

1 AN ACT concerning education.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Findings. The General Assembly makes all of the  
5 following findings:

6 (1) Literacy is not only critical for individuals'  
7 ability to earn income, secure housing, participate in  
8 their health care, support their children's education,  
9 pursue happiness, and navigate the world but also  
10 collectively foundational to our community and democracy.

11 (2) The World Literacy Foundation found that low  
12 literacy is a major contributor to inequality and  
13 increases the likelihood of poor physical and mental  
14 health, workplace accidents, misuse of medication,  
15 participation in crime, and welfare dependency, all of  
16 which have substantial additional social and economic  
17 costs.

18 (3) Fifty percent of Illinois' third graders met,  
19 exceeded, or approached learning standards in English  
20 language arts according to the Illinois Assessment of  
21 Readiness with the other half of students not meeting or  
22 partially meeting standards; this represents a 10  
23 percentage-point swing from the 2019 prepandemic rates  
24 when 60% of students met, exceeded, or approached learning

1 standards.

2 (4) Thirty-three percent of Illinois' fourth graders  
3 achieved proficient or advanced reading scores on the 2022  
4 National Assessment of Educational Progress with another  
5 29% meeting basic reading proficiency and the remaining  
6 38% scoring below basic reading proficiency.

7 (5) Research from the Annie E. Casey Institute found  
8 that students who are not proficient readers in third  
9 grade are 4 times more likely not to finish high school; if  
10 those students are from low-income families, they are more  
11 than 6 times more likely not to finish high school.

12 (6) Research consistently finds that a diverse,  
13 well-trained, and expanding pool of teachers, in  
14 conjunction with curricula responsive to the strengths and  
15 needs of diverse student populations, improves educational  
16 outcomes for all students.

17 (7) An appropriate curriculum considers the learning  
18 needs of students with their developmental needs and  
19 increases in complexity with every new stage of childhood.

20 (8) Oral language development is a prerequisite for  
21 reading and writing that is nurtured from birth through  
22 talking, reading, story-telling, singing, nursery rhymes,  
23 and other language exposure and, as younger children  
24 develop, through intentional dialogue with rich  
25 vocabulary, home visiting programs, access to books,  
26 high-quality child care and preschool, and lived

1 experiences that strengthen students' opportunity to build  
2 oracy skills, vocabulary, and background knowledge,  
3 leading to higher-level cognitive thinking.

4 (9) Reading builds new neural pathways in the brain as  
5 people, usually children, learn to connect the sounds in  
6 language to letters on a page to the meaning of the text;  
7 however, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to  
8 literacy, as learners will require differentiated  
9 strategies or methods and dosages within different areas  
10 of literacy instruction to meet their individual needs.

11 (10) Reading, writing, and oracy have a reciprocal  
12 relationship, as each strengthens the other, and students  
13 benefit when their instruction is closely intertwined.

14 (11) English learners benefit from a comprehensive  
15 literacy approach that recognizes the value of  
16 multilingualism by enveloping all areas of literacy  
17 instruction with a deep focus on oral language development  
18 and encouraging students to make connections between  
19 English and their home language.

20 (12) Teachers deserve the tools to be knowledgeable  
21 about the cultural practices and language system of the  
22 children they serve, including those children who speak  
23 language variations of English, such as African-American  
24 English (AAE); AAE has a linguistic structure that is a  
25 systematic and rule-governed variation of General American  
26 English.

1           (13) Research shows that direct, systematic,  
2 cumulative, and explicit reading instruction that is  
3 focused on the foundational reading skills of phonemic  
4 awareness, phonics or decoding, spelling or encoding,  
5 vocabulary development that includes morphology, oral  
6 language development, reading fluency, and reading  
7 comprehension that includes syntax and building background  
8 or content knowledge, is highly effective in teaching  
9 young children to read.

10           (14) High literacy achievement across all demographic  
11 groups is an essential indicator of educational equity  
12 within this State; strengthening early literacy  
13 instruction and support for students in Illinois will pay  
14 dividends in the future by empowering students, providing  
15 them with the skills they will need to graduate, find  
16 fulfilling careers, and be productive members of their  
17 communities and of our democracy.

