



2015 Legislative Session Summary

WINS

AFT CONNECTICUT BILLS/ISSUES

- **SB 1096 Charter School Accountability** – Establishes significant transparency and reporting measures for charter schools and charter management organizations to ensure public dollars are being spent appropriately.
- **SB 811 Hospital Conversions** – Establishes measures to control health care costs and improve transparency for patients and place greater scrutiny on the sale of hospitals.
- **SB 855 Hospital Nurse Staffing** – Requires all hospitals to report actual nurse staffing ratios and incidents of workplace violence.
- **Paraprofessional Staffing** – Reached agreement with SDE in lieu of legislation to improve their guidance to local boards of education about writing IEPs with sufficient specificity regarding responsibilities of certified and non-certified staff and their enforcement of the use of appropriately qualified substitute teachers.
- **HB 6787 Promotional Examinations** – Allows DAS to retain promotion exam results for certain state employees.

Other Priority Bills:

- **SB 914 Double Damages** – Requires a court to award double damages plus court costs and attorney's fees if an employer failed to (1) pay an employee's wages, accrued fringe benefits, or arbitration award or (2) meet the law's requirements for an employee's minimum wage or overtime rates.
- **SB 963 Labor History** – Requires SDE to provide curriculum materials to districts to teach Labor History.

PreK-12/PSRP

- **SB 843 Trauma-Informed Practices** – Requires districts to annually provide in-service training for school employees on trauma-informed practices.
- **SB 913 True Pooling** – Allows municipalities and boards of education to put their employees into the state employee health insurance plan to get better healthcare for less money.
- **SB 927 Restraints/Seclusions** – Specifies the steps school boards must take when a student is subject to restraint and seclusion four or more times in 20 school days, adds training requirements for certain school professionals and creates a pilot program to analyze data on incidents of physical restraint or seclusion.

- **SB 962 Curriculum Changes** - Requires CPR training, instruction on the safe use of social media and computer programming to be included in middle and secondary level curriculum beginning in the 2017-2017 school year.
- **SB 1053 Suspensions and Expulsions** – Mandates under which circumstances students in preschool through grade 2 may be given out-of school suspension and expulsion.
- **SB 1054 Dyslexia** – Requires SDE to designate staff to help parents and boards of education detect and intervene on behalf of students with dyslexia and requires teacher preparation programs and in-service training programs to include dyslexia education and training.
- **SB 1057 CTHSS** - Requires the State Board of Education to maintain a three- year, rather than five-year, rolling capital improvement and capital equipment plan for the state's technical high school system.
- **SB 1058 Chronic Absenteeism** - Requires boards of education to establish attendance review teams when chronic absenteeism rates reach a certain percentage and report to SDE the number of truant and chronically absent students for each school and the entire district. Requires SDE to develop a prevention and intervention plan districts to use and expands children's probate truancy court clinics.
- **SB 1059 HS Graduation Requirements** - Delays, by one year (Class of 2021), implementation of the scheduled changes to the state's school requirements that increase the minimum number of credits, from 20 to 25 and require students to pass state course examinations and complete a senior project. Creates a task force to study the alignment of the high school graduation requirement changes with the Common Core State Standards and the feasibility of adding CPR training as a graduation requirement.
- **SB 1095 Student Assessments** – Replaces the 11th grade SBAC with the SAT and establishes a committee to review the usage and overreliance of standardized tests.
- **SB 1098 Teacher Certification Reciprocity** – Allows for reciprocity agreements with other states without diluting Connecticut's teacher certification standards.
- **SB 1099 Education Plan** – Required SDE to establish a strategic master plan for public education in Connecticut. Passed the Senate and died in the House.
- **HB 6912 School Safety Grants** - Extends the deadline for school security infrastructure grant applications and awards by one fiscal year, from June 30, 2015 to June 30, 2016.
- **HB 6974 Director of Reading** – Creates a Director of Reading Initiatives at SDE.
- **HB 6978 Magnet Schools** – Requires SDE to develop and submit comprehensive statewide magnet school plan to the General Assembly by October 1, 2016.
- **HB 7018 Alternative Education** – Requires SDE to develop guidelines for the provision of alternative education.
- **HB 7019 Minimum Budget Requirement** – Allows districts with declining enrollment to reduce their education spending.
- **HB 7020 Early Childhood Educators** – Makes several changes in early childhood education statutes:

- Requires Boards of Education and RESCs operating preschool magnet programs, as well as state or local charter school governing councils offering preschool programs, to obtain NAEYC accreditation
- Requires the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) to report on the status of school readiness program providers' compliance with the stricter staff qualification requirements and develop a plan to achieve full compliance
- Grandfathers certain school readiness staff into stricter staff qualifications until June 30, 2025
- Extends from July 1, 2015 to 2017, the deadline by which certain school readiness staff must meet the first phase of heightened staff qualifications and removes the requirement that Smart Start preschool classroom teachers have a professional certificate, rather than any type of teaching certificate as required by existing law.
- **HB 7021 Teacher Prep Programs** – Requires part of student teaching experience to take place in Title I district and requires SDE to assess the quality of in-state teacher prep programs.
- **HB 7023 Various Revisions to Education Statutes** -
 - Changes the name of “Special Master” to “District Improvement Officer”
 - Reduces the number of required vision and postural screenings for public school students
 - Allows school employees to voluntarily administer epi-pens in consultation with the School Nurse Advisory Council
 - Clarifies that a union representative is required to be part of district professional development and evaluation committees from both teachers’ and administrators’ unions.
 - Indemnified mentor teachers and reviewers from lawsuits
 - Approves CTHSS long range strategic and capital improvement plans

State Employees

- **SR 30/HR 33 Rowland Settlement** – Approve the Rowland/SEBAC settlement. Designated approved after 30 days on each respective chamber calendar.
- **HB 6812 Faculty Representation** - Allows the chairperson and vice-chairperson of the Board of Regents for Higher Education's (BOR) faculty advisory committee (FAC), who serve as nonvoting, ex-officio members of BOR, to attend BOR executive sessions at the BOR chairperson's invitation. Current law excludes them from all executive sessions.