

MOKENA

SCHOOL DISTRICT #159
Superintendent's Weekly Update

February 23, 2024

From the IASA - Legislative Landscape Update: Navigating New Bills and Upcoming Events

The Illinois Association of School Administrators recently sent out an update on the activity downstate. I copy it below for your information.

In our recent Capitol Watch, we highlighted the unprecedented surge in legislative activity witnessed during the filing deadline week. There was a staggering total of 735 bills filed on the final filing day, with 324 bills filed in the Senate and 411 bills filed in the House. Friday's filings put the weekly total at over 1,500 new legislative measures proposed in one week's time. These excessive numbers highlight the dynamic nature of the legislative process and underscore the importance of vigilance in monitoring proposed legislation.

The Government Relations team has been dedicated to updating the online bill tracker to ensure that we capture every piece of legislation that could potentially impact K12 education. As a reminder, this advocacy tool can be found on the IASA website on the Government Relations page, behind the membership paywall.

Currently, our focus is on the "Bills Moving CY 2024" tab of the tracking tool. While nearly 9,500 bills have been filed since the 103rd General Assembly began in January 2023, it is important to note that most of those proposals may not progress beyond the Rules or Assignments committees. However, in order to differentiate which measures may move through the process, we will ensure potential bills that have relevance to our educational community will be clearly denoted on the "Bills Moving CY 2024" sheet for your convenience.

Upcoming Event: Governor Pritzker's State of the State Address

We invite you to mark your calendars for this Wednesday, February 21st, at noon as Governor Pritzker delivers his annual State of the State and FY 25 Budget address. We will be closely monitoring this event and promptly providing a comprehensive summary of the Governor's education funding proposals. This information will be crucial for understanding the potential impact on our schools and planning our advocacy efforts accordingly as the General Assembly begins the budgeting process.

Committee Hearings Scheduled for Next Week

This week promises an array of committees and our team has been proactive in taking positions and having conversations around many pieces of legislation that are scheduled to be heard. For a little legislative refresher as we begin the committee process, it is important to remember that even though a bill may be passed out of committee, it is

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often the case that promises for follow-up amendments have been made behind the scenes to address concerns with the underlying bills. We anticipate many of those situations in the upcoming week.

Below are highlights of a few bills that are scheduled for hearing this week.

Senate Education - Tuesday, 2/20 @ 1:30 PM

SB 2861 (Morrison-D; Deerfield) aims to establish statewide safety standards for student cheerleaders and spirit groups. It proposes adopting the safety rules outlined in the Spirit Rules Book by the National Federation of State High School Associations.

SB 2872 (Ventura-D; Joliet) would require school districts to provide an opportunity for students to engage in relaxation activities at least once per week. Those activities can include mindful-based movements, breathing exercises, walking, in-person conversations, among others.

SB 3151 (Stadelman-D; Rockford) proposes adding a requirement to driver's education courses. Specifically, it mandates that at least one hour of instruction be devoted to teaching about worker safety in highway construction zones. We have expressed concerns about this specific hour requirement being too rigid, and there has been discussion about amending it.

SB 3156 (Johnson-D; Waukegan) is ISBE's annual clean-up bill and aims to address several sections of the school code. Provisions of note include flexibility for the timeline of approving an e-learning plan, updating the definition of school counselor duties, and clarification on the members who should be included in a threat assessment team.

SB 3164 (Edly-Allen-D; Grayslake) the proposed legislation expands the definition of "diagnostic and screening purposes" within educational assessments. It acknowledges that these assessments can be used not only to identify educational needs, but also to determine eligibility for advanced academic programs.

SB 3166 (Koehler-D; Peoria Heights) would make changes to procedures related to student records, specifically adding a number of records to the definition of a "student permanent record." Additionally, if a student or their parent/guardian agrees, a free copy of the student's school records must be provided to select agencies to assist in establishing access to adult disability services and related benefits. We have expressed concerns with the bill related to agency access to student records, and that the breadth of information that would be moving from the temporary record to a permanent record would make this maintenance difficult. We believe an amendment is pending to address the concerns listed.

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SB 3237 (Belt-D; East St. Louis) addresses school construction grants, and provides that school districts that were on the 2004 through 2006 construction lists may qualify for a reduced local match if the district applies and is approved during the first three grant cycles. This measure comes after the initial construction grant clean-up bill two years ago allowed districts on the lists to be eligible for a reduced local match only if they applied and were approved during the first cycle. Districts can see if they were on the 2004, 2005, or 2006 lists on ISBE's website, and it is important to note that funding for construction grants has not been included in a budget request to date.

Senate Labor - Wednesday, 2/21 @ 9:00 AM

The Senate Labor committee is scheduled to hear SB 2568 (Villa-D; West Chicago), which was recently amended via Senate Amendment 1. The amended version would allow a district to enter into a contract to provide 403b options with only one vendor. That plan would be required to be rebid every 7 years, and would give the approval of the vendor selection to a collective bargaining representative. We have expressed significant concerns about this proposal to the sponsor and discussions are ongoing.

House Curriculum & Policies - Wednesday, 2/21 @ 9:00 AM

Representative Yang Rohr (D; Naperville) has several bills scheduled to be heard that would add additional curricular requirements across the grade level and curricular spectrum. HB 4219 requires the same educational components on the dangers of fentanyl that are required for health courses for students in grades 9-12 to be taught in health courses for grades 6-8. HB 4625 requires all students to receive developmentally appropriate opportunities to gain digital literacy skills, and HB 4626 requires public school students to be allowed to work with elected officials as part of the student's education.

