



Acts Affecting Education

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Notice to Readers

This report provides summaries of new laws (Public Acts and Special Acts) affecting education enacted during the 2017 regular session. OLR's other Acts Affecting reports are, or will soon be, available on OLR's website: <https://www.cga.ct.gov/olr/actsaffecting.asp>.

Each summary indicates the Public Act (PA) or Special Act (SA) 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:

<https://www.cga.ct.gov/olr/olrsums.asp>. Readers are encouraged to obtain the full text of acts that interest them from the Connecticut State Library, House Clerk's Office, or General Assembly's website: <http://www.cga.ct.gov>.

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Accountability and Achievement

Establishing the Connecticut Preschool through 20 and Workforce Information Network (CP20 WIN)

A new law creates in statute the CP20 WIN network to establish processes for securely sharing longitudinal education and employment data across participating agencies. Under the law, the network matches education and employment data for individuals from state agencies and other organizations to conduct audits and evaluations of federal and state education programs. Participating agencies include the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU), State Department of Education (SDE), Department of Labor (DOL), UConn, Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges (CCIC), and any entity that participates through a memorandum of agreement (MOU). Currently, the network exists through MOUs between state agencies, including SDE and DOL. The law also creates a CP20 WIN board to govern and oversee the network ([PA 17-207](#), § 4, effective upon passage).

Science Mastery Exam

The statewide science mastery exam will take place in grade 11, instead of grade 10, beginning in the 2018-19 school year, under a new law that the legislature enacted ([PA 17-14](#), § 12, effective July 1, 2017).

Calculating Student Absences

Under a new law, a student who serves an in-school suspension that is a half day or longer is no longer considered absent for the purpose of board of education calculations of chronic absenteeism ([PA 17-14](#), § 1, effective July 1, 2017).

Early Childhood Education

Early Literacy Program

A new law requires SDE to establish a reading readiness program to provide three tiers of support in early literacy to each school district designated as an alliance district and each school in the commissioner's network of schools. Under this law, SDE must (1) determine the reading readiness of each participating school and school district and (2) provide literacy supports based on each school or district's reading readiness. The new law makes confidential the results of a reading instruction survey that all teachers with an early childhood or elementary education endorsement must take, except with respect to the teacher and the supervisor responsible for crafting the teacher's professional development ([PA 17-101](#), effective July 1, 2017).

Head Start State Collaboration Office

A new law places the Connecticut Head Start State Collaboration Office within the Office of Early Childhood (OEC), thus conforming statutes to practice ([PA 17-146](#), § 47, effective upon passage).

School Readiness Staff Qualifications

The legislature enacted a law that makes it easier for people to meet the heightened state staff qualifications for state-funded school readiness programs. Existing law increases higher education requirements for school readiness staff in two phases. This new law delays the first phase's deadline by one year, from July 1, 2017 to July 1, 2018, and the second phase by one year, from July 1, 2020 to July 1, 2021.

It also eliminates the requirement that a bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education come from a program that has been approved in Connecticut, thus making applicants eligible who have bachelor's degrees with a concentration in early childhood from out of state institutions ([PA 17-41](#), effective July 1, 2017).

Health and Safety

School Security Grant Program Extension

The legislature extended the school security infrastructure grant program for an additional year, from June 30, 2017 to June 30, 2018. The program provides grants to develop or improve security infrastructure in schools, based on the results of school building security assessments conducted with local law enforcement. Under existing law, these grants are available to private schools. The new law specifies that these include private child care centers or preschools that have received threats ([PA 17-68](#), § 1, effective upon passage).

State Oversight of School Bus Company Driver Monitoring

A new law requires the motor vehicles commissioner to ensure that school bus companies fulfill their duty to review, twice a month, the commissioner's periodic reports on drivers who have had their licenses withdrawn, suspended, or revoked. To do this the commissioner must randomly audit bus companies for compliance, maintain records of each review for the previous two years, and make them publicly available upon request. Under existing law, bus companies that fail to review the commissioner's suspension reports are subject to civil penalties ([PA 17-68](#), § 15, effective July 1, 2017).