18           (15) Ensuring that every child has access to  
19 high-quality, research-aligned, developmentally  
20 appropriate reading instruction implemented using a  
21 comprehensive approach is a foundational component of this  
22 State's public education system and a responsibility  
23 shared among federal, State, and local education agencies.

24           Section 90. The School Code is amended by adding Section  
25 2-3.196 and by changing Sections 21B-30 and 21B-35 and as

1 follows:

2 (105 ILCS 5/2-3.196 new)

3 Sec. 2-3.196. State Board of Education literacy  
4 assistance.

5 (a) The State Board of Education shall adopt and make  
6 available all of the following to each publicly funded school  
7 district by July 1, 2024:

8 (1) A rubric by which districts may evaluate curricula  
9 and select and implement evidence-based, culturally  
10 inclusive core reading instruction programs aligned with  
11 the comprehensive literacy plan for the State described in  
12 subsection (c).

13 (2) A template to support districts when developing  
14 comprehensive, district-wide literacy plans that include  
15 support for special student populations, including, at a  
16 minimum, students with disabilities, multilingual  
17 students, and bidialectal students.

18 (3) Guidance on evidence-based practices for effective  
19 structures for training and deploying literacy coaches to  
20 support teachers and close opportunity gaps among student  
21 demographic groups.

22 (b) On or before January 1, 2025, the State Board of  
23 Education shall develop and make available training  
24 opportunities for educators in teaching reading that are  
25 aligned with the comprehensive literacy plan described in

1 subsection (c) and consistent with State learning standards.

2 This support may include:

3 (1) the development of a microcredential or a series  
4 of microcredentials in literacy instruction aligned with  
5 the comprehensive literacy plan described in subsection  
6 (c) to be affixed to educator licenses upon successful  
7 demonstration of the skill or completion of the required  
8 coursework or assessment, or both, or online training  
9 modules on literacy instruction, aligned with the  
10 comprehensive literacy plan described in subsection (c)  
11 and consistent with State learning standards, accepted for  
12 continuing professional development units; and

13 (2) the creation and dissemination of a tool that  
14 school districts, educators, and the public may use to  
15 evaluate professional development and training programs  
16 related to literacy instruction.

17 (c) In consultation with education stakeholders, the State  
18 Board of Education shall develop and adopt a comprehensive  
19 literacy plan for the State on or before January 31, 2024. The  
20 comprehensive literacy plan shall consider, without  
21 limitation, evidence-based research and culturally and  
22 linguistically sustaining pedagogical approaches to meet the  
23 needs of all students and shall, at a minimum, do all of the  
24 following:

25 (1) Consider core instructional literacy practices and  
26 practices related to the unique needs of and support for

1 specific student populations, including, at a minimum,  
2 students with disabilities, multilingual students, and  
3 bidialectal students, and the resources and support,  
4 including professional learning for teachers, needed to  
5 effectively implement the literacy instruction.

6 (2) Provide guidance related to screening tools, the  
7 administration of such screening tools, and the  
8 interpretation of the resulting data to identify students  
9 at risk of reading difficulties in grades kindergarten  
10 through 2. This guidance shall outline instances in which  
11 dyslexia screenings and other universal screeners are  
12 appropriate for use with English learners.

13 (3) Provide guidance related to early literacy  
14 intervention for students in grades kindergarten through 2  
15 for schools to implement with students at risk of reading  
16 difficulties, as well as literacy intervention for  
17 students in grades 3 through 12 demonstrating reading  
18 difficulties.

19 (4) Consider the impact of second language acquisition  
20 and bilingual education on reading instruction in the  
21 student's native language and English.

22 (5) Define key terminology, such as "evidence-based".

23 (6) Contextualize the interaction between elements of  
24 the plan and existing laws and regulations that have  
25 overlapping components, such as a multi-tiered system of  
26 support.

1           (7) Focus on a comprehensive range of elements of  
2           literacy, including phonological awareness; decoding  
3           (phonics); encoding (spelling); vocabulary development,  
4           including morphology, oracy, and reading fluency; and  
5           reading comprehension, including syntax and background and  
6           content knowledge.

7           (105 ILCS 5/21B-30)

8           Sec. 21B-30. Educator testing.

9           (a) (Blank).

