



General Assembly

January Session, 2023

Raised Bill No. 6881

LCO No. 5554



Referred to Committee on EDUCATION

Introduced by:
(ED)

AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES RELATED TO EDUCATOR COMPENSATION AND PARAEDUCATORS.

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

1 Section 1. Subsection (a) of section 10-148d of the general statutes is
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
3 *2023*):

4 (a) For the school year commencing July 1, [2022] 2023, and each
5 school year thereafter, each paraeducator employed by a local or
6 regional board of education shall participate in a program of
7 professional development. Each local and regional board of education
8 shall make available, annually, at no cost to its paraeducators, a
9 program of professional development that is not fewer than eighteen
10 hours in length, of which a preponderance is in a small group or
11 individual instructional setting. Such program of professional
12 development shall (1) be a comprehensive, sustained and intensive
13 approach to improving paraeducators effectiveness in increasing
14 student knowledge achievement, (2) focus on refining and improving

15 various effective instruction methods that are shared between and
16 among paraeducators, (3) foster collective responsibility for improved
17 student performance, (4) be comprised of professional learning that (A)
18 is aligned with rigorous state student academic achievement standards,
19 (B) is conducted among paraeducators at the school and facilitated by
20 principals, coaches, mentors, distinguished educators, as described in
21 section 10-145s, or other appropriate teachers, (C) occurs frequently on
22 an individual basis or among groups of paraeducators in a job-
23 embedded process of continuous improvement, and (D) includes a
24 repository of best practices for instruction methods developed by
25 paraeducators within each school that is continuously available to such
26 paraeducators for comment and updating, and (5) include training in
27 culturally responsive pedagogy and practice. Each program of
28 professional development shall include professional development
29 activities in accordance with the provisions of subsection (b) of this
30 section. The [principles and practices of social-emotional learning and
31 restorative practices shall be integrated throughout the] components of
32 such program of professional development described in subdivisions (1)
33 to (5), inclusive, of this subsection shall integrate the principles and
34 practices of social-emotional learning and restorative practices
35 throughout, but may not otherwise include mandated trainings such as
36 trainings regarding blood-borne pathogens, the policies and procedures
37 of the Department of Children and Families and sexual harassment.

38 Sec. 2. Subsections (b) and (c) of section 10-220a of the general statutes
39 are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
40 *1, 2023*):

41 (b) Not later than a date prescribed by the commissioner, each local
42 and regional board of education shall establish a professional
43 development and evaluation committee. Such professional
44 development and evaluation committee shall consist of (1) at least one
45 teacher, as defined in subsection (a) of section 10-144d, selected by the
46 exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees chosen
47 pursuant to section 10-153b, (2) at least one administrator, as defined in
48 subsection (a) of section 10-144e, selected by the exclusive bargaining

49 representative for certified employees chosen pursuant to section 10-
50 153b, [and] (3) at least one paraeducator selected by any exclusive
51 bargaining representative for paraeducators, and (4) such other school
52 personnel as the board deems appropriate. The duties of such
53 committees shall include, but not be limited to, participation in the
54 development or adoption of a teacher evaluation and support program
55 for the district, pursuant to section 10-151b, and the development,
56 evaluation and annual updating of a comprehensive local professional
57 development plan for certified employees of the district. Such plan shall:
58 (A) Be directly related to the educational goals prepared by the local or
59 regional board of education pursuant to subsection (b) of section 10-220,
60 (B) on and after July 1, 2021, be developed with full consideration of the
61 priorities and needs related to student social-emotional learning and
62 restorative practices, in accordance with the provisions of section 10-
63 148a, and student academic outcomes as determined by the State Board
64 of Education, (C) provide for the ongoing and systematic assessment
65 and improvement of both teacher evaluation and professional
66 development of the professional staff members of each such board,
67 including personnel management and evaluation training or experience
68 for administrators, and (D) be related to regular and special student
69 needs and may include provisions concerning career incentives and
70 parent involvement. The State Board of Education shall develop
71 guidelines to assist local and regional boards of education in
72 determining the objectives of the plans and in coordinating staff
73 development activities with student needs and school programs. For the
74 school year commencing July 1, 2022, and each school year thereafter,
75 such committees shall develop, evaluate and annually update a
76 comprehensive local professional development plan for paraeducators
77 of the district in accordance with the provisions of this subsection.

