



**PA 25-99—sHB 6445**

*Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee*

**AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF HIGHER EDUCATION, EXPANDING DUAL CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES AND CONCERNING COLLEGE READINESS AND REMEDIAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS AT THE CONNECTICUT STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES AND INFORMATION REPORTED TO THE CREDENTIAL DATABASE**

**SUMMARY:** This act makes various changes in laws and programs related to the Office of Higher Education (OHE) and the Department of Education (SDE). It:

1. defines a “Connecticut institution of higher education” and an “out-of-state institution of higher education” as they relate to authorization for distance learning and related OHE oversight activities;
2. prohibits private career schools from renewing their certificate to operate if they have not enrolled any students continually during the previous two calendar years;
3. increases, from 60 to 90 days, the length of time the OHE commissioner can extend a private career school’s authorization for good cause;
4. requires OHE to review requests and applications regarding an ownership change for a higher education institution;
5. requires SDE, starting by February 1, 2026, to annually notify parents of public school students in grades 8 to 11 about opportunities to pursue a challenging curriculum (see BACKGROUND) and the availability of courses that grant postsecondary credit (§ 5);
6. requires SDE, by July 1, 2026, to develop a model agreement between secondary schools and postsecondary institutions for offering dual and concurrent enrollment courses and postsecondary credit courses to high school students;
7. requires higher education institutions that offer dual or concurrent enrollment courses to report certain information on their courses and student enrollees to SDE annually;
8. generally requires higher education institutions that offer a concurrent enrollment course as of July 1, 2025, or that add new such courses after that date, to obtain accreditation for it from the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) within three years;
9. narrows, to the upcoming academic year, a provision from PA 25-67 that requires the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) to continue offering certain transitional college readiness, embedded remedial support, and intensive remedial support programs at the state’s public higher education institutions; and
10. clarifies what information institutions must submit to OHE for use in the

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office's existing credentials database.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025, except the SDE parent notification provision (§ 5) is effective January 1, 2026.

### § 1 — DISTANCE LEARNING

For the law on distance learning reciprocity, the act defines a “Connecticut institution of higher education” as such an institution that either (1) conducts instructional activities at a physical location in the state or (2) maintains an administrative office in the state. It defines an “out-of-state institution of higher education” as one that (1) does not fall under the above definition and (2) is authorized, licensed, or accredited by another state.

Specifically, these definitions apply to the existing law on OHE's multistate or regional reciprocity agreement that allows Connecticut and its higher education institutions to participate in a nationwide state authorization reciprocity agreement on distance learning programs. The nationwide agreement (1) establishes uniform standards across states and (2) eliminates the need for participating states to assess the program quality offered by an out-of-state institution.

Under this law, Connecticut institutions seeking to participate in the nationwide agreement must apply to OHE, and OHE must approve or reject the application under the agreement's terms. Participating out-of-state institutions can operate distance learning programs here under the agreement's standards. Out-of-state institutions that do not participate in the agreement must apply to OHE if they seek to offer these programs here.

### §§ 2 & 3 — PRIVATE CAREER SCHOOL CERTIFICATION RENEWAL OR EXTENSION

The act prohibits OHE from renewing a private career school's certificate to operate if the school has not enrolled any students continually during the previous two calendar years. Under the act, these schools must close according to statutory procedures when their current certificate expires. By law, these procedures include verifying that coursework is complete, no refunds are due, and student records are going to be maintained.

The act also increases, from 60 to 90 days, the length of time the commissioner can extend a private career school's authorization if good cause is shown. As under prior law, the extension does not change the date of the original certificate's issuance or the date for each renewal.

### § 4 — REVIEWING CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP REQUESTS FOR AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The act requires OHE to review requests and applications regarding change of ownership for a higher education institution. Under existing law, OHE generally reviews requests for program modifications, non-substantive changes, and authorizations.

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Under the act, a “change of ownership” is generally a transaction, such as a sale, merger, or transfer, involving a higher education institution that results in a change of control over the institution. This includes transfers of a substantial portion of the institution’s educational assets, but not transfers that are exclusively granting a security interest in those assets. It also includes a change in an institution’s status as a public, nonprofit, or for-profit institution.

### § 6 — MODEL AGREEMENT

Under the act, by July 1, 2026, SDE must develop a model agreement between secondary schools and postsecondary institutions for providing dual and concurrent enrollment courses and postsecondary credit courses to high school students. SDE must do so in partnership with UConn, the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, and independent institutions of higher education. By law, the latter is any nonprofit higher education institution established in Connecticut that (1) has degree granting authority, (2) has its main campus in-state, (3) is not included in the Connecticut public higher education system, and (4) is not primarily training students for a religious vocation.

### § 7 — REPORTING ON CONCURRENT AND DUAL ENROLLMENT COURSES AND STUDENTS

The act requires higher education institutions, starting by August 1, 2025, to annually report on their concurrent and dual enrollment courses in a form and manner set by the SDE commissioner and in a manner that complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act’s requirements. They must include the following information for each high school student who enrolled in either type of course during the prior academic year:

1. the student’s name, date of birth, student identification number, and the high school’s name and SDE code;
2. for each of the student’s courses: the course’s name, type (dual enrollment or concurrent course), subject matter or associated academic department, department code, location where it was provided, and academic term and year;
3. the student’s grade and credits for each course; and
4. any other information requested by SDE.

Under the act, a “concurrent enrollment course” and “dual enrollment course” are both postsecondary education courses in any academic subject or career-oriented pathway for high school students simultaneously enrolled in a higher education institution. However, concurrent enrollment courses are delivered at high schools and taught by high school teachers approved by the student’s higher education institution and dual enrollment courses are taught by the faculty members of the student’s institution.

### § 7 — NACEP ACCREDITATION

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The act generally requires higher education institutions that offer a concurrent enrollment course as of July 1, 2025, to obtain NACEP accreditation for it by July 1, 2028. It allows institutions to have them accredited by NACEP after that date if SDE approves an extension in writing.

The act also requires institutions that establish new concurrent enrollment courses after July 1, 2025, to obtain NACEP accreditation for the course within three years, unless SDE approves an extension in writing.

### § 8 — TRANSITIONAL COLLEGE READINESS AND REMEDIAL SUPPORT PROGRAM OFFERINGS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

PA 25-67, § 25, requires BOR to continue offering, for the fall 2025, spring 2026, and each following semester, every transitional college readiness, embedded remedial support, and intensive remedial support program that they offered at public higher education institutions in the fall 2024 and spring 2025 semesters. This act narrows this provision, by requiring BOR to do so only for the fall 2025 and spring 2026 semesters.

### § 9 — REPORTING TO OHE CREDENTIALS DATABASE

Existing law requires higher education institutions (among other entities) to annually submit certain information to OHE for inclusion in OHE's credentials database. The act specifies that higher education institutions do not have to submit information on the (1) website giving information on the credential and (2) industry and occupation related to the credential (such as certain codes). Prior law allowed higher education institutions to omit this information only if it was not applicable to credentials the institution offers.

## BACKGROUND

### *Challenging Curriculum Policies*

By law, each board of education must adopt a challenging curriculum policy that aligns with SDE guidance and at least includes (1) criteria for identifying grade 8 and 9 students who may enroll in an advanced course or program (e.g., honors or advanced placement classes) and (2) a requirement that these students have an academic plan.