10          (b) The State Board of Education, in consultation with the  
11 State Educator Preparation and Licensure Board, shall design  
12 and implement a system of examinations, which shall be  
13 required prior to the issuance of educator licenses. These  
14 examinations and indicators must be based on national and  
15 State professional teaching standards, as determined by the  
16 State Board of Education, in consultation with the State  
17 Educator Preparation and Licensure Board. The State Board of  
18 Education may adopt such rules as may be necessary to  
19 implement and administer this Section.

20          (c) (Blank).

21          (c-5) The State Board must adopt rules to implement a  
22 paraprofessional competency test. This test would allow an  
23 applicant seeking an Educator License with Stipulations with a  
24 paraprofessional educator endorsement to obtain the  
25 endorsement if he or she passes the test and meets the other



1 requirements of subparagraph (J) of paragraph (2) of Section  
2 21B-20 other than the higher education requirements.

3 (d) All applicants seeking a State license shall be  
4 required to pass a test of content area knowledge for each area  
5 of endorsement for which there is an applicable test. There  
6 shall be no exception to this requirement. No candidate shall  
7 be allowed to student teach or serve as the teacher of record  
8 until he or she has passed the applicable content area test.

9 (d-5) The State Board shall consult with any applicable  
10 vendors within 90 days after the effective date of this  
11 amendatory Act of the 103rd General Assembly to develop a plan  
12 to transition the test of content area knowledge in the  
13 endorsement area of elementary education, grades one through  
14 6, by July 1, 2026 to a content area test that contains testing  
15 elements that cover bilingualism, biliteracy, oral language  
16 development, foundational literacy skills, and developmentally  
17 appropriate higher-order comprehension and on which a valid  
18 and reliable language and literacy subscore can be determined.  
19 The State Board shall base its rules concerning the passing  
20 subscore on the language and literacy portion of the test on  
21 the recommended cut-score determined in the formal  
22 standard-setting process. Candidates need not achieve a  
23 particular subscore in the area of language and literacy. The  
24 State Board shall aggregate and publish the number of  
25 candidates in each preparation program who take the test and  
26 the number who pass the language and literacy portion.

1 (e) (Blank).

2 (f) Except as otherwise provided in this Article,  
3 beginning on September 1, 2015, all candidates completing  
4 teacher preparation programs in this State and all candidates  
5 subject to Section 21B-35 of this Code are required to pass a  
6 teacher performance assessment approved by the State Board of  
7 Education, in consultation with the State Educator Preparation  
8 and Licensure Board. A candidate may not be required to submit  
9 test materials by video submission. Subject to appropriation,  
10 an individual who holds a Professional Educator License and is  
11 employed for a minimum of one school year by a school district  
12 designated as Tier 1 under Section 18-8.15 may, after  
13 application to the State Board, receive from the State Board a  
14 refund for any costs associated with completing the teacher  
15 performance assessment under this subsection.

16 (g) The content area knowledge test and the teacher  
17 performance assessment shall be the tests that from time to  
18 time are designated by the State Board of Education, in  
19 consultation with the State Educator Preparation and Licensure  
20 Board, and may be tests prepared by an educational testing  
21 organization or tests designed by the State Board of  
22 Education, in consultation with the State Educator Preparation  
23 and Licensure Board. The test of content area knowledge shall  
24 assess content knowledge in a specific subject field. The  
25 tests must be designed to be racially neutral to ensure that no  
26 person taking the tests is discriminated against on the basis

1 of race, color, national origin, or other factors unrelated to  
2 the person's ability to perform as a licensed employee. The  
3 score required to pass the tests shall be fixed by the State  
4 Board of Education, in consultation with the State Educator  
5 Preparation and Licensure Board. The tests shall be  
6 administered not fewer than 3 times a year at such time and  
7 place as may be designated by the State Board of Education, in  
8 consultation with the State Educator Preparation and Licensure  
9 Board.

10 The State Board shall implement a test or tests to assess  
11 the speaking, reading, writing, and grammar skills of  
12 applicants for an endorsement or a license issued under  
13 subdivision (G) of paragraph (2) of Section 21B-20 of this  
14 Code in the English language and in the language of the  
15 transitional bilingual education program requested by the  
16 applicant.

17 (h) Except as provided in Section 34-6 of this Code, the  
18 provisions of this Section shall apply equally in any school  
19 district subject to Article 34 of this Code.