Public Health Prevention Efforts Task Force

A new law establishes an eight-member public health prevention efforts task force. Among other things, the task force must examine and make recommendations for improvements to public school disease prevention curriculum. The task must report its findings and recommendations to the Public Health Committee by July 1, 2018 ([SA 17-17](#), effective upon passage).

Child Abuse and Neglect Investigations

By law, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) must take certain steps regarding investigations of alleged child abuse or neglect by a public or private school or child care facility employee. Under a new law, the commissioner must notify the agency responsible for credentialing (1) the employee or (2) his or her employer, of the investigation results if the employee DCF investigated has a state license or certificate or State Board of Education (SBE) permit or authorization or his or her employer has a state license or approval.

The new law requires DCF to also provide investigation records to agencies responsible for credentialing (1) a public school employee who was investigated and (2) the school where he or she is employed. Existing law requires this only for entities that credential (1) public and private child care facilities and private schools and (2) employees of those facilities ([PA 17-81](#), effective July 1, 2017).

Notice of Protection Orders

The legislature made changes to laws governing notice to schools or higher education institutions about certain protection orders issued by courts. Under prior law, a court, upon the request of a victim, had to notify the victim's school or institution when it issued a restraining order, civil protection order, criminal protective order, or family violence protective order. The new law, instead, requires the court to do so only if the applicant provides the court with the school's or institution's name and address. For civil restraining orders, the new law additionally requires the court to provide the notice under the conditions described above to the school or institution in which the victim's minor child protected by the order is enrolled.

The new law also expands the court's duty to provide notification to schools or institutions of higher education. Specifically it requires the court to do so, under the conditions described above, when it issues standing criminal protection orders and orders prohibiting harassment of a witness in a criminal case ([PA 17-163](#), effective January 1, 2018).

School Violence Prevention Program

The school violence prevention program in existing law is a pretrial diversionary program for students charged with an offense involving the use or threatened use of physical violence in or on school property or at a school-sponsored activity. A new law eliminates the requirement that the program provide a minimum of eight group-counseling sessions in anger management and nonviolent conflict resolution, requiring instead that the program have a group-counseling session component ([PA 17-99](#), §§ 4 & 20, effective October 1, 2017).

School Board Reports on Asthma

The legislature enacted a new law that reduces, from annually to once every three years, the frequency with which boards of education must report to the local health department and DPH on the number of pupils per school and in the district diagnosed with asthma along with certain related demographic information. The law changes the due date of the report from February 1 to October 1. As under existing law, the boards must report the number of students with this diagnosis (1) upon enrollment, (2) in grade six or seven, and (3) in grade 10 or 11 ([PA 17-146](#), § 5, effective October 1, 2017).

Reports on Student Restraint and Seclusion

A new law transfers, from the Office of Protection and Advocacy (OPA) to Disability Rights Connecticut, Inc., the responsibility to receive reports from SBE regarding instances of student restraint and seclusion of special education students where the student was injured. OPA no longer exists, and this new law transferred this and a number of its other duties to other entities ([PA 17-96](#), § 6, effective July 1, 2017).

Interdistrict Magnet Schools

Magnet School Reduced-Isolation Enrollment Standards

The legislature created new integration enrollment standards for determining state operating grant eligibility for all magnet schools, applicable in FYs 18 and 19. For FY 18, the act creates uniform standards for both *Sheff* and non-*Sheff* magnet schools, but in FY 19 it gives the education commissioner the authority to create alternative standards for reduced-isolation student enrollment for each *Sheff* magnet school, in order to comply with the *Sheff* integration stipulation and order that will be in effect at that time ([PA 17-172](#), effective July 1, 2017).

Magnet School Grant Eligibility

A new law makes Norwalk's Center for Global Studies at Brien McMahon High School eligible for full-time magnet school operating grants of \$7,085 for each nonresident student and \$3,000 for each resident student ([PA 17-172](#), effective upon passage).

