PA 25-143—sHB 6921
Education Committee

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND CAREER SYSTEM AND CONCERNING THE ADMINISTRATION OF EPINEPHRINE AND GLUCAGON

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§§ 19-28 — EPINEPHRINE AND GLUCAGON ADMINISTRATION

Expands how epinephrine and glucagon can be administered to include through nasal sprays and other USDA-approved medical equipment in various statutes related to allergic reaction response

SUMMARY: This act makes various changes to education laws, summarized below in a section-by-section analysis.
EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025, unless otherwise noted below.

§ 1 — DESIGNATED QUALIFIED STAFF MEMBER REQUIREMENTS

Modifies education and supervision requirements for qualified designated staff members in OEC early care and education programs

Existing law requires primary classroom teachers at Office of Early Childhood (OEC)-funded early childhood education programs to meet certain education requirements. It also specifies the degrees or credentials required for these teachers to qualify as "designated qualified staff members" (i.e. the person assigned primary

responsibility for a classroom in an early care and education program). A teacher may qualify as a designated qualified staff member at a bachelor's degree level or an associate degree level.

The act modifies designated qualified staff member education, supervision requirements, and phase-in dates as described below.

Bachelor's Degree-Designated Qualified Staff Member

Under existing law, a person may qualify as a bachelor's degree-designated qualified staff member by meeting one of several criteria, such as having a (1) bachelor's degree or higher with an early childhood concentration or (2) State Board of Education-issued teaching certificate with an early childhood education or special education endorsement.

Another way a person can qualify under existing law is if he or she is enrolled in a higher education institution, is making progress in an early childhood planned program of study leading to an early childhood bachelor's degree, and receives OEC's permission. The act adds a requirement that these individuals also be supervised by an on-site staff teacher or administrator who has a bachelor's degree or higher with an early childhood concentration.

Associate Degree-Designated Qualified Staff Member

Existing law generally allows an associate degree-designated qualified staff member meeting certain education requirements to be deemed a designated qualified staff member when a bachelor's degree-designated qualified staff member is not assigned. Prior law required an associate degree-designated qualified staff member to be supervised on-site by a bachelor's degree-designated qualified staff member. The act instead requires that these qualified staff members be supervised by an on-site staff teacher or administrator who has a bachelor's degree or higher with a concentration in early childhood education.

The act also eliminates a provision in prior law that allowed a bachelor's degree-designated qualified staff member to supervise an associate degree-designated staff member off-site. But it continues to allow off-site supervision if the associate degree-designated staff member works at a family child care home and (1) is working toward an early childhood associate degree or higher and (2) the supervisor meets the requirements for a bachelor's degree-designated qualified staff member and provides coaching at the family child care home.

Phase-In of Requirements

Prior law phased in the designated qualified staff member requirements from July 1, 2024, to July 1, 2030. The act delays the start date of the phase-in timeline to July 1, 2025.

Specifically, starting July 1, 2025, at least 25% of staff members with primary responsibility for a classroom at each OEC-funded early care and education program must be bachelor's level designated qualified staff members. This

requirement increases to (1) 50% starting July 1, 2027, and (2) 60% starting July 1, 2030.

Under existing law and the act, if the OEC-funded early care and education program is a family child care home, the designated qualified staff member for the home must have achieved, or be working toward, an early childhood education associate degree or higher. But starting July 1, 2035, the act requires these designated qualified staff members to have such a degree.

As under existing law, these requirements apply to programs that accept state funds, other than Care 4 Kids subsidies, directly from OEC or indirectly through OEC subcontractors for any combination of infant, toddler, preschool, and before- and after-school care programs.

§§ 2 & 3 — YOUTH CAMPS

Specifies that youth camp licensees (1) cannot transfer their licenses and (2) must apply to OEC to renew them

By law, youth camps must obtain an annual license from OEC. The act specifies that (1) these licenses are not transferable and (2) when renewing a license, youth camps must apply to OEC, in addition to paying the renewal fees required under existing law. (The fees are $815 for for-profit camps, $315 for nonprofit camps, and no fee for certain nonprofit day camps that operate for no more than five days.)

