



2017 Legislative Session Summary

WINS

By far, our biggest and most important win was protecting collective bargaining and binding arbitration by defeating scores of bills and amendments that sought to limit, repeal or weaken both, including:

- Imposing further state employee concession by enacting statutory changes eliminating collective bargaining for state employees
- Requiring chamber votes on state employee collective bargaining agreement and arbitration awards;
- Eliminating overtime from state employee pension calculations;
- Moving state employees from a defined benefit to a defined contribution pension plan;
- Establishing an irrebuttable presumption that a municipal budget reserve of fifteen percent or less is not available for payment for any item subject to arbitration;
- Eliminating municipal or board of education employees' right to bargain over municipal regionalization efforts;
- Establishing a statewide Municipal Accountability Review Board that could set aside collective bargaining agreements and act as the arbitrator in financially distressed municipalities.

AFT CONNECTICUT BILLS/ISSUES

- **SR 7.HR 8** – Approved agreement negotiated between SEBAC and Governor Malloy that modifies actuarial cost methods and assumptions used to calculate the state's actuarial determined employer contribution.
- **SB 746** – Defeated efforts that would have required the Municipal Employee Retirement System to exclude overtime in benefit calculations for new hires.
- **SB 950 (amended to HB 7271)** - Defeated efforts to weaken teaching certification in the vocational technical high school by issuing a certificate to anyone who has completed five years of experience, which may have included an apprenticeship or specialized schooling. The bill now says applicants must have to complete six years of work experience in the field for which the certificate is to be endorsed and does not include specialized schooling.
- **HB 6668** – Establishes protections for pregnant women in the workplace.
- **HB 7161** – Requires companies that administer certain 403(b) retirement plans offered by a political subdivision of the state to disclose in writing the (1) fee ratio and return, net of fees for each investment under the plan and (2) fees paid to any person who provides investment advice to plan participants.
- **HB 7212** – Passed legislation that would require public service employers, including boards of education, with more than 10 full-time employees to provide informational material and forms pertaining to federal student loan forgiveness program to newly hired employees.

- **HB 7271** – Moves the Connecticut Technical High School System from the State Department of Education and establish it as an independent executive branch agency over a 3-year phase-in period.
- **HB 7296** – Permits municipalities with accrued unfunded liabilities in the Municipal Employee Retirement System (MERS) to authorize bonds to pay all or part of the unfunded liability.

OTHER KEY BILLS

PreK-12/PSRP

- **SB 953 Professional Development for Educators** - For professional development, the bill: (1) requires school districts' professional development programs for certified employees to be consistent with the goals the district or employees identify; (2) eliminates the requirement that districts attest in writing to the State Department of Education (SDE) that they meet the state's professional development requirements (in practice, districts have SDE-approved educator evaluation and support plans that include this information); (3) eliminates the requirement that SDE (a) notify a district of its failure to meet the professional development requirements and (b) audit district programs; and (4) eliminates the State Board of Education's (SBE) authority to assess financial penalties against districts it finds out of compliance based on such SDE audits. For in-service training, the bill eliminates several topics districts are currently required to cover when providing such training to certified teachers, administrators, and other pupil personnel. (Some of these topics are covered by other statutory provisions and, in practice, may be covered by local education curricula.)
- **SB 954 Universal Preschool** - The Department of Education, in consultation with the Office of Early Childhood, the Early Childhood Cabinet, and two providers of private preschool programs shall develop a plan for the provision of preschool to all children three and four years of age in the state for the school year commencing July 1, 2022.
- **SB 1026 High School Graduation Requirements** - This bill extends, for another two years, the current graduation requirements, which require that students earn at least 20 credits to graduate. Therefore, heightened graduation requirements that require students to earn at least 25 credits are postponed and would take effect with the freshman class beginning in the 2019-20 school year, instead of the 2017-18 school year. The bill also makes changes to the heightened requirements established in current law and allows graduation requirements to be met through successful demonstration of subject matter content mastery achieved through educational experiences and opportunities that provide flexible and multiple pathways to learning.
- **HB 7205 – Early Literacy** - This bill requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to establish a reading readiness program, within available appropriations. The program must 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. The bill also specifically requires the results of literacy surveys, which must be taken by all teachers in positions requiring endorsements in (1) early childhood nursery through grade three or (2) elementary education, to be distributed to the teacher and the supervisor responsible for designing and facilitating the teacher's professional development. The bill specifies that the survey results be confidential, but it removes a provision of current law that the survey be conducted in a way that protects the teacher's anonymity.
- **HB 7202** - This bill establishes a postsecondary educational division of the Connecticut Technical High School System (i.e., "system") to administer any postsecondary educational 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.

- **HB 7207 Student Data Privacy Act** - This bill alters or eliminates several state mandates placed upon local and regional boards of education (hereinafter “boards”). Among other things, the bill: (1) allows, rather than requires, boards to follow a unified regional school calendar (§ 1); (2) expands the type of alternative education for expelled students that boards must offer (§§ 2 & 3); (3) reduces the number of school employees who must receive training in student restraint and seclusion and makes other changes to the training requirements (§ 5); and (4) shortens the former employer lookback period that boards of education must consider when conducting background checks of prospective employees (§ 6).

Healthcare

- **SB 444 Healthcare Cabinet** - This bill requires the state's Health Care Cabinet to advise the governor on total statewide health care spending, including methods to collect, analyze, and report health care spending data. Existing law already requires the cabinet to advise the governor on the: (1) design, implementation, actionable objectives and evaluation of state and federal health care policies, priorities, and objectives related to Connecticut's efforts to improve health care access; (2) quality of such care; and (3) affordability and sustainability of the state's health care system.