Supplemental Magnet School Transportation Grant

By law, the education commissioner may provide supplemental transportation grants to Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) for *Sheff* magnet school transportation. These grants are appropriated over a FY in two phases. Under a new law for FY 17, the commissioner may release a higher grant percentage in the first phase in comparison to previous years: up to 70%, rather than 50%, of the grant by June 30, 2017. Additionally, the new law shortens the deadline for releasing the grant balance in the second payment phase in comparison to previous fiscal years: on or before May 30, 2018, rather than September 1 ([PA 17-14](#), § 11, effective upon passage).

Interscholastic Athletics

High School Athletics Task Force

The legislature established a new task force to study issues related to high school interscholastic athletics programs. Among other topics, the task force must examine and report to the Education Committee about (1) barriers to participation in athletic activities, (2) team financing, (3) academic requirements for participation, and (4) participant and spectator safety and sportsmanship ([PA 17-173](#), § 13, effective upon passage).

Libraries

Library Internet Usage Policy

A new law requires boards of libraries and public reading rooms to adopt policies and rules for internet usage and content access by library patrons on library devices. By law, these boards adopt bylaws, rules, and regulations for the operation and governance of libraries and reading rooms ([PA 17-68](#), § 16, effective July 1, 2017).

Private Schools

Private School Employee Background Checks

The legislature passed a law that extends to private schools the applicant and employee background check requirements that apply to public schools (i.e., state child abuse and neglect registry and state and national criminal background checks). It requires applicants for any position

in which the employee comes in direct contact with students to participate in, and consent to, a number of checks to determine whether an applicant has a history of sexual misconduct or child abuse or neglect. In addition, SDE must make available a standardized questionnaire for private schools to use with current or former employers in order to obtain applicant background information ([PA 17-68](#), §§ 9 & 10, effective July 1, 2017; § 11, effective upon passage).

Private School Transportation Pilot Program

A new law creates a private school transportation pilot program whose cost must be borne by either the students or the private school in which the students are enrolled. It requires each public school district within 12 miles of the West Hartford, New Haven, Shelton, Stamford, and Montville school districts to participate in the pilot program to provide transportation for students to attend an equivalent private school located in one of the five named school districts.

Under the new law, (1) requests for transportation must be made at least 30 days in advance to the student’s home district and (2) a board of education is not required to provide transportation for fewer than 10 students. The 10-year program begins in the school year starting July 1, 2017 ([PA 17-68](#), § 8, effective July 1, 2017).

Working Papers Issued From Private Schools

A new law extends to private schools the same authority public school superintendents have to issue working papers (i.e., “certificates of age”) to minors, allowing them to be employed in certain settings. Specifically, it authorizes private schools to issue working papers certifying a minor’s age, which authorizes him or her to work in certain settings shown in Table 1 below ([PA 17-68](#), § 18, effective July 1, 2017).

Table 1: Permitted Work Settings for Minors

Age, at least	Work Setting
16 years old	Manufacturing, mechanical, or theatrical industry; restaurant or public dining room; or bowling alley, shoe-shining establishment, or barber shop
15 years old	Commercial or retail establishment
14 years old	Municipal or private golf course

Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs)

Open Choice Seat Reporting

The legislature eliminated a requirement that RESCs annually report to SDE the number of spaces available during the following school year for out-of-district students to attend public schools in their respective regions through the Open Choice program ([PA 17-14](#), § 10, effective July 1, 2017).

School Districts and Boards of Education

High School Graduation Requirements

The General Assembly revised and delayed the heightened graduation requirements that were set to take effect in the 2017-18 school year with the incoming freshman class. It extended, for another two years, the requirement that students earn at least 20 credits to graduate. The heightened graduation requirement of at least 25 earned credits instead takes effect with the freshman class entering in the 2019-20 school year. The new law also changes the subject area content of these requirements ([PA 17-42](#), effective July 1, 2017).

