background check processing time. OEC must report, by July 1, 2026, on its findings and recommendations to the Children, Education, and Public Safety and Security committees ([PA 25-82](#), § 6, effective July 1, 2025).

Building Educational Responsibility With Greater Improvement Networks Commission

This session, new legislation expanded the BERGIN Commission's study responsibilities to include the following special education-related topics: the need for new programs and services, peer review of special education programs, Tier 2 interventions, the Connecticut Special Education Data System (CT-SEDS), respite care access, delivery effectiveness and acknowledgment of meeting or failing to meet standards, the proposed statewide workload analysis model, and service qualification under Medicaid and private insurance.

The legislation also adds 20 more members to the BERGIN Commission, including various professionals in the special education field, to be appointed by legislative leaders and the SDE commissioner. The legislation makes other related changes as well, such as pushing back due dates for certain reports ([PA 25-67](#), § 15, effective from passage).

Child Care Center and Family Child Care Home Liability Insurance Study

This session new legislation requires OEC, the Insurance Department, and the attorney general to study liability insurance for child care centers and family child care homes. OEC must submit a report on the study's findings and any recommendations by July 1, 2026, to the Children, Education, and Insurance and Real Estate committees ([PA 25-82](#), § 5, effective upon passage).

Chronic Absenteeism

A law passed this session requires SDE, beginning by February 1, 2026, to annually report to the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee on each school district with an attendance review team. The report must have (1) specific efforts and outcomes of teams in alliance districts and (2) any effective practice a team used to reduce chronic absenteeism rates ([PA 25-168](#), § 247, effective upon passage).

Dyslexia Report

A new law requires SDE's Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities to report to the Education Committee on recent developments and best practices on dyslexia evaluations, interventions, and student outcomes and on teacher preparation capacity. The report is due February 1, 2026 ([PA 25-67](#), § 23, effective July 1, 2025).

Posting Disconnected Youth Report Online

This session the legislature passed a law requiring any state agency that contributes data for the Connecticut Preschool through Twenty and Workforce Information Network's (P20 WIN) disconnected youth report to post the report on its website ([PA 25-93](#), § 33, effective from passage).

Private Provider Enrollment Report

The legislature passed a new law requiring special education private providers to submit an annual report to SDE regarding their enrollment, including (1) the number of enrolled students; (2) the number of enrolled students organized by each student's state of residence, or prior residence in the case of a residential facility; (3) the special education services sought organized by state of residence; and (4) students on the waiting list, if any ([PA 25-67](#), § 26, effective July 1, 2025).

Report on Behavioral Health Issues Affecting Special Education Students

This session, the legislature passed a law requiring the Transforming Children's Behavioral Health Policy and Planning Committee to submit a report to the Children and Education committees on behavioral health issues affecting special education students. The report must include the (1) behavioral intervention methods special education private providers use and (2) feasibility and effect of requiring them to use proactive, highly individualized evidence-based interventions. It must also specifically include the (1) feasibility and effect of requiring the providers' staff to be trained on the interventions, emphasizing problem-solving as a main goal and (2) best practices for SDE to

monitor and randomly audit the use of physical restraint and seclusion on special education students ([PA 25-67](#), § 14, effective July 1, 2025).

Report on Special Education Student Placements

A new law requires school boards to annually report to SDE on information related to special education student placements where the board is paying any portion of the cost. SDE must disaggregate the information and annually post it on the department's special education data system, in a way that complies with federal student privacy protection law ([PA 25-67](#), § 12, effective from passage).

Reporting on Child Care Centers and Higher Education Campuses

By October 1, 2025, and quarterly after, a new law requires the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) chancellor, in consultation with the OEC commissioner, to submit a report to the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee describing the coordination of efforts between CSCU and OEC to construct, improve, or equip child care centers on or near college and university campuses in the state ([PA 25-174](#), § 134, effective July 1, 2025).

School Board Nonlapsing, Unspent Funds Account Information

This session, the legislature passed a law that, beginning for FY 26, and annually thereafter, requires each local school board to create and submit a report to SDE with information on their nonlapsing, unspent funds account, including the account balance, the amount deposited into the account in a fiscal year, and an accounting of the expenditures made from the account. Regional school boards must make this same information available and annually update it.

A separate law requires school boards to include the balance of any nonlapsing, unspent funds account in the existing annual report that boards must publish annually, which is required to include information such as the total cost of maintaining the board's schools ([PA 25-93](#), § 35, and [PA 25-175](#), §§ 6-7, effective July 1, 2025).

SDE Report on CT-SEDS

This session the legislature passed a law requiring SDE to develop a report on the functions of SDE's CT-SEDS and submit it to the BERGIN Commission and Education Committee that (1) explains each field in the data system's purpose, how the data and information in each field is used, and how each field relates to student outcomes and (2) identifies which fields or collected data and information in the system exceed the requirements of the federal IDEA ([PA 25-67](#), § 17, effective July 1, 2025).

Special Education and Excess Cost Grant Projections Data Reporting

A new law requires SDE to annually post on its website specified disaggregated, student-level, and statewide data on students receiving special education and special education expenditures. It also requires SDE to annually submit excess cost grant projections to the Appropriations and Education committees and the Office of Fiscal Analysis, on January 30 and March 30 ([PA 25-67](#), § 22, effective July 1, 2025).

