

# NARRATIVES – POLICY UPDATE 1

December 8, 2023

## Connecticut School Climate Policy

This Connecticut School Climate Policy was developed by the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) with technical and substantive guidance from the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity (CWCSEO) and other members of the statewide Social Emotional Learning and School Climate Collaborative.<sup>1</sup>

The policy was developed to provide districts guidance on recent revisions to Connecticut’s school climate law, Public Act 23-167. In accordance with [Public Act 23-167, An Act Concerning Transparency in Education](#), for the school years commencing July 1, 2023, and July 1, 2024, each local and regional board of education **may adopt** and implement the Connecticut School Climate Policy, in lieu of implementing the provisions of sections 10-222d, 10-222g to 10-222i, inclusive, 10-222k and 10-222p of the general statutes.

For the school year commencing July 1, 2025, and each school year thereafter, **each local and regional board of education shall adopt** and implement the Connecticut School Climate Policy.

This policy **does not modify or eliminate** any rights or obligations under state and federal laws, including any constitutional and civil rights protections or any other applicable policies and procedures or collective bargaining agreements.

**See Policy 5131.911**

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## Policy for Educator and Leader Evaluation and Support

In Connecticut, the State Board of Education adopted its “Flexibility to Guidelines for Educator Evaluation” on February 6, 2014, in accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act. Over the past several years, with the loosening or added flexibilities to the plan, local districts were provided greater autonomy and encouraged to devote their efforts towards improving the model and directing energy towards improving instruction through more thoughtful and collaborative discourse among teachers and leaders. The pandemic provided an opportunity for greater reflection resulting in an effort to develop a new educator and leader evaluation plan, informed by lessons learned over the past ten years while examining best practices.

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter 170 – Boards of Education (ct.gov)

Districts now have the opportunity to delve deeply into improving teaching and leadership, to build trusted and constructive professional relationships between evaluators and evaluatees while referencing state and national models to inform and support professional practice, and to move away from the notion that assessments should be used to hold educators accountable rather than as tools to inform more effective instruction.

Sections 24 through 27 of Public Act 23-159 make significant changes to the Evaluation Guidelines, which were recently adopted by the State Board of Education. Most notably, the new guidelines include removing the four performance evaluation designators for teachers and removing references to teacher evaluation scoring systems to determine those ratings.

Aligning itself to the recently released *Connecticut Guidelines for Educator and Leader and Support*, CAFE's policy department has included in its bank of policies, a model policy (4115) to assist districts as they prepare to adopt new practices related to evaluating and supporting certified educators and leaders.

Public Act 23-159 (An Act Concerning Teachers and Paraeducators)

### **See Policy 4115**

[Link to Connecticut Guidelines for Educator and Leader Evaluation and Support 2023 \(CT Guidelines 2023\)](#)

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### **Exit Interviews**

CAFE has updated policy 4117.6 to align with Public Act 23-159 (An Act Concerning Teachers and Paraeducators), § 6-7 Exit Survey for Teachers Leaving the Profession and Teacher Attrition Rates, which requires school boards to (1) develop and conduct exit surveys of teachers voluntarily leaving employment with the board and (2) add teacher attrition rates to their strategic school profile report:

#### **Key Points:**

- Must be in place no later than January 1, 2024
- Must be completed by a teacher employed by the board and voluntarily ceases employment
- Must include questions relating to the reason why the teacher left, if the teacher is leaving the profession, the demographics of the teacher, and the subject area in which the teacher taught.

Public Act 23-159, §6 (An Act Concerning Teachers and Paraeducators)

### **See Policy 4117.6**

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## Graduation Requirements

CABE has updated the Graduation Requirements policy to include key updates in Public Act 23-21 (An Act Concerning Financial Literacy Instruction).

### Key Points:

- The Board of Education **may** adopt in its policy the requirement of a one-credit mastery-based diploma assessment for students to graduate or be granted a diploma. Prior to Public Act 23-21, it was required.
- Commencing with classes graduating in 2027, and each graduating class thereafter, students are required to have earned a one-half credit in personal financial management and financial literacy.
- This one-half credit can be applied to either humanities or as an elective credit.

See Policy 6146

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## Cheating/Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty

CABE has updated the policy narrative to provide boards with more relevant background information on this topic for its consideration. With the advent of AI (artificial intelligence) and more sophisticated technologies, language was added to the policy requiring teachers to instruct students in research and study skills to ensure all students feel comfortable knowing that if they prepare, they can succeed without cheating or plagiarizing.

In addition, “materials generated by artificial intelligence” was added to “another person’s original ideas/work” as material requiring annotation or citation.

Supportive administrative regulations have been updated and added as well.

See Policy & Regulation 5121.3

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## Construction of the Agenda

CABE has updated Bylaw 9323 by adding language adopted in Public Act 23-160 §6 (An Act Concerning Mandate Relief and Other Technical and Assorted Revisions to the Education and Early Childhood Education Statutes).

### Key Language to Add:

- In addition to posting Board of Education meeting agendas on its website 24 hours prior to the meeting, **any associated documents** that may be reviewed by members of the board at such meeting will be made available on the board’s website prior to the meeting.

See Bylaw 9323

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