Student Data Privacy

The legislature amended a law passed last year that governs how boards of education protect student data. Among other things, it extends, from October 1, 2016 to July 1, 2018, the date by which boards must enter into contracts with contractors with whom they share student data ([PA 17-200](#), effective upon passage for most provisions).

Board of Education Mandate Relief

The legislature enacted a new law that alters or eliminates several state mandates placed on boards of education. Among other things, the new law eliminates requirements that boards (1) follow a unified regional school calendar and (2) provide 900 hours of education for expelled students who are under age 16. It also reduces the number of school employees who must receive training in student restraint and seclusion and shortens the previous employment lookback period that boards must consider when conducting background checks of prospective employees ([PA 17-220](#), various effect dates).

Model School District Responsibilities Agreement

A new law allows SDE to develop a model school district responsibilities agreement for boards of education with guiding principles and specific duties for board members and district administrators. Districts may use the agreement beginning in the 2018-19 school year ([PA 17-215](#), effective July 1, 2017).

Alliance District Performance Plans

A new law requires alliance districts to include or consider including additional provisions in the performance plans they submit to the education commissioner when applying for alliance district funding. Specifically, the plans (1) must use student academic performance data when they are developed and (2) may include a school district responsibilities agreement and leadership succession plans ([PA 17-215](#), effective July 1, 2017).

Training for Low-Performing Districts

The legislature amended an existing law that allows SBE to require boards of education to undergo training to improve their efficiency and effectiveness. The act specifies that the training must distinguish and clarify the proper roles and different functions of the (1) board, including the responsibility to develop district improvement plans and education policy, and (2) school and district-level administrators, including the responsibility to implement such plans and policies ([PA 17-215](#), effective July 1, 2017).

Access to Education Records for Homeless Students

The legislature passed a new law that allows a homeless minor who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian to have access to his or her educational records. The new law requires local and regional boards of education to provide these homeless students with knowledge of, and access to, their educational records, including medical records, in the board's possession. Otherwise, under state and federal law, only students who are over age 18 or emancipated have rights as adults regarding record access ([PA 17-194](#), effective July 1, 2017).

In-School Vision Screenings

Under a new law, an automated screening device may be used in public school vision screenings in place of a Snellen chart. Additionally, if a child is found to have a vision defect or eye disease during an in-school screening, the new law requires superintendents to recommend in writing to a student's parents or guardians that the student be examined by a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist ([PA 17-173](#), § 5, effective July 1, 2017).

Seal of Biliteracy

The legislature passed a law allowing boards of education to affix a seal of biliteracy on the high school diploma of any student who is proficient in English and at least one other foreign language, beginning with the graduating class of 2018. This designation is also indicated on the student's transcript. SBE must establish criteria for awarding the seal ([PA 17-29](#), effective July 1, 2017).

Marital and Family Therapists

Under a new law, boards of education may employ candidates for marital and family therapist licensure in their schools to provide services to students and their parents or guardians ([PA 17-173](#), § 10, effective July 1, 2017).

“Pipeline for Connecticut’s Future” Program

A new law allows boards of education to establish a Pipeline for Connecticut’s Future program, in which boards must partner with local businesses to offer students onsite training and course credit ([PA 17-173](#), § 11, effective July 1, 2017).

Incarcerated Parents and Access to Student Records

A new law specifies that an incarcerated parent is entitled to knowledge of, and access to, all the educational, medical, or similar records of his or her minor child kept by the school district, with certain exceptions, including when the parent is prohibited from such knowledge or access to the student’s records under a court order ([PA 17-68](#), § 4, effective July 1, 2017).

Town and Board of Education Agreements on Non-Educational Functions

The legislature passed a new law that explicitly allows local boards of education to enter into written agreements with their respective municipalities’ board of finance, board of selectmen, or similar municipal body, as appropriate, to perform certain non-educational functions for the board ([PA 17-68](#), § 12, effective July 1, 2017).