78 (c) (1) The Department of Education, in cooperation with one or more
79 regional educational service centers, is authorized to provide institutes
80 annually for Connecticut educators. Such institutes shall serve as model
81 programs of professional development and shall be taught by
82 exemplary Connecticut teachers and administrators and by other

83 qualified individuals as selected by the Department of Education. The
84 Department of Education shall charge fees for attending such institutes
85 provided such fees shall be based on the actual cost of such institutes.

86 (2) Not later than January 1, 2024, and annually thereafter, the
87 Department of Education shall (A) in collaboration with the School
88 Paraeducator Advisory Council, develop or update guidance and best
89 practices for programs of professional development provided for
90 paraeducators, and (B) distribute such guidance and best practices to
91 each local and regional board of education.

92 Sec. 3. Subsection (c) of section 10-10a of the general statutes is
93 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
94 *2023*):

95 (c) The state-wide public school information system shall:

96 (1) Track and report data relating to student, teacher and school and
97 district performance growth and make such information available to
98 local and regional boards of education for use in evaluating educational
99 performance and growth of teachers and students enrolled in public
100 schools in the state. Such information shall be collected or calculated
101 based on information received from local and regional boards of
102 education and other relevant sources. Such information shall include,
103 but not be limited to:

104 (A) In addition to performance on state-wide mastery examinations
105 pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, data relating to students shall
106 include, but not be limited to, (i) the primary language spoken at the
107 home of a student, (ii) student transcripts, (iii) student attendance and
108 student mobility, (iv) reliable, valid assessments of a student's readiness
109 to enter public school at the kindergarten level, and (v) data collected, if
110 any, from the preschool experience survey, described in section 10-515;

111 (B) Data relating to teachers shall include, but not be limited to, (i)
112 teacher credentials, such as master's degrees, teacher preparation
113 programs completed and certification levels and endorsement areas, (ii)

114 teacher assessments, such as whether a teacher is deemed highly
115 qualified pursuant to the No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-110, or
116 deemed to meet such other designations as may be established by
117 federal law or regulations for the purposes of tracking the equitable
118 distribution of instructional staff, (iii) the presence of substitute teachers
119 in a teacher's classroom, (iv) class size, (v) numbers relating to
120 absenteeism in a teacher's classroom, and (vi) the presence of a teacher's
121 aide. The department shall assign a unique teacher identifier to each
122 teacher prior to collecting such data in the public school information
123 system;

124 (C) Data relating to schools and districts shall include, but not be
125 limited to, (i) school population, (ii) annual student graduation rates,
126 (iii) annual teacher retention rates, (iv) school disciplinary records, such
127 as data relating to suspensions, expulsions and other disciplinary
128 actions, (v) the percentage of students whose primary language is not
129 English, (vi) the number of and professional credentials of support
130 personnel, (vii) information relating to instructional technology, such as
131 access to computers, and (viii) disaggregated measures of school-based
132 arrests pursuant to section 10-233n; and

133 (D) Data related to paraeducators shall include, but not be limited to,
134 (i) total number of paraeducators employed in each school district, (ii)
135 assigned job title, (iii) hourly rate of pay, (iv) number of working days
136 and hours, (v) health care contributions as a percentage of salary, and
137 (vi) annual salary calculated by multiplying working hours and hourly
138 rate of pay. The department shall assign a unique paraeducator
139 identifier to each paraeducator prior to collecting such data in the public
140 school information system.

141 (2) Collect data relating to student enrollment in and graduation from
142 institutions of higher education for any student who had been assigned
143 a unique student identifier pursuant to subsection (b) of this section,
144 provided such data is available.

145 (3) Develop means for access to and data sharing with the data

146 systems of public institutions of higher education in the state.

