



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 341

February Session, 2026

Substitute Senate Bill No. 221

Senate, April 2, 2026

The Committee on Education reported through SEN. MCCRORY, D. of the 2nd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING ASPIRING EDUCATORS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 10-156ii of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

3 (a) There is established an aspiring educators [diversity] scholarship
4 program administered by the Department of Education. The program
5 shall provide an annual scholarship to [diverse students] aspiring
6 educators who (1) graduated from a public high school in [an alliance
7 district, as defined in section 10-262u] this state, and (2) are enrolled in
8 a teacher preparation program at any four-year institution of higher
9 education. [A diverse student] An aspiring educator may receive an
10 annual scholarship in an amount up to ten thousand dollars for each
11 year such [diverse student] aspiring educator is enrolled and in good
12 standing in a teacher preparation program. As used in this section,
13 ["diverse" has the same meaning as provided in section 10-156bb]
14 "aspiring educator" means an individual who is in a population
15 subgroup that is underrepresented in the teaching profession in this

16 state and for which such population subgroup has been identified as a
17 teacher shortage area by the Commissioner of Education pursuant to
18 section 10-8b, as amended by this act.

19 (b) Not later than January 1, [2023] 2027, the department shall, in
20 consultation with the chairpersons of the joint standing committee of the
21 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education,
22 develop a policy concerning the administration of the scholarship. Such
23 policy shall include, but need not be limited to, provisions regarding (1)
24 any additional eligibility criteria, (2) payment and distribution of the
25 scholarships to [diverse students] aspiring educators through the
26 teacher preparation programs in which they are enrolled, and (3) the
27 notification of students in high school [in alliance districts] of the
28 scholarship program, including the opportunity to apply for a
29 scholarship under the program while enrolled in high school and prior
30 to graduation if such student will be enrolled in a teacher preparation
31 program during the following fall semester at a four-year institution of
32 higher education.

33 (c) For the fiscal years ending June 30, [2024] 2027, and each fiscal year
34 thereafter, the department shall annually award scholarships in
35 accordance with the provisions of this section and the guidelines
36 developed pursuant to subsection (b) of this section.

37 (d) The Commissioner of Education shall develop scholarship
38 repayment criteria for recipients who are not employed as a certified
39 teacher by a local or regional board of education in [the] this state
40 following graduation from a teacher preparation program. Any
41 amounts repaid to the department shall be deposited in the General
42 Fund.

43 (e) On or before March first of each year, the commissioner shall
44 determine if there are any unexpended funds appropriated for purposes
45 of this section for the fiscal year. If the commissioner determines that
46 there are unexpended funds, the commissioner may expend up to two
47 hundred fifty thousand dollars of such unexpended funds for the
48 purpose of implementing the plan to promote the teaching profession

49 developed pursuant to section 10-155m.

50 [(e)] (f) The department may accept gifts, grants and donations, from
51 any source, public or private, for the aspiring educators [diversity]
52 scholarship program.

53 [(f)] (g) Not later than January 1, [2024] 2028, and annually thereafter,
54 the department shall develop a report that includes annual data on the
55 [race and ethnicity of the diverse] population subgroups of students
56 who receive a scholarship under the program and the teacher
57 preparation program in which they are enrolled. The department shall
58 submit such report to the joint standing committee of the General
59 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, in
60 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a.

61 Sec. 2. Section 10-8b of the general statutes is repealed and the
62 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

63 (a) The Commissioner of Education shall annually, by December first,
64 [determine subject and geographic] identify the following areas in
65 which a teacher shortage exists: [and] (1) Subject, (2) geographic, and (3)
66 population subgroups that are underrepresented in the teaching
67 profession in this state. The commissioner shall certify such [shortages]
68 teacher shortage areas to the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority
69 for purposes of section 8-265pp. In [determining] identifying such
70 teacher [shortages] shortage areas, the commissioner shall consider the
71 following: [(1)] (A) The number of teacher vacancies in a particular
72 subject area or geographic area; [(2)] (B) the number of new certificates
73 in such subject areas and geographic areas or population subgroups
74 issued by the Department of Education during the preceding year; [and
75 (3)] (C) the number and types of classes being taught by persons whose
76 training is not specific to the field in which they are teaching; and (D)
77 those population subgroups that are underrepresented in the teaching
78 profession in this state using data collected in the state-wide public
79 school information system pursuant to section 10-10a.