Health Information Survey

Beginning with the 2017-18 school year, and each year thereafter, a new law requires each board of education to complete the SDE-issued Health Services Program Information Survey and submit it to SDE in a form and manner prescribed by the department ([PA 17-68](#), § 13, effective July 1, 2017).

Special Education

Dyslexia Education for Teachers

A new law increases the dyslexia education requirements for applicants seeking a comprehensive special education or integrated early childhood and special education teaching endorsement. It requires applicants to complete a reading and language diagnosis and remediation program that

includes supervised practicum hours and instruction in the detection of, and evidence-based structured literacy interventions for, students with dyslexia. This requirement applies to certified teachers seeking an endorsement or new applicants for teacher certification ([PA 17-3](#), effective July 1, 2017).

Advisory Board for Persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

A new law renames the “Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired” as the “Advisory Board for Persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing” and changes the membership and duties of the board. Under the act, the board advises the governor and General Assembly on state policies affecting deaf and hard of hearing individuals and their relationship to educational opportunity, among other things. Among other membership changes, the law removes the SDE commissioner and adds (1) the executive director of the American School for the Deaf, (2) an educator who works with children who are deaf or hard of hearing, (3) a parent of a student in a predominantly oral education program, and (4) a parent of a student at the American School for the Deaf. The new law requires the board to meet with the SDE commissioner, among others, to discuss best practices and gaps in services ([PA 17-30](#), effective upon passage).

Private Special Education Provider Audit Frequency

A new law changes the frequency of private special education provider audits from at least once every seven years to as often as the state auditors deem necessary using a risk-based approach. (It maintains the limit of audits under existing law to no more than once every five years, unless the auditors find a problem with the provider’s records and accounts.) Also, it requires boards of education, as well as private providers, to give the auditors any information the auditors deem necessary for conducting the audit ([PA 17-173](#), §§ 6-8, effective upon passage).

Monitoring Boards that Contract with Private Special Education Providers

A new law requires local boards of education that have contracts with private special education providers to submit to audits by the state auditors. These audits must examine the board’s monitoring of student attendance in the private programs to ensure that proper services are being provided and to control costs ([PA 17-68](#), §§ 6 & 7, effective July 1, 2017).

Construction Grants for Regional Special Education Facilities

As part of a long-term, regional plan approved by SBE, a school district is eligible for school construction grants for the purchase, construction, or reconstruction of a special education facility serving students who live outside of the district or attend a private academy. A new law removes

the requirements that (1) SBE approve such a facility and (2) the facility be adjunct to, or connected with, facilities for children in the regular school program, unless SBE determines that a separate facility would more greatly benefit the special education program students ([PA 17-14](#), § 2, effective July 1, 2017).

State Board and State Department of Education

Advisory Council on Digital Citizenship

The legislature enacted a law establishing a Digital Citizenship, Internet Safety, and Media Literacy Advisory Council within SDE. The council is charged with providing SBE with recommendations on best practices for instruction in digital citizenship, internet safety, and media literacy. The education commissioner must select the council's members ([PA 17-67](#), effective July 1, 2017).

Services for Gifted and Talented Students

A new law requires the education commissioner to designate an SDE employee to give information and assistance to boards of education and parents and guardians of gifted and talented students. The information and assistance must relate to identifying and serving gifted and talented students. Also, SDE must develop guidelines for providing services to these students in schools ([PA 17-82](#), effective July 1, 2017).

Mastery Exam Score Reporting

A new law requires SDE to report mastery exam scores to boards of education by August 15 in the year following the year of exam administration ([PA 17-173](#), § 1, effective July 1, 2017).

Commissioner's Network Reports

A new law establishes deadlines by which the education commissioner must submit reports to the Education Committee about the commissioner's network of schools. By February 1, 2018, and annually thereafter, she must submit reports analyzing the academic performance of each network school and comparing the performance of all network schools. By the February 1 following the expiration of each schools' respective turnaround plan, she must submit a final report evaluating the school's plan and its academic performance under the plan, as well as making recommendations about its operation ([PA 17-173](#), § 4, effective July 1, 2017).