147 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2023*) Not later than December 1, 2023,
148 and annually thereafter, the Department of Education shall post on the
149 department's Internet web site and submit, in accordance with the
150 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing
151 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
152 relating to education a report concerning the staffing level of
153 paraeducators in schools. Such report shall include, but need not be
154 limited to, for each school district in the state (1) the number of vacancies
155 for paraeducator positions, (2) paraeducator to student staffing ratios,
156 and (3) the impact of such vacancies on students and student learning.

157 Sec. 5. Subparagraph (I) of subdivision (10) of subsection (a) of section
158 10-76d of the general statutes is repealed and the following is
159 substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2023*):

160 (I) Prior to any planning and placement team meeting for a child or
161 pupil in which an educational program for such child or pupil is
162 developed, reviewed or revised, if the parent, guardian, pupil or
163 surrogate parent has requested that the school paraprofessional
164 assigned to such child or pupil attend such meeting, then the
165 responsible local or regional board of education shall provide (i)
166 adequate notice of such meeting to such school paraprofessional so that
167 such school paraprofessional may adequately prepare for such meeting,
168 and (ii) training, upon request of such school paraprofessional, on the
169 role of such school paraprofessional at such meeting. Following such
170 meeting, such school paraprofessional, or any other paraprofessional
171 who is providing special education or related services to such child,
172 shall review such educational program with a supervisor, as needed,
173 and be permitted to view such educational program in order to be able
174 to provide special education or related services to such child or pupil in
175 accordance with such educational program.

176 Sec. 6. (*Effective from passage*) (a) As used in this section:

177 (1) "Resident student" means each student counted toward the

178 calculation of a town's entitlement to an equalization aid grant pursuant
179 to section 10-262h of the general statutes;

180 (2) "Teacher" has the same meaning provided in section 10-151 of the
181 general statutes; and

182 (3) "Paraeducator" means an employee of a local or regional board of
183 education who assists teachers or other professional educators in the
184 delivery of instructional and related services to students.

185 (b) The Comptroller shall establish a grant program to supplement
186 the salaries of educators and paraeducators in the state for the fiscal
187 years ending June 30, 2024, and June 30, 2025. Not later than September
188 first of each fiscal year, the Comptroller shall pay to each town
189 maintaining public schools according to law a percentage of the total
190 appropriation for such purpose equal to each town's proportional share
191 of the total state-wide equalization aid grants received by such town
192 during such fiscal year pursuant to section 10-262h of the general
193 statutes.

194 (c) Not later than five days after the receipt of a grant payment
195 pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, each town shall pay a
196 proportional share of such grant payment to (1) the local board of
197 education in an amount equal to the proportion of total resident
198 students that is enrolled in schools governed by such board, and (2) any
199 regional board of education in which a resident student is enrolled in an
200 amount equal to the proportion of total resident students that is enrolled
201 in school governed by such board.

202 (d) Each local or regional board of education that receives any portion
203 of the grant payment pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, shall use
204 such grant payment to supplement the salaries of each teacher and each
205 paraeducator employed by such board. The amount paid to each teacher
206 and paraeducator shall be subject to collective bargaining provided each
207 teacher salary is not less than three and one quarter times and each
208 paraeducator salary is not less than three and three quarters times the
209 current federal poverty level for a family of two. Contracts for teachers

210 and paraeducators may be reopened exclusively for the purpose of this
211 subsection subject to the provisions of sections 10-153a to 10-153n,
212 inclusive, of the general statutes, except, upon mutual agreement of the
213 parties such negotiations may (1) include other conditions of
214 employment, and (2) be excluded from the binding arbitration
215 provisions of section 10-153f of the general statutes. No amount of the
216 grant payment may be used to supplant the teacher and paraeducator
217 salary included in such board's budget for such fiscal year.

218 Sec. 7. (*Effective from passage*) The sum of six hundred million dollars
219 is appropriated to the office of the Comptroller from the General Fund,
220 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, for the grant program
221 established pursuant to section 6 of this act.

222 Sec. 8. (*Effective July 1, 2024*) An amount equal to twenty per cent of
223 the discretionary budget surplus of the General Fund is appropriated to
224 the office of the Comptroller from the General Fund, for the fiscal year
225 ending June 30, 2025, for the grant program established pursuant to
226 section 6 of this act.

