

2026 Spring Legislative Session Update

Illinois State Board of Education



Legislative Overview

60

Bills Advanced

23

New
Educational
Mandates

0

Curricular
Mandates



FY 2027 Budget Implementation Bill

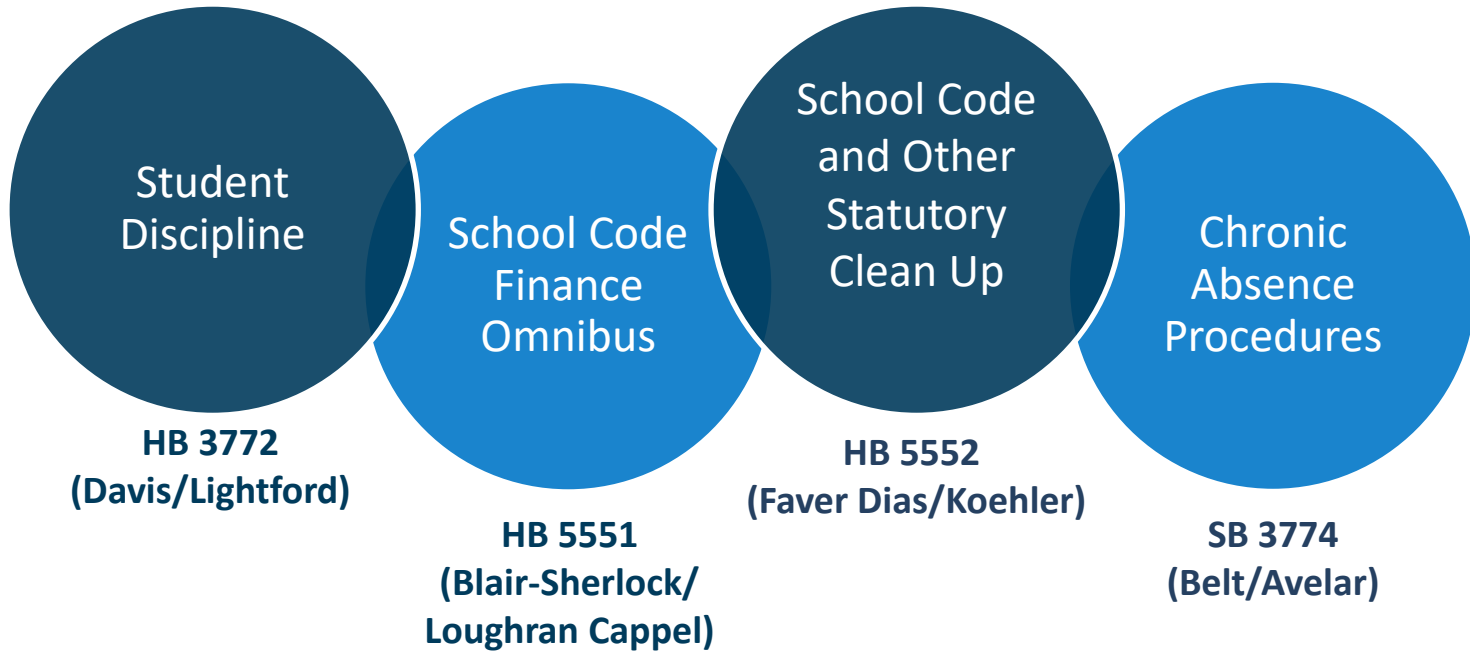
HB 2949 (Sims/Guzzardi) –

- The Budget Implementation Bill authorizes the statutory changes required to execute the state budget. Some of the authorizations include:
 - Extending the Property Tax Relief Grant (PTRG) abatement requirement from 2 years to 3 years.
 - Allowing Children's Rehabilitation Center reimbursements to be allocated from the Special Education Orphanage line (14-7.03) rather than the general Orphanage line (18-3)
 - Requiring ISBE to conduct a study on best practices for regular, vocational, and special education transportation



ISBE Initiatives

These legislative proposals passed both chambers:





Student Discipline

House Bill 3772 (Davis/Lightford) –

- Prohibits expulsions for students in kindergarten through Grade 2 except where federal law allows removal
- Requires approval of a district superintendent or early childhood director for suspensions longer than 3 days for PreK–2 students
- Clarifies that if a suspension is longer than 3 days, the length should not exceed the number of days required to implement a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) or safety plan
- Modifies and expands Alternative Learning Opportunity Program (ALOP) eligibility
- Clarifies discipline data reporting requirements



