

1/14/2021

Education-Related Bills and Articles Passed in “Lame Duck” Session of the 101st General Assembly

[HB2170](#), also known as the Education Omnibus Bill, represents an important step in advancing racial equity in Illinois’ education system. As a whole, the bill is designed to increase educational access and opportunities for Black students, other students of color, English learners, and students from low-income households throughout the state. The following is a summary of the key articles within the bill.

HB2170 | EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

Article 15. Establishes the Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Act.

This new act demonstrates support of the Illinois General Assembly for the *Illinois Commission on Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Funding*. It supports the goals of the Commission to create a more equitable system of services and funding, to consolidate early childhood programs into a single state agency, and to create funding mechanisms that ensure stability and quality. It also encourages the state to establish an inclusive implementation planning process and timeline with a designated body accountable for implementing the Commission’s recommendations.

Article 5. Establishes in state law a kindergarten readiness assessment. The proposal codifies in statute the requirement for a developmentally appropriate kindergarten readiness assessment to allow schools, districts, and the state to understand better where young learners need support to be successful in kindergarten and beyond. Additionally, it establishes a committee to make recommendations to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the General Assembly about the assessment. Illinois began requiring the administration of its kindergarten readiness assessment several years ago, but unlike most other state education assessments, there is no current reference to it in law.

Article 90. Establishes the Early Childhood Workforce Act. This proposal establishes a new act that recognizes the critical role of the early childhood workforce. It encourages IDHS to offer targeted outreach and available financial support to those early educators seeking to increase their credentials, while prioritizing diversity and communities with the greatest shortages. It provides annual reports on those receiving scholarships and encourages agencies to prioritize reaching compensation parity between early childhood educators and their K-12 peers.

Article 10. Extends Early Intervention (EI) services to three-year-olds until their next school year begins. By July 1, 2022, certain children with May through August birthdays receiving Early Intervention (EI) services will now remain in the EI program until the beginning of the school year following their third birthday. This change will minimize gaps in services and ensure better continuity of care.

Article 35. Establishes the Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultations Act. The new act encourages the state to increase availability of Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (I/ECMHC) services through increased funding, encourages relevant state agencies to develop and promote improved materials for families and providers, and encourages relevant state agencies to provide more data on early childhood expulsions, among other things.

Article 40. Requires developmentally appropriate diagnostic assessment codes and billing for birth to five behavioral health. By July 1, 2022, this bill would require the use of developmentally and age-appropriate diagnostic codes for behavioral health for children under the age of five for treatment and planning, using a crosswalk to existing codes as necessary. By July 2022, IDHS will make recommendations on the resources needed to integrate the codes into the state system.

Article 145. Early Education Act. Establishes the Early Education Act, which encourages IDHS to reexamine its eligibility criteria for the Early Intervention program, develop a plan for the establishment of specialized teams, and establish at least two demonstration projects at neonatal intensive care departments.

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HB2170 | K-12

Article 25. Whole Child Task Force. Creates a task force to establish an equitable, inclusive, safe, and supportive environment in all schools. This includes: 1) recommending a common statewide definition of trauma responsive schools, 2) conducting analysis and making recommendations around process and data collection to understand current need and existing supports, and 3) developing recommendations to support the state’s progress toward ensuring all schools, communities, and districts are trauma-responsive. The task force will be comprised of educators, social workers, school and district leaders, civil rights leaders, experts in culturally responsive pedagogy and trauma-responsive practices, advocates, legislators, and representatives of the state board of education. This article will be repealed as of February 1, 2023.

Article 50. Equitable Coursework for College Access. This provision requires the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) to report college admission coursework requirements and recommendations by May 1, 2021 (and as needed thereafter). All 8-12th grade students and parents/guardian must have access to this information, and, starting in SY2022-23, all students must have access to these recommended courses. Schools can fulfill the requirement to provide these courses by offering them within the district, partnering with other district, community college, or other course providers (at no additional financial cost to the student). Starting with students entering 9th grade in SY2024-25, the bill also adds a requirement that the science courses required for graduation be “laboratory sciences,” and, beginning with students entering 9th grade in SY2028-29, adds a 2-year foreign language requirement to the state’s high school graduation requirements.

Article 60. Computer Science. This bill requires, by December 1, 2021, ISBE develop or adapt computer science learning standards and analyze and revise existing computer science course titles for alignment. Starting for students entering 9th grade in SY2022-23, it revises high school graduation requirements to include a course that incorporates computer literacy (which may be English, social studies or other subjects that count toward other graduation requirements). Furthermore, beginning in SY2023-24, districts with 9-12th graders are required to provide an opportunity for every high school student to take at least one computer science course. (Note, this is not a graduation requirement for students).

Article 65. Academic Acceleration. Starting in the SY2023-24, this policy requires school districts to automatically enroll students who meet or exceed standards (based on the statewide assessment or locally selected, nationally normed assessment) in the next most rigorous course (e.g., dual credit, Advance Placement, honors, IB). Students who are automatically enrolled can choose to opt out if a different course better fits their goals. This policy does not prohibit or remove districts from using paths (i.e., other measures or criteria) for placement into advance courses.

Article 70. Learning Recovery P20 Council. Charges the Illinois P20 Council to study the academic and social-emotional impacts of COVID-19 on students and make recommendations related to how the state can support recovery and “build back better.” The Council must submit a report to this effect to the General Assembly by December 31, 2021.