Additionally, the act makes technical changes to related statutory definitions.

§ 4 — STATE INTERAGENCY BIRTH-TO-THREE COORDINATING COUNCIL

Eliminates the six-year term limit for certain State Interagency Birth-to-Three Coordination Council members

Under prior law, members appointed to the State Interagency Birth-To-Three Coordinating Council, which helps OEC perform its responsibilities regarding the Birth-To-Three program, could serve up to two consecutive three-year terms. The act eliminates this term limit for the following council members:

1. the state coordinators of (a) education for homeless children and youth and (b) early childhood special education and
2. members representing each of the participating state agencies (excluding the State Department of Education (SDE)).

The act also updates terminology, replacing the term "minority parents" with "parents representing culturally diverse communities" to reflect current OEC policy.

§ 5 — HEAD START PROGRESS REPORT

Eliminates the requirement that the Early Childhood Cabinet report annually on state agencies' progress made on tasks specified in the federal Head Start Act

Existing law requires the Early Childhood Cabinet to annually develop an action plan assigning the appropriate state agency to complete the tasks specified in the federal Head Start Act (P.L. 110-134). The act eliminates a corresponding requirement that the cabinet annually submit a statewide strategic report on the progress state agencies made on these tasks to the governor and Education and Human Services committees. (In practice, this information is already included in OEC's Blue Ribbon five-year strategic plan.)

§§ 6-8 — EARLY START CT

Makes various changes related to Early Start CT, including reducing the number of local or regional governance partners in each community that may help provide early care and education, extending by two years the deadline for OEC to establish a sliding fee scale, and increasing the amount OEC can allocate to each local or regional governance partner

PA 24-78 consolidated the School Readiness Preschool Grant Program, state-contracted child care centers for disadvantaged children, and the state supplemental Head Start grants into one program (Early Start CT), starting in FY 2026. This act makes various changes affecting the program's local and regional governance partnerships, sliding fee scale, and state allocation.

Local and Regional Governance Partners

Prior law required local or regional governance partners, within available appropriations, to help provide early care and education in a community under Early Start CT. The act instead allows only one partner to do so within a community.

Existing law allows (1) a town or school district, and appropriate representatives of groups or entities interested in early care and education in the town or district, to establish a local governance partner and (2) two or more towns or districts, and appropriate representatives of groups or entities interested in early childhood education in a region, to establish a regional governance partner. These partners' membership must reflect the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic composition of the community served.

Sliding Fee Scale

The act extends, from July 1, 2025, to July 1, 2027, the date by which OEC must establish a sliding fee scale for families enrolled in an early care and education program under Early Start CT. By law, the fee scale must be based on family income and consistent with the existing Care 4 Kids fee scale.

Program Allocation

Prior law allowed OEC to allocate the lesser of $150,000 or up to 10% of the total financial assistance under the contract with each local or regional governance partner for Early Start CT's coordination, program evaluation, and administration.

The act increases the amount OEC can allocate to the lesser of $350,000 or up to 10% of the funding for childcare spaces awarded to providers supported by governance partners.

Under existing law and the act, the allocated amount must be increased by the lesser of up to $50,000 or the amount of local funding provided for early childhood education coordination, program evaluation, and administration.

§ 9 — MAGNET SCHOOL ENROLLMENT STANDARDS FOR OPERATING GRANTS AND MAGNET STUDENT RESIDENCY FOR ECS GRANTS

Makes permanent (1) magnet school enrollment standards for operating grants and (2) magnet school students counting in the town they reside in for ECS grant purposes

Enrollment Standards

The act makes permanent the requirement that a *Sheff* magnet school meet the reduced-isolation (i.e. desegregation) enrollment standards required under *Sheff* to receive operating grants. *Sheff* magnet schools help the state meet its obligations under the *Sheff* v. *O'Neill* Connecticut Supreme Court desegregation decision (see *Background — Sheff v. O'Neill State Supreme Court Decision*).