School Code Finance Omnibus

House Bill 5551 (Blair-Sherlock/Loughran Cappel) –

- Ensures consistency pertaining to the tuition reimbursement calculations for youth in care
- Sunsets the state process of districts filing Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) adjustments from past years
- Revises the Illinois Teaching Excellence Program to prepare for its administration by ISBE beginning FY 2027
 - Creates an annual retention bonus of \$4,000 for a National Board Certified Teacher who has worked in a hard-to-staff school if funds are available and certain requirements are met
 - Provides that retention incentives must be distributed on a competitive basis and establishes procedures for when funds are insufficient



Chronic Absence Procedures

Senate Bill 3774 (Belt/Avelar) –

- Defines and limits the circumstances under which a student may be removed from enrollment based on nonattendance pursuant to Section 26-12 of the School Code
- Clarifies that removal for nonattendance is not an expulsion (meaning that the student remains in good standing and may return to school at any time)
- Defines the level of notification that must be given to a parent or guardian before a withdrawal occurs



School Code and Other Statutory Clean Up

House Bill 5552 (Faver Dias/Koehler) –

- Streamlines School Code provisions and revises or removes outdated or otherwise problematic provisions in statute. Some noteworthy changes include:
 - Amending prior public acts to address a few drafting errors and key misalignment in intent related to licensure provisions
 - Addressing conflicting language with state and federal statutes
 - Streamlining reporting and School Code waiver application procedures
 - Codifying existing requirements in the charter renewal process

Non-Agency Initiatives of Note:



School Cellphone Ban

Senate Bill 2427 (Castro/Mussman) –

- Each school district and charter school must adopt and implement a wireless communication device policy that, at a minimum, prohibits a student from using a device during instructional time
- Provides exceptions for medical needs, IEPs or 504 plans, English learners, or case-by-case needs, as well as parameters for disciplinary practices
- Requires ISBE to post on its website a template for a model wireless communication policy by September 1, 2026



Educator Evaluations

Senate Bill 2909 (Belt/Canty) –

- Prohibits evaluators from using artificial intelligence tools to assign teacher performance ratings or make professional judgment decisions but allows the use of artificial intelligence to assist with administrative tasks if its use and purpose are disclosed
- Prohibits teachers from using artificial intelligence tools to generate evidence of professional practice that will be used by an evaluator to evaluate educator performance



Educator Evaluations

Senate Bill 2913 (Lightford/Faver Dias) –

- Provides that the use of student growth data in teacher evaluations are optional rather than mandatory
- Allows school districts and teachers' unions to jointly determine whether student growth measures will be included in evaluation plans; if no agreement can be reached, those measures are removed



Notice to Remedy

SB 2914 (Loughran Cappel/Moeller) –

- Clarifies and limits "notice to remedy" (written warning) requirements
- Allows teachers to respond to findings in a written warning before school board approval and, if disputed, pursue binding arbitration
- Sets forth the procedures for arbitration



Language Equality and Acquisition

House Bill 1783 (Mussman/Loughran Cappel) –

- Creates the Language Equality Acquisition for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or DeafBlind Children Act, applying to children from birth to 5 years of age
- Provides that subject to appropriation, the Department of Human Services (DHS), in consultation with ISBE, the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission, Department of Early Childhood, and Department of Public Health, must:
 - Establish a language needs and monitoring program to assess, monitor, and track the language communication developmental milestones, as well as develop a resource for use by parents and guardians by July 1, 2028
 - Support an advisory committee on language needs and monitoring to recommend action plans, timelines, anticipated costs, and proposed rules necessary to fully implement language and communication tools, assessments, and resources
 - Consult with subject matter experts on the advisory committee in selecting validated tools and assessment for interventionists and educators to be used in the assessment of language, communication, and preliteracy development



Educator Pipeline

House Bill 4397 (Crawford/Villa) –

- Updates school psychologist requirements to align professional requirements to match current, nationally accredited training standards
- Provides that beginning July 1, 2027, individuals may hold a qualifying master's degree with a minimum set of semester hours, a qualifying specialist degree, an equivalent degree, a higher degree, or hold a valid Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) credential

Senate Bill 2773 (Loughran Cappel/Manley) –

- Expands criteria to obtain paraprofessional educator endorsement if an individual worked previously with a Short-Term Approval for Paraprofessional; was employed for each year of the approval being valid; paid applicable fees; and was determined by the school district to have met a set of provided competencies



Next Steps

Begin reviewing all passed legislation to prepare for their successful implementation

Ensure compliance with any new requirements that ISBE must meet



Work with program staff and management to develop the agency's 2027 legislative agenda, which will be presented for approval

Questions?