Survey of Digital Reporting Software

A new law requires SDE to conduct a survey of boards of education, by January 1, 2018, regarding their use of digital school management and reporting software. The survey must include questions on whether boards use digital school management and reporting software for creating, submitting, and sharing digital copies of education-related documents with SDE and authorized users ([PA 17-220](#), effective July 1, 2017).

Teachers, Administrators, and Other School Employees

Professional Development and In-Service Training

The legislature made numerous changes to statutes on professional development and in-service training for educators. The new law requires school districts' professional development programs for certified employees to be consistent with the goals that the district or employees identify, and it eliminates a number of provisions, including SBE's authority to audit and assess penalties on local professional development programs. It also removes several topics from the in-service training that school districts were required to provide to their teachers ([PA 17-37](#), effective July 1, 2017).

Master's Degree for Teacher Certification

The legislature extended the deadline by which a teacher must earn a master's degree in order to earn a professional educator certificate, which is the highest level of certification for public school teacher certification. (The other two levels are initial and provisional certification.) Under the new law, beginning July 1, 2018, rather than July 1, 2016, anyone applying for professional certification must hold a master's degree in an SBE-determined subject matter area ([PA 17-173](#), §§ 2 & 3, effective July 1, 2017).

Initial Educator Certification

A new law changes the requirements to qualify for an entry-level initial educator certificate. It allows an applicant with a bachelor's degree in any subject area from a Board of Regents- or Office of Higher Education-accredited or regionally accredited institution to be eligible, as long as he or she has also completed either certain approved (1) educator preparation programs or (2) alternate route to certification programs and satisfies either temporary certificate or resident teacher certificate requirements ([PA 17-14](#), § 8, effective July 1, 2017).

Teacher Certificate for Out-of-State Teachers

A new law makes teachers who have taught for at least two years and hold a teaching certificate from another state, U.S. possession or territory, the District of Columbia, or Puerto Rico eligible for a nonrenewable, temporary Connecticut teaching certificate. It makes the certificate valid for one year and allows SBE to extend it for an additional two years ([PA 17-68](#), § 2, effective July 1, 2017).

Resident Teacher Certificate

A new law extends the length of a resident teacher certificate from one to two years. To qualify for this certificate an applicant must, among other things, hold a bachelor's degree from an institution of higher education accredited regionally or in Connecticut and be enrolled in an SBE-approved alternate route to certification program ([PA 17-68](#), § 3, effective July 1, 2017).

Exam Waiver for Teacher Preparation Students

The legislature passed a new law under which teacher preparation program students may qualify for a waiver from the state competency exam. (A law passed last year required all such students to take the exam for diagnostic purposes.) SBE establishes the waiver criteria ([PA 17-14](#), § 3, effective July 1, 2017).

Teacher Retirement System (TRS) Health Coverage

A new law allows certain teachers and school administrators who return to work for a board of education after retirement (under existing reemployment exceptions) to keep their TRS health coverage during the reemployment ([PA 17-173](#), § 14, effective upon passage).

Uncertified Superintendents

A new law allows a board of education to request that the education commissioner grant a one-time, probationary extension for an uncertified, acting superintendent's term. This extension may not exceed one school year, and the board must show a significant need or hardship to earn the commissioner's approval ([PA 17-173](#), § 12, effective upon passage).

Technical High School System

Technical High School System Reorganization

A new law transitions the Connecticut technical high school system into an independent executive branch agency in two phases over a three-year period (FYs 18 to 20). (Currently, the system is part of SDE.) It also renames the system the "Technical Education and Career System" and renames

the system's high schools "technical education and career schools." The new law establishes accountability and efficiency mechanisms for the system, requires evaluation of existing career technical education standards and curriculum, and modifies teacher certification requirements in occupational subject areas ([PA 17-237](#), various effective dates).