Article 85. PRP Research Review. Charges the Professional Review Panel (PRP), a group created to regularly review and make recommendations related to the implementation of the state’s Evidence-Based Funding formula (EBF), with several topics for research, including whether the formula’s calculation of adequacy can or should be adjusted to include elements specifically related to increasing racial equity and whether additional elements should be added to support re-enrolled students and support equitable access to foreign language instruction. It also charges the PRP to consider how long it will take to reach full funding with an annual investment of \$350 million in new funding each year and whether efficiencies can be identified to allow the system to expedite progress toward full funding. The PRP’s report on these topics must be submitted to the General Assembly by December 31, 2021.

Article 75. Freedom Schools. Subject to appropriations, it creates an ISBE administered discretionary grant program to provide grants to public schools, public community colleges, and not-for-profit and community-based organizations to implement Freedom School programs.

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HB2170 | EDUCATOR PIPELINE

Article 120. Minority Teachers of Illinois Scholarship. This act updates the Minority Teachers of Illinois (MTI) Scholarship to improve affordability of teacher preparation for candidates of color. Pending appropriations, maximum scholarship amounts will increase from \$5K to \$7.5K per year. Starting in FY2023, high school graduates with an education pathway endorsement are now eligible for MTI funding in college prior to official enrollment in teacher preparation. MTI scholarships are now prioritized for candidates with financial need, and institutions receiving MTI funds must provide basic advising supports and efforts to increase awareness of the scholarship. This act also increases the male set-aside from 30% to 35% and prioritizes funding for black male candidates within this set-aside, and pending appropriations, it creates a new set-aside for bilingual candidates as well.

Article 115. Alternative Licensure GPA abolishment. Effectively immediately, this provision removes the requirement that teacher candidates seeking licensure through an alternative pathway have an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher. The state does not mandate a minimum GPA for traditional programs; this provision aligns state requirements for entrance into traditional and alternative teacher preparation.

Article 130. Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI). The IAI is a statewide transfer agreement that includes major course recommendations for 2-year postsecondary students planning to transition to a 4-year institution. Effective immediately, this provision encourages making education an IAI major to ensure that aspiring teachers who begin postsecondary education in a 2-year institution do not face costly, duplicative, and unaligned course requirements.

Article 155. National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT). Effective immediately, this bill will expand who is eligible for NBCT Candidate Cohort Facilitator and Trainer stipends and create priorities for these stipends for those who work with rural and diverse candidates.

HB2170 | HIGHER EDUCATION

Article 100. Developmental Education. Developmental education coursework often does not give students college credit while forcing them to deplete financial aid. Starting May 1, 2022, this act requires consideration of multiple measures before placing a student in developmental education, including a specific high school GPA and completion of a high school transition course. All institutions must also publicly post its placement policy and submit plans for scaling evidence-based developmental education reform to maximize student completion rates. Starting January 1, 2023 (and every two years thereafter), IBHE and ICCB must collect and report disaggregated data on developmental education enrollment, completion, and credit accumulation.

Article 125. AIM HIGH. AIM HIGH is a merit aid program that requires institutions to match state dollars in financial aid for students. In the context of higher education funding inequity and additional pandemic-related financial challenges, this provision reduces institutions' required matching rates to state dollars to 20% at institutions with over 50% Pell-eligible students and 60% at institutions with under 50% Pell-eligible students.

Article 95. Equity in Higher Education. Expresses support for the Illinois Board of Higher Education's strategic planning process to address inequities, increase degree attainment, and improve affordability – including examining equitable and adequate ways to fund higher education.

Article 150. Amendments to the Illinois Workforce Investment Board Act. By May 1, 2021, the Board shall conduct a feasibility study regarding the consolidation of all workforce development programs funded by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act into one agency.

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HB2170 | OTHER

Article 20. Data Collection. By July 1, 2022 and annually thereafter, ISBE and designated state departments shall report program participation by race and ethnicity using common definitions. The Dept. Of Innovation and Technology (DoIT) shall support departments and the Board to establish common processes and procedures for cataloguing, aligning, collecting, and sharing data and matching data across departments. By October 31, 2021, the Governor’s Office shall provide a plan for these data collection and management processes. By March 31, 2022, and annually thereafter, the Board and Departments shall provide a progress report on their work to the General Assembly.

OTHER EDUCATION-RELATED BILLS

HB 2275. Amends the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act. Effective immediately, removes section 4.5 language concerning impasse procedures involving Chicago Public Schools. Repeals provisions concerning subjects of collective bargaining with that educational employer. Previously, section 4.5 established permissive subjects of bargaining (e.g., pupil assessment policies, hours and places of instruction, class size and class staffing). Whether to bargain decisions with respect to these subjects remained within the exclusive province of CPS. The impact of decisions regarding these topics was now subject to a bargaining obligation. If a dispute over an impact subject remained after a reasonable period of bargaining, there was an agreed upon dispute resolution process in lieu of a strike. Furthermore, CTU was expressly prohibited from striking over Section 4.5 issues. This bill removes all of these provisions.

HB 1599. Provides that, with respect to the Chicago school district only, collective bargaining between an educational employer and an exclusive representative of its employees may include decisions to determine the length of the work and school day and the length of the work and school year. Provides that the Act takes effect upon becoming law.