20 (i) The rules developed to implement and enforce the  
21 testing requirements under this Section shall include, without  
22 limitation, provisions governing test selection, test  
23 validation, and determination of a passing score,  
24 administration of the tests, frequency of administration,  
25 applicant fees, frequency of applicants taking the tests, the  
26 years for which a score is valid, and appropriate special

1 accommodations. The State Board of Education shall develop  
2 such rules as may be needed to ensure uniformity from year to  
3 year in the level of difficulty for each form of an assessment.  
4 (Source: P.A. 101-81, eff. 7-12-19; 101-220, eff. 8-7-19;  
5 101-594, eff. 12-5-19; 102-301, eff. 8-26-21.)

6 (105 ILCS 5/21B-35)

7 Sec. 21B-35. Minimum requirements for educators trained in  
8 other states or countries.

9 (a) Any applicant who has not been entitled by an  
10 Illinois-approved educator preparation program at an Illinois  
11 institution of higher education applying for a Professional  
12 Educator License endorsed in a teaching field or school  
13 support personnel area must meet the following requirements:

14 (1) the applicant must:

15 (A) hold a comparable and valid educator license  
16 or certificate, as defined by rule, with similar grade  
17 level and content area credentials from another state,  
18 with the State Board of Education having the authority  
19 to determine what constitutes similar grade level and  
20 content area credentials from another state;

21 (B) have a bachelor's degree from a regionally  
22 accredited institution of higher education; and

23 (C) (blank); or

24 (2) the applicant must:

25 (A) have completed a state-approved program for

1 the licensure area sought, including coursework  
2 concerning (i) methods of instruction of the  
3 exceptional child, (ii) methods of reading that align  
4 with all applicable standards set forth in Part 23 of  
5 Title 23 of the Illinois Administrative Code and  
6 reading in the content area, and (iii) instructional  
7 strategies for English learners;

8 (B) have a bachelor's degree from a regionally  
9 accredited institution of higher education;

10 (C) have successfully met all Illinois examination  
11 requirements, except that:

12 (i) (blank);

13 (ii) an applicant who has successfully  
14 completed a test of content, as defined by rules,  
15 at the time of initial licensure in another state  
16 is not required to complete a test of content; and

17 (iii) an applicant for a teaching endorsement  
18 who has successfully completed an evidence-based  
19 assessment of teacher effectiveness, as defined by  
20 rules, at the time of initial licensure in another  
21 state is not required to complete an  
22 evidence-based assessment of teacher  
23 effectiveness; and

24 (D) for an applicant for a teaching endorsement,  
25 have completed student teaching or an equivalent  
26 experience or, for an applicant for a school service

1           personnel endorsement, have completed an internship or  
2           an equivalent experience.

3           (b) In order to receive a Professional Educator License  
4 endorsed in a teaching field or school support personnel area,  
5 applicants trained in another country must meet all of the  
6 following requirements:

7           (1) Have completed a comparable education program in  
8 another country.

9           (2) Have had transcripts evaluated by an evaluation  
10 service approved by the State Superintendent of Education.

11           (3) Have a degree comparable to a degree from a  
12 regionally accredited institution of higher education.

13           (4) Have completed coursework aligned to standards  
14 concerning (i) methods of instruction of the exceptional  
15 child, (ii) methods of reading that align with all  
16 applicable standards set forth in Part 26 of Title 23 of  
17 the Illinois Administrative Code and reading in the  
18 content area, and (iii) instructional strategies for  
19 English learners.

20           (5) (Blank).

21           (6) (Blank).

22           (7) Have successfully met all State licensure  
23 examination requirements. Applicants who have successfully  
24 completed a test of content, as defined by rules, at the  
25 time of initial licensure in another country shall not be  
26 required to complete a test of content. Applicants for a

1 teaching endorsement who have successfully completed an  
2 evidence-based assessment of teacher effectiveness, as  
3 defined by rules, at the time of initial licensure in  
4 another country shall not be required to complete an  
5 evidence-based assessment of teacher effectiveness.

6 (8) Have completed student teaching or an equivalent  
7 experience.

8 (9) (Blank).