Representative Yang Rohr also has a measure (HB 4273) that would establish a grant to provide schools with the funding necessary to change their start time for grades 6 through 12 to after 8:00 am.

HB 4274 (Swanson-R; Woodhull) requires school nurses or designees to remove ticks from students in accordance with specific guidelines, and requires the school to preserve the tick for 72 hours so the parent may send it for testing. On a related note, three committees - House Human Services, House Public Health, and Senate Public Health - are holding a joint subject matter hearing on Lyme Disease on Tuesday.

HB 4474 (Syed-D; Palatine) requires IEP teams to consider a goal related to voter registration for any student who is 17 years of age or older.

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House Administration, Licensing, & Charter Schools - Wednesday, 2/21 @ 2:00 PM

With a shortage of manufacturing employees attracting attention from legislators across the state, there have been a number of bills filed that aim to address the shortage. HB 3286 (Ness-D; Carpentersville) proposes that the State Board of Education offer stipends to teachers participating in externships with manufacturing companies within the state, contingent upon funding. HB 3287 (Ness-D; Carpentersville) suggests that the State Board of Education allocate funds to pay half the salary of an employee from a manufacturing company working as a licensed career and technical education teacher in a high school, subject to appropriations.

HB 4173 (Davis-R; Yorkville) directs the State Board of Education, in collaboration with relevant departments, to expand a database identifying labor shortages in manufacturing, engineering, technology, and trades (METT). By July 1, 2026, it mandates that school districts in regions with shortages participate in a College and Career Pathway Endorsement program, offering a METT endorsement. Our team has expressed concerns to the sponsor regarding the mandate to offer specific pathway endorsements, and have been informed the bill will be amended.

HB 4277 (Yang Rohr-D; Naperville) mandates the inclusion of American Sign Language in the world language endorsement on a Professional Educator License, under the State Board of Education's rules.

HB 4622 (Didech-D; Buffalo Grove) requires that any proposed legislation imposing mandates on local school districts must have a brief explanatory statement or note prepared before the second reading. This note should estimate the fiscal and operational impact of the mandates on local districts. The State Board of Education would be responsible for preparing and submitting this note within five calendar days of the request. It also outlines provisions for the content of the note and the involvement of state officials in supporting or opposing the measure. There are a number of other bills that have been filed that would place similar requirements on the General Assembly before passing additional mandates. Our organizations are supportive of mandate reform, and we expect larger conversations around this important issue to emerge as session continues.

House Higher Education - Wednesday, 2/21 @ 4:00 PM

HB 4652 (Hernandez-D; Aurora) proposes the establishment of a student teaching stipend program by the Board of Higher Education to alleviate financial burdens and incentivize students to pursue teaching careers, addressing the state's teacher shortage. Eligible students, placed as student teachers by specific deadlines, may receive stipends of up to

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\$10,000 per semester for two consecutive semesters, with funds disbursed by the Board to educator preparation programs.

HB 4787 (Grant-D; Wheaton) establishes the Paraprofessional Fast Track to Teaching Degree Pilot Program, offering a two-year pathway for paraprofessional educators to obtain a professional educator license, aligning with State Board of Education and Board of Higher Education standards. It mandates the coordination of a Program director to develop the curriculum, selection of a public school and university for program development, outlines core components, and requires a report on the Program's impact before dissolution and repeal.

House Public Health - Thursday, 2/22 @ 9:00 AM

HB 4294 (Yang Rohr-D; Naperville) would allow a pharmacist to provide a standing order for undesignated epinephrine injectors, asthma medication, glucagon, and opioid antagonists, and would require the Department of Public Health to issue standing orders for the same medications.

House Personnel & Pensions - Thursday 2/22 @ 10:00 AM

The House may elect to start scratching the surface of Tier 2 discussions this week, with several bills scheduled for hearing.

HB 4098 (Kifowit-D; Aurora) was filed at the end of May and several subject matter hearings were held on the legislation over the summer. The current proposal would allow for the provision of a full annuity for an employee who reaches age 62 with 35 years of service, age 64 with 20 years of service, or age 67 with 10 years of service. The bill would also phase in the increase of the wage cap to more closely match the Social Security Wage Base, and would change the cost of living adjustment to be 3% or one-half of CPI, whichever is greater.

Staffing Update

In the month of March we have typically presented on the District's staffing needs for next year. It is likely that this presentation will be moved to April. Our core and exploratory staffing is going to be the same next year as it is this year, but Jen Volpe and I are meeting with the principals to dig into related services staffing needs. Now that Megan Mundt is officially on board she will be involved in these discussions as well.

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Parent Advisory Team


On Monday the Parent-Advisory Team meets at 9 a.m. in the Boardroom. We will be discussing the feedback we received about the E-Learning days we took last month and the E-Learning Plan. A report on the meeting will be presented to the Board in March. The results of the parent feedback will also be discussed with the staff on the E-Learning committee when we review the plan and prepare to reauthorize it later in the Spring for another three years. The last meeting of the Parent-Advisory team will be in April when they take a look at the Parent-Student Handbook.

This Week / Next Week

Today Megan Mundt came into the District to meet with Kristin Johnson, Teri Shaw, Jen Volpe, Janet Walker, and Luann Lodes to plan the Student Services budget, grant expenditures, and discuss staffing for next year. On Wednesday we will have 5 candidates come in to interview for the Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent position. On Friday Jami Madonia from MEF is coming in to review this spring's Foundation grant requests.

For What It's Worth



The Dad 
@thedad

Kids won't remember the things you agonize over as a parent, or the choices that keep you up at night. But they will never forget the time you yelled, "I love you sweetheart!" out the car window after dropping them off in front of a big group of their friends.

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