Postsecondary Education Programs within the Technical High School System

The legislature enacted a new law creating a postsecondary education division within the Connecticut Technical High School System to administer any postsecondary education program that (1) a technical high school offered during the 2016-17 school year or (2) the system board approves on or after July 1, 2017. The system currently operates postsecondary programs in aviation maintenance and licensed practical nursing ([PA 17-100](#), effective upon passage).

Higher Education

Teach-Out Plans

A new law expands the Office of Higher Education (OHE) executive director's authority regarding higher educational institutions that are in danger of closing. It allows him to require any institution, not just a private occupational school, that is not regionally accredited to facilitate a "teach-out" if it is exhibiting financial and administrative signs that it is in danger of closing, provided, however, that this course of action was previously discussed. A teach-out ensures that students can complete the courses or programs of study in which they were enrolled without significant impact ([PA 17-191](#), effective July 1, 2017).

Programs Requiring Licensure to Practice

A new law expands the OHE executive director's authority regarding higher educational institutions that apply to OHE to offer programs in a field requiring a license to practice in Connecticut. It allows him to require of any such program application (1) evidence that the program meets state or federal licensing requirements and (2) a focused or onsite review ([PA 17-191](#), effective July 1, 2017).

Private Occupational Schools

The legislature made several changes to the laws governing private occupational schools. It (1) changed the definition of “private occupational school,” (2) changed the financial reporting requirements for non-accredited schools enrolling fewer than 10 students, (3) required all schools to maintain duplicate academic transcripts for students and alumni, and (4) established a deadline for OHE-issued tuition refunds to students whose school becomes insolvent or closes ([PA 17-139](#), effective July 1, 2017).

Promotion of Loan Forgiveness Programs

A new law requires public service employers with more than 10 full-time employees to provide (1) informational materials about certain federal student loan forgiveness programs to newly hired employees within two weeks of their start date and (2) certain loan forgiveness certification forms to current employees upon request. OHE must create or copy federally-designed informational materials, make them available online, and distribute them to public service employers ([PA 17-206](#), effective July 1, 2017).

Endowed Chair Investment Fund

Beginning in FY 18, a new law authorizes the UConn and Connecticut State University System (CSUS) foundations to invest state funds transferred from OHE’s Endowed Chair Investment Fund to benefit endowed chairs at their respective institutions. Under prior law, the state treasurer invested these funds. The new law also transfers, from the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) to the UConn board of trustees, the requirement to establish an endowed chair in infectious diseases at the UConn Health Center ([PA 17-63](#), §§ 7 & 8, effective July 1, 2017).

State Contracting Requirements

A new law limits the applicability of certain state contracting requirements to UConn and BOR. Generally, it allows UConn and BOR to enter into certain goods and services contracts without (1) obtaining specified certifications from bidders and contractors and (2) complying with competitive bidding or negotiation requirements. In the latter case, UConn and BOR must first adopt policies for entering into or amending the goods and services contracts covered by the new law ([PA 17-130](#), §§ 2-11, effective July 1, 2017).

Guidelines on Reducing Educational Resource Costs

A new law allows OHE, UConn, CSUS, the regional community-technical college system, and Charter Oak State College to each establish guidelines encouraging the state's public higher education institutions to implement programs that reduce students' textbook and educational resource costs ([PA 17-130](#), § 1, effective January 1, 2018).

Connecticut Early College Opportunity Program (CT-ECO)

A new law codifies the CT-ECO program, which in practice exists in several school districts, including Danbury, New London, Norwalk, and Windham. It defines CT-ECO as collaboration between a school district's high schools, a local community college, and a company or business entity where a student may earn an industry-recognized, two-year postsecondary degree in addition to a high school diploma. The law requires the CSCU president to create an outreach coordinator position to act as a liaison between high schools, community colleges, and businesses to develop workforce education and job training opportunities, including CT-ECO. It also requires that the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission include CT-ECO in its next statewide plan ([PA 17-207](#), §§ 5 & 6, effective upon passage for CT-ECO and October 1, 2017 for the outreach coordinator).