80 (b) The Department of Education shall annually, by March first,

81 electronically distribute to the president of every institution of higher
82 education in this state offering a teacher preparatory program
83 information concerning teacher shortage areas, [determined] identified
84 pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, for at least the prior five years.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2026	10-156ii
Sec. 2	July 1, 2026	10-8b

ED *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 27 \$	FY 28 \$
Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA)	CHFA - Cost/Potential Revenue Impact	Minimal	Minimal
Education, Dept.	GF - Cost	See Below	See Below

Note: GF=General Fund; CHFA=Resources of CHFA

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill makes various changes to the Aspiring Educators Scholarship Program, which result in the fiscal impacts described below.

Section 1 expands eligibility for the Aspiring Educators Scholarship Program to students who graduated from any Connecticut public high school, rather than in Alliance Districts only, and are underrepresented in the teaching profession. This results in a cost annually to the State Department of Education (SDE) beginning in FY 27. Costs will vary based on the number of additional award recipients due to the bill, and the amount of grants they receive.¹ In FY 26, \$6 million was appropriated for the program and \$992,000 is anticipated to be spent.

Additionally, Section 1 allows SDE to use up to \$250,000 from the Aspiring Educators Scholarship Program account, if it is expected to lapse, to promote the teaching profession.

¹ The scholarship is up to \$10,000 per student per year enrolled in a teacher preparation program.

Section 2 requires the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) to expand an existing mortgage assistance program for teachers, which results in costs to CHFA from the authority's own resources beginning in FY 27 associated with altering and marketing the program.²

Additional utilization of the Teachers Mortgage Assistance program is anticipated to result in minimal changes to CHFA's operating revenues. The bill is not anticipated to materially change the rate of spending.³

The section additionally requires SDE to annually determine populations that are underrepresented in the teaching profession in order to implement Section 1. This has no fiscal impact as SDE has sufficient expertise to make the determination.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the level of funding of the scholarship program and award amounts, the number of applicants, and the amount of CHFA mortgage assistance provided.

² CHFA is a quasi-public authority that issues its own federally tax-exempt and taxable mortgage revenue bonds. The authority pays its operating expenses using funds derived from the excess of interest income from loans over bond interest expenses.

³ In 2025, CHFA assisted approximately 3,800 first-time homebuyers. Of these buyers, 27 utilized the Teachers Mortgage Assistance Program.

OLR Bill Analysis**sSB 221*****AN ACT CONCERNING ASPIRING EDUCATORS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill makes “aspiring educators,” rather than “diverse educators,” eligible for existing law’s diversity teacher recruitment scholarship, which potentially broadens the pool of eligible candidates.

Under current law, the scholarship targets “diverse” students, which 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. Under the bill, an “aspiring educator” is an individual from a population subgroup that (a) is underrepresented in the teaching profession in Connecticut and (b) has been identified under state law as a teacher shortage area.

Under current law, the State Department of Education (SDE) commissioner annually determines geographic and subject areas with teacher shortages based on teacher vacancies, new certificates issued, and classes being taught by people without training specific to the subject area. Under the bill, the commissioner must also determine the population subgroups in which a teacher shortage exists and, when doing so, consider those that are underrepresented in teaching in the state based on data in the statewide public school information system (see BACKGROUND).

This potentially broadens eligibility for the scholarship and shortage designation. 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 other similar status.

The bill also allows the education commissioner to use up to \$250,000 of unexpended scholarship funds to promote the teaching profession.

It also makes conforming and technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Under current law, the aspiring educators diversity student scholarship program, which the bill renames the aspiring educators scholarship program, awards annual scholarships of up to \$10,000 to 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.

The bill requires SDE, in consultation with the Education Committee chairpersons, to develop a policy for administering the scholarship with the new criteria by January 1, 2027. SDE must annually award scholarships under the new criteria beginning FY 27 and, beginning January 1, 2028, annually submit a report to the Education Committee with data on the scholarship recipients' population subgroups and the teacher preparation programs in which they are enrolled.

Use of Unexpended Funds to Promote Teaching Profession

The bill allows the commissioner, by March first of each year, to determine if there are any unexpended funds in the program for the fiscal year and if so, she may use up to \$250,000 of them to implement the teaching profession promotion plan.

By law, the plan must include (1) a way for school districts to develop partnerships with in-state educator preparation programs and (2) counseling programs to inform high school students about, and recruit them to, the teaching profession. It also requires SDE to distribute to boards of education information that promotes the teaching profession,

including materials on in-state educator preparation programs and alternative route to certification programs.

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)).

Alliance Districts

The alliance district program requires each of the state’s 36 lowest performing school districts (as measured by the accountability index scores) to submit an improvement plan to SDE for approval before the department releases the district’s alliance funding (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 Substitute

Yea 45 Nay 0 (03/16/2026)