227 Sec. 9. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Any contract negotiated on and
228 after the effective date of this section for the compensation of (1)
229 teachers, as defined in section 10-151 of the general statutes, shall
230 maintain a minimum scheduled annual salary in an amount not less
231 than three and one quarter times the federal poverty limit for a family
232 of two, (2) paraeducators, as defined in section 6 of this act, and
233 collectively bargained pursuant to sections 10-153a to 10-153n, inclusive,
234 of the general statutes, shall maintain a minimum scheduled annual
235 salary in an amount not less than three and three quarters times the
236 federal poverty limit for a family of two. Contracts for teachers and
237 paraeducators may be reopened exclusively for the purpose of this
238 section subject to the provisions of sections 10-153a to 10-153n, inclusive,
239 of the general statutes, except, upon mutual agreement of the parties
240 such negotiations may include other conditions of employment.

241 Sec. 10. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Each local or regional board of

242 education that employs a paraeducator, as defined in section 6 of this
243 act, shall employ such paraeducator for not fewer than twenty hours a
244 week. The Commissioner of Education may waive the requirement set
245 forth in this section if the commissioner finds that extraordinary
246 circumstances, in the commissioner's discretion, require employing a
247 paraeducator for fewer than twenty hours a week for period not to
248 exceed one school year.

249 Sec. 11. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) Notwithstanding
250 subdivision (1) of subsection (i) of section 5-259 of the general statutes,
251 each local or regional board of education shall offer the Municipal
252 Employee Health Insurance Plan, established pursuant to subsection (i)
253 of section 5-259 of the general statutes, to any paraeducator employed
254 by such board. Each paraeducator who elects such coverage shall (1) be
255 eligible to participate in such plan for a full calendar year, (2) pay the
256 employee's share of the premium for such coverage subject to the
257 provisions of subsection (b) of this section, and (3) may opt to receive a
258 salary over a twelve month period to facilitate the payment of the
259 employee's share of the premium for such coverage.

260 (b) The portions of the premium for the coverage offered pursuant to
261 subsection (a) of this section to be paid by the employer and the
262 employee shall be subject to collective bargaining between the
263 authorized representative of the local or regional board of education
264 and the employee organization that represents paraeducators.

265 (c) The Comptroller shall annually pay to each local or regional board
266 of education not less than fifty per cent of the cost to such board for the
267 coverage offered pursuant to subsection (a) of this section.

268 Sec. 12. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) Notwithstanding any
269 provision of the general statutes, each local and regional board of
270 education shall pay for each paraeducator, as defined in section 6 of this
271 act, employed by such board the full employee contribution required
272 pursuant to the Municipal Employees Retirement System or any other
273 retirement system in which such board participates, provided such

274 payment shall not exceed the amount of the full employee contribution
 275 required pursuant to the Municipal Employees Retirement System.

276 (b) The Comptroller shall annually pay to each local or regional board
 277 of education not less than fifty per cent of the cost to such board for the
 278 payment of the employee contribution for retirement benefits pursuant
 279 to subsection (a) of this section.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	10-148d(a)
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	10-220a(b) and (c)
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	10-10a(c)
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	New section
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	10-76d(a)(10)(I)
Sec. 6	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 7	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 8	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	New section
Sec. 9	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 10	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 11	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 12	<i>from passage</i>	New section

Statement of Purpose:

To (1) exclude mandated trainings from professional development programs for paraeducators, (2) include a paraeducator on professional development and evaluation committees, (3) require the collection of data concerning paraeducators on the state-wide public school information system, (4) require an annual report on paraeducator staffing levels, (5) require paraeducators to review a student's individualized education program with a supervisor, as needed, (6) require the establishment of a grant program to supplement teacher and paraeducator salaries, (7) establish a minimum salary for teachers and paraeducators, (8) require boards of education to (A) offer the Municipal Employee Health Insurance Plan to paraeducators, and (B) pay the employee contribution required under a retirement system for paraeducators, and (9) require the state to pay not less than fifty per cent of the cost to boards of education for providing the Municipal Employee Health Insurance Plan and for paying the employee contribution for retirement benefits.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]