For non-*Sheff* magnet schools, the act makes permanent the prohibition on the SDE commissioner awarding a grant to any magnet that (1) has more than 75% of the total school enrollment from one school district (i.e. not enough out-of-district students attending) or (2) does not have school enrollment that meets the commissioner's magnet school enrollment standards for reduced isolation.

Under prior law, these provisions expired at the end of FY 25. Under the act, as under prior law, a magnet school that does not comply may still receive grants if the commissioner (1) finds it appropriate to award a grant for an additional year or years and (2) approves a plan to bring the school into compliance with the standards.

The act also makes permanent the commissioner's authority to impose a financial penalty on a magnet school that does not meet the reduced-isolation standards for two consecutive years or more. Specifically, the commissioner may impose the penalty on the school's operator or, after consulting with the operator, take other appropriate steps to help the operator comply. This authority was set to expire at the end of FY 25 under prior law.

ECS Grants and Magnet School Students

The act makes permanent the requirement that a magnet school student is counted in the town where the student lives (rather than in the town that hosts the magnet school) for education cost sharing (ECS) grant purposes. This provision was set to expire at the end of FY 25 under prior law, although it has already been a long-time SDE practice.

ECS grants are per-student grants that depend on, among other things, the number of resident students for a town. ECS is the largest form of state education aid to school districts.

Background — Sheff v. O'Neill State Supreme Court Decision

In this 1996 decision, the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled that the state had a constitutional obligation to remedy the educational inequities in the Hartford schools caused by racial and ethnic isolation (238 Conn. 1 (1996)). The court ordered the state legislature and the governor to craft a solution, and legislation was passed to create voluntary desegregation in Hartford by creating interdistrict magnet schools and using programs such as Open Choice.

§ 10 — SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS AND OPEN CHOICE

Clarifies duties for receiving and sending districts participating in Open Choice for special education students and students with 504 accommodations

The act places certain duties on school districts that send or receive Open Choice students who require special education services. Open Choice is a voluntary interdistrict attendance program that allows students from the Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, Danbury, and Norwalk school districts to attend suburban schools, and vice versa, on a space-available basis. The state awards per-student grants to the districts that receive Open Choice students.

The act requires the receiving district (the district where the student attends school) to hold the planning and placement team (PPT) meeting for each out-of-district student and invite representatives from the sending district to participate in the meeting. By law and unchanged by the act, the sending district must pay the receiving district for the student's special education costs that exceed the state grant amount for the student. PPT meetings are planning meetings held at least annually with parents and school staff to plan services for special education students; the plan they agree to is known as the student's individualized education program (IEP).

The act also requires the receiving district to ensure that out-of-district students who require special education services receive the services mandated by the student's IEP regardless of whether the sending or receiving district provides the services.

504 Accommodations

Under the act, an Open Choice receiving district must ensure that a student with a 504 accommodation plan (a plan pursuant to Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973) receives the services required under the plan and the receiving district bears the costs of providing the services to the student. These accommodations may include things like more time for standardized tests, preferential seating (away from distractions), assistive technology, and instructional adjustments (visual aids or alternative methods of instruction).

§§ 11 & 12 — MAGNET SCHOOL CAPITAL EXPENSES GRANTS FOR GOODWIN MAGNETS

Allows existing grant funds for magnet school capital expenses to be given to Goodwin University Education Services in addition to RESCs

The act amends two existing SDE bond authorizations for grants for capital expenses at magnet schools operated by regional educational service centers (RESCs) to additionally allow the grants to be given to magnet school operator Goodwin University Education Services.
EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 13 — SHEFF REGION MAGNET SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION GRANTS

Changes the (1) calculation for certain Sheff magnet school transportation grants by eliminating the per-pupil calculation and the supplemental grants structure for RESCs, instead basing the grants on actual costs of transportation services and (2) payment schedule for all magnet school transportation grants

The act changes the calculation for transportation grants to certain magnet schools that help the state meet its obligations under the *Sheff* v. *O'Neill* desegregation court decision (see *Background — Sheff v. O'Neill*). Under prior law, SDE awarded (1) *Sheff* magnet school transportation grants in an amount equal to $2,000 per pupil, and (2) supplemental *Sheff* magnet school transportation grants to RESCs within available appropriations. (Non-*Sheff* magnet school transportation grants are calculated based on $1,300 per pupil.)