Study on Over-Identification of Minority Students for Special Education Services

This session the legislature passed a law requiring SDE to conduct a study on the disproportionate or over-identification of minority students for special education and related services. The study must examine how often students are identified as requiring special education and related services, disaggregated by race and gender for each school district ([PA 25-93](#), § 30, effective from passage).

Superintendents' Annual Report to Board of Education

A new law requires all superintendents to submit information on the district's contracts, students, staff, and savings annually to the board of education, including (1) the number and names of all community-based organizations in which the district is in a formal memorandum of understanding (MOU), agreement, or contract to provide student support services (by school and type of support service); (2) workforce development programs offered by the board to the students where the board has partnered with an outside entity, including cooperatives, internships, in-school job training programs provided by businesses, and in-school workforce board presentations; and (3) certified and noncertified staff turnover, other than same-district transfers (by school and subject) ([PA 25-93](#), § 32, effective July 1, 2025).

Teachers and Other School District Staff

Initial Educator Certificate Fee Eliminated

The FY 26-27 budget and implementer act eliminates the \$200 fee for initial educator certificate applicants ([PA 25-168](#), § 433, effective October 1, 2025).

Paid Family and Medical Leave for Certain School Employees

A new law extends the state's Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program to cover school employees whose position does not require a professional certification. More specifically, it applies to those employees employed by local or regional boards of education, nonpublic elementary or

secondary schools, or certain magnet schools, charter schools, academies, or cooperative arrangements. The new law correspondingly extends the state's Family and Medical Leave Act to cover these employees, which allows them to take job-protected unpaid leave for certain reasons and receive a partial wage replacement benefit from the program while on leave ([PA 25-174](#), §§ 234-237, October 1, 2025).

Paid Sick Leave Increments

The state's paid sick leave law generally requires employers to give their employees up to 40 hours of paid sick leave per year, and employees must accrue one hour of leave for every 30 hours worked. The Department of Labor's implementation of the law generally requires employers to allow eligible employees to use the leave in one-hour increments, but the legislature enacted a new law that allows local or regional boards of education to require that their school employees use their accrued paid sick leave at the increments set in their applicable collective bargaining agreement, as long as the board (1) gives their employees paid sick leave, or any other paid leave, that accrues at a rate greater than one hour of leave for every 30 hours worked and (2) does not prohibit the employees from using up to 40 hours of accrued leave per year ([PA 25-174](#), § 233, effective upon passage).

Reading Instruction Teacher Survey Repeal

The legislature enacted a new law that removes the reading instruction survey requirement for certified K-3 teachers. Under prior law, school boards required their K-3 teachers to take a biennial survey developed by SDE to assess the teachers' reading instruction practice and knowledge ([PA 25-143](#), § 14, effective July 1, 2025).

Retired Teachers Health Insurance

For FY 26, the budget and implementer act reduces the state's share of retired teachers health insurance costs from one-third to 25%. This applies to teachers covered by the Teachers Retirement Board plan or teachers covered under local plans ([PA 25-168](#), § 301, effective upon passage).

Subsidized Loans for Alliance District School Employees

A new law expands eligibility for the Alliance District Educator and Counselor Loan Subsidy Program and renames it the Alliance District Loan Subsidy Program. Under prior law, the Connecticut Higher Education Supplemental Loan Authority (CHESLA) provided subsidized interest rates on CHESLA loans that refinanced the private student loans of teachers, paraeducators, and school counselors employed in an alliance district. The act specifies that these school employees must be employed

by a school board or a technical education and career school to be eligible. It also expands the program to make it available to non-teachers who are employed in high priority occupations (as designated by SDE and CHESLA) by a school board or a technical education and career school in an alliance district ([PA 25-105](#), effective July 1, 2025).

Technical High Schools

CTECS Cooperative Agreements and Instructional Staff Approval Timeline

This session, the legislature passed a law (1) allowing the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) executive director to enter into cooperative agreements with nonprofit career schools and training institutes and (2) requiring the OPM secretary to review and approve requests to fill instructional staff positions by 30 days after the statement of staffing needs is submitted ([PA 25-143](#), § 18, effective July 1, 2025).

Removing CTECS From the School Construction Grant Program

The legislature passed a new law that removes CTECS from the school construction grant program. Under prior law, CTECS projects had to undergo the school construction process, including being on the construction priority list that DAS submits to the legislature each year for approval. As a state agency, CTECS projects are already 100% state-funded and do not require the local approval and funding match that the school construction grant program requires of school boards and towns ([PA 25-174](#), §§ 140, 144, & 146, effective upon passage).

Additional Minor Acts

Various Acts

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

1. [PA 25-8](#) (makes technical changes to the education and early childhood statutes);
2. [PA 25-67](#), § 20 (specifies the education commissioner's authority to supervise special education programs and facilities, includes authority over approved special education private providers);
3. [PA 25-120](#) (makes minor changes to the Teachers' Retirement System statutes);
4. [PA 25-124](#) (specifies that the Freedom of Information Act's disclosure exemption for records covered by the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) applies to

- education, rather than “educational,” records exempt from FERPA, which conforms with terminology used in FERPA; and
5. [PA 25-143](#), § 14 (makes conforming changes to the Teacher Education and Mentoring Program law to align with the boarder 2024 changes to educator certification).

JM:ms