9 (b-5) All applicants who have not been entitled by an  
10 Illinois-approved educator preparation program at an Illinois  
11 institution of higher education and applicants trained in  
12 another country applying for a Professional Educator License  
13 endorsed for principal or superintendent must hold a master's  
14 degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher  
15 education and hold a comparable and valid educator license or  
16 certificate with similar grade level and subject matter  
17 credentials, with the State Board of Education having the  
18 authority to determine what constitutes similar grade level  
19 and subject matter credentials from another state, or must  
20 meet all of the following requirements:

21 (1) Have completed an educator preparation program  
22 approved by another state or comparable educator program  
23 in another country leading to the receipt of a license or  
24 certificate for the Illinois endorsement sought.

25 (2) Have successfully met all State licensure  
26 examination requirements, as required by Section 21B-30 of

1           this Code. Applicants who have successfully completed a  
2           test of content, as defined by rules, at the time of  
3           initial licensure in another state or country shall not be  
4           required to complete a test of content.

5           (2.5) Have completed an internship, as defined by  
6           rule.

7           (3) (Blank).

8           (4) Have completed coursework aligned to standards  
9           concerning (i) methods of instruction of the exceptional  
10          child, (ii) methods of reading that align with all  
11          applicable standards set forth in Part 26 of Title 23 of  
12          the Illinois Administrative Code and reading in the  
13          content area, and (iii) instructional strategies for  
14          English learners.

15          (4.5) (Blank).

16          (5) Have completed a master's degree.

17          (6) Have successfully completed teaching, school  
18          support, or administrative experience as defined by rule.

19          (b-7) All applicants who have not been entitled by an  
20          Illinois-approved educator preparation program at an Illinois  
21          institution of higher education applying for a Professional  
22          Educator License endorsed for Director of Special Education  
23          must hold a master's degree from a regionally accredited  
24          institution of higher education and must hold a comparable and  
25          valid educator license or certificate with similar grade level  
26          and subject matter credentials, with the State Board of



1 Education having the authority to determine what constitutes  
2 similar grade level and subject matter credentials from  
3 another state, or must meet all of the following requirements:

4 (1) Have completed a master's degree.

5 (2) Have 2 years of full-time experience providing  
6 special education services.

7 (3) Have successfully completed all examination  
8 requirements, as required by Section 21B-30 of this Code.  
9 Applicants who have successfully completed a test of  
10 content, as identified by rules, at the time of initial  
11 licensure in another state or country shall not be  
12 required to complete a test of content.

13 (4) Have completed coursework aligned to standards  
14 concerning (i) methods of instruction of the exceptional  
15 child, (ii) methods of reading that align with all  
16 applicable standards set forth in Part 26 of Title 23 of  
17 the Illinois Administrative Code and reading in the  
18 content area, and (iii) instructional strategies for  
19 English learners.

20 (b-10) All applicants who have not been entitled by an  
21 Illinois-approved educator preparation program at an Illinois  
22 institution of higher education applying for a Professional  
23 Educator License endorsed for chief school business official  
24 must hold a master's degree from a regionally accredited  
25 institution of higher education and must hold a comparable and  
26 valid educator license or certificate with similar grade level

1 and subject matter credentials, with the State Board of  
2 Education having the authority to determine what constitutes  
3 similar grade level and subject matter credentials from  
4 another state, or must meet all of the following requirements:

5 (1) Have completed a master's degree in school  
6 business management, finance, or accounting.

7 (2) Have successfully completed an internship in  
8 school business management or have 2 years of experience  
9 as a school business administrator.

10 (3) Have successfully met all State examination  
11 requirements, as required by Section 21B-30 of this Code.  
12 Applicants who have successfully completed a test of  
13 content, as identified by rules, at the time of initial  
14 licensure in another state or country shall not be  
15 required to complete a test of content.

16 (4) Have completed modules aligned to standards  
17 concerning methods of instruction of the exceptional  
18 child, methods of reading and reading in the content area,  
19 and instructional strategies for English learners.

20 (c) The State Board of Education, in consultation with the  
21 State Educator Preparation and Licensure Board, may adopt such  
22 rules as may be necessary to implement this Section.

23 (Source: P.A. 101-220, eff. 8-7-19; 101-643, eff. 6-18-20;  
24 102-539, eff. 8-20-21.)

25 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon  
26 becoming law.