Starting with FY 26, the act eliminates the supplemental grant and the per-pupil calculation for RESCs, instead requiring that their *Sheff* magnet transportation grant amounts equal the cost of reasonable transportation services. It subjects the grant to a comprehensive financial review, which must be done by an auditor the SDE commissioner selects and may be paid out of the grant funds. This is the same audit requirement that applied under prior law to the supplemental grants.

Starting with FY 26, the act also changes the payment schedule for these grants to RESCs. Under the act, up to 95% of the grant must be paid by June 30 of the fiscal year based on documentation provided before May 31, with up to 50% of the estimated transportation costs in October. The remainder must be paid in increments by March 1 of the next fiscal year upon the financial review's completion. (This was somewhat similar to the prior schedule for the supplemental grants.)

Separately, for transportation grants to the other magnet schools, the act allows for payments to be made earlier than previously required. Specifically, half of the estimated eligible transportation costs must be paid by October 31, with the remainder paid by May 31. Prior law required the payments to be made in October and May, respectively. (An identical provision was also passed in PA 25-168, § 312.)

Background — Sheff v. O'Neill

In this 1996 decision, the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled that the state had a

constitutional obligation to remedy the educational inequities in the Hartford schools caused by racial and ethnic isolation (238 Conn. 1 (1996)). The court ordered the state legislature and the governor to craft a solution, and legislation was passed to create voluntary desegregation in Hartford by creating interdistrict magnet schools and using programs such as Open Choice.

§ 14 — READING INSTRUCTION SURVEY REMOVAL

Removes the reading instruction survey requirement for K-3 teachers

The act removes the reading instruction survey requirement for certified K-3 teachers. Under prior law, local and regional boards of education ("school boards") had to require their K-3 teachers to take a biennial survey developed by SDE on reading instruction. SDE's survey identifies strengths and weaknesses of the teachers' reading instruction practice and knowledge on an individual, school, and district level.

The act maintains the provision that results from these surveys are confidential under the Freedom of Information Act.

§ 15 — UPDATES TO THE TEACHER EDUCATION AND MENTORING PROGRAM

Makes technical and conforming updates to the TEAM program

The act makes conforming updates to the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) program to align with 2024 changes to the law on educator certification. The TEAM program provides guided support to new teachers. Under prior law, teachers are eligible for a provisional educator certificate when they complete the program.

PA 24-41 reduced the number of teacher certification levels from three to two by eliminating the provisional level as of July 1, 2025 (existing certificates remain valid until expired). The act makes conforming changes to the TEAM law by replacing references to "provisional educator certificate" with "professional educator certificate" and specifying that these teachers also must meet the law's other requirements for professional educator certification.

§§ 16 & 17 — REQUIREMENT FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION PROVIDERS TO PROVIDE BASE TUITION AND COSTS

Requires private special education providers to submit their base tuition and costs for services for each school year by December 31 of the year before the services will be provided

Beginning July 1, 2025, the act requires any written contract entered or amended between a school board and a private special education provider (see *Background — Special Education Services Contracts*) to require the provider to submit a base tuition and cost for services to the school board for each school year services are provided (according to the contract). This submission must occur by

December 31 of the year before the services will be provided (which is prior to school boards' budget cycles).

The act also requires each RESC providing special education services to submit a base tuition and cost for services provided for any school board for each school year services are provided. This must occur by December 31 of the year before the services will be provided.

Background — Special Education Services Contracts

The state reimburses school districts for special education costs that exceed four and a half times the cost of educating a student in that district (the exact level of reimbursement depends on the state appropriation for the grant for that fiscal year). This reimbursement is known as an excess cost grant.

By law, if a district pays a private provider for special education services, the district must enter a written contract with the provider for those services to be eligible for the excess cost grant.