Examining the Bioscience Education Pipeline

To examine whether the state's public and private higher education institutions have the educational resources to meet the state's bioscience industry workforce needs, the legislature authorized the formation of a working group. The working group, which the Commerce Committee's chairpersons must appoint, must report its findings and recommendations to the legislature by January 15, 2018 ([SA 17-20](#), effective upon passage).

Microbiome Research & Development Workforce Development

The bioscience business sector converts research into new products and treatments, and one of its new subsectors looks at how microorganisms that inhabit the body could be used to improve digestion, cognition, or other biological processes and systems (i.e., microbiome). To develop a roadmap to make Connecticut a leader in microbiome research and development, the legislature created a stakeholders' working group to determine, among other things, the industry's workforce needs and assess whether the state's public and private higher education institutions can meet them. The working group must present its findings to the governor and the legislature by February 1, 2018 ([SA 17-16](#), effective upon passage).

Online Mechatronics College Courses

A new law requires BOR to develop, by January 1, 2018, a plan to offer online mechatronics courses at Central Connecticut State University and the community colleges. Mechatronics combines various engineering fields, including mechanical, electronics, controls, and computer. Mechatronics professionals design and repair robotics and computer-aided manufacturing equipment, among other things ([PA 17-242](#), effective upon passage).

Uniform Fraudulent Transfer Act and College Tuition Payments

The Uniform Fraudulent Transfer Act protects creditors by, among other things, providing ways to determine and prohibit certain fraudulent asset transfers and obligations. It provides criteria for determining what are fraudulent transfers or obligations and allows the court to void them. The legislature amended the act so that transfers and obligations against a higher education institution are not voidable if the transfer was made or obligation incurred by a parent or guardian on behalf of a minor or adult child for his or her undergraduate education. In doing so, it limits the ability of a parent's or guardian's creditors to have tuition payments voided to fulfill a debt to the creditor ([PA 17-50](#), effective October 1, 2017).

Transfer Agreements at Connecticut Public Institutions of Higher Education

In an effort to make it easier for college students to transfer from one public institution to another, the legislature enacted a new law to make transfer agreements more accessible. The law requires (1) OHE and public institutions of higher education to publish information regarding transfer and articulation agreements on their respective internet websites and (2) CSCU to provide information on transfer and articulation agreements to all students admitted to any of the regional community-technical colleges ([PA 17-229](#), effective January 1, 2018).

Planning Commission for Higher Education

A new law reconstitutes and expands the membership of the Planning Commission for Higher Education and places it within OHE. Furthermore, it modifies certain commission duties and activities, including creating a requirement that a subcommittee develop an annual affordability index for public higher education ([PA 17-229](#), effective January 1, 2018).

Student Loan Ombudsman

A new law requires the banking commissioner to report to the Banking Committee, by July 1, 2018, on a plan to implement the department's student loan ombudsman, a position within the banking department to provide assistance to student loan borrowers ([PA 17-236](#), § 19, effective upon passage).

Additional Minor Changes

Various Acts

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

1. [PA 17-63](#) (reassigns various duties from BOR to OHE);
2. [PA 17-68](#) (makes minor changes to the membership and appointing authorities of the Connecticut Advisory Council for Teacher Professional Standards and the School Nurse Advisory Council and adds a representative from the Connecticut Association of School Administrators, an administrators' union, to the membership of the teacher Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC));
3. [PA 17-156](#) (requires (1) the Higher Education Coordinating Council to use existing data networks to produce reports about the employment status and earnings of UConn and CSCU students, both prior to enrollment and after graduation and (2) the reports to be posted online in aggregate form); and
4. [PA 17-173](#) (adds a representative from the Connecticut Association of Schools to PEAC and adds the chief court administrator, or his designee, to the Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement Gap).

JM:cmg