§ 18 — CTECS COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF APPROVALS

Allows the CTECS executive director to enter into cooperative arrangements with nonprofit career schools and certain training institutes; requires the OPM secretary to review and approve requests to fill instructional staff positions within 30 days after submission of the CTECS superintendent's statement of staffing needs

Cooperative Arrangements

The act authorizes the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) executive director to enter into cooperative arrangements with nonprofit career schools and an in-state nonprofit training institute that provides building trades training to underserved populations. These arrangements are for providing general education; vocational, technical, technological, or postsecondary education; and work experience.

Under existing law, the CTECS executive director can also enter into these arrangements with private career schools, school boards, higher education institutions, job training agencies, and employers.

OPM Approval of Instructional Staff

By law, (1) the CTECS executive director must communicate directly with the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) secretary to request creating or filling budgeted staff positions and (2) the secretary, when reviewing these requests, must prioritize requests for instructional staff, as identified in the statement of staffing needs the CTECS superintendent is required to submit to the executive director. The act requires the OPM secretary to review and approve requests to fill CTECS instructional staff positions within 30 days after the date the superintendent submits the statement of staffing needs for the positions.

Under existing law, the CTECS superintendent must submit to the executive director the system's education budget, which, among other things, must include a statement of the staffing needs for technical education and career schools. The executive director must review the education budget and include it as part of the CTECS operating budget (CGS § 10-99g).

§§ 19-28 — EPINEPHRINE AND GLUCAGON ADMINISTRATION

Expands how epinephrine and glucagon can be administered to include through nasal sprays and other USDA-approved medical equipment in various statutes related to allergic reaction response

Epinephrine

The act expands how epinephrine can be administered in certain allergic reaction response situations to include nasal sprays and other USDA-approved medical equipment. Under prior law, epinephrine could only be administered through an automatic prefilled cartridge injector or similar device. (In August 2024, the FDA approved the first epinephrine nasal spray for anaphylactic treatment.)

Specifically, this expansion applies to statutes related to epinephrine administration, including:

1. administering epinephrine (with a parent or guardian's written authorization and pursuant to a licensed medical professional's written order) to children in schools, school readiness programs, child care facilities, before- and after-school programs, day camps, and at athletic events;
2. prohibiting child care centers and group care homes from refusing services because a child has an epinephrine prescription;
3. requiring child care centers and group care homes to have staff trained in epinephrine administration;
4. requiring parents or guardians to give, and replace when expired, epinephrine medication and equipment to their child's child care center or group care home;
5. prohibiting boards of education from refusing transportation services because a child has an epinephrine prescription;
6. requiring training for school bus drivers on epinephrine identification and administration;
7. administering epinephrine in emergencies (without a parent or guardian's written authorization nor a licensed medical professional's written order) at child care facilities and schools;
8. permitting authorized entities, including for-profit and nonprofit entities and organizations that employ at least one person with epinephrine training, and practitioners that prescribe epinephrine to establish a medical protocol for epinephrine administration for authorized entities' trained employees to use;
9. permitting drug wholesalers and manufacturers to sell epinephrine to authorized entities; and
10. granting immunity from liability to state employees, teachers, school personnel, school bus drivers, trained volunteers, and staff members of

before- or after-school programs, day camps, and child care facilities when they use epinephrine devices in emergencies.

Glucagon

Similarly, the act also expands how glucagon can be administered to include nasal sprays and other USDA-approved medical equipment in various statutes related to an emergency first aid response to a diabetic reaction. Under prior law, glucagon could only be administered through injectable equipment. (In July 2019, the FDA approved the first glucagon nasal spray for hypoglycemic treatment.)

This expansion applies to various provisions related to glucagon administration, including:

1. administering glucagon (with a parent or guardian's written authorization and pursuant to a licensed medical professional's written order) to children in schools and child care centers;
2. prohibiting child care centers and group care homes from refusing services because a child has a glucagon prescription;
3. requiring child care centers and group care homes to have staff trained in glucagon administration; and
4. requiring parents or guardians to give, and replace when expired, glucagon medication and equipment to their child's child care center or group care home.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025