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**March 8, 2024**  
(103-27)

[Legislative Update: Safety, Madates, Licensing, and More](#)

## **Student Teacher Stipends, Mental Health Screenings, CPS Elected School Board, and School Bus Seatbelts**

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This week at the Capitol, many bills were poised to move through committees. With over 100 bills to monitor this week, IASB Governmental Relations staff were prepared and ready to act on behalf of our members. Overall, several bills moved through committees, a lot of debate was heard on some big legislative initiatives, and important subject matter hearings were held to better understand the impact of topics with big impact to our school districts.

### **Four Hot Bills Discussed in Committees this Week**

#### **1. Higher Education Committee**

## **HB4652 (Hernandez) and HB5414 (Faver Dias) - Student Teacher Stipends**

These bills were the focus of an extensive subject matter hearing this week. Both bills relate to student teaching stipends and with the hearing going well into the evening, it was clear that advocates felt that something needs to be done to help student teachers financially. Many college students testified to the difficulties of not being able to have a job bringing in income during student teaching and that it is a barrier to students going into the profession. With both bills tackling the issue in different ways, it was asked that all stakeholders work together to bring back one proposal so the Committee can act. Some of the issues mentioned are what entity will handle the funding and how they will ensure the funding does not negatively impact student teachers' financial aid. While both proposals are subject to appropriation, estimates mentioned were between \$54 million and \$62 million for the programs. IASB will continue to monitor the initiative.

## **2. Senate Executive Committee**

### **SB15 (Harmon) Chicago Public Schools Elected School Board**

The statutory deadline for action on this issue is April 1 so there was urgency in finding a solution to this election issue. As you may remember, the House and Senate each passed different versions of the bill during veto session but have come to consensus with SB15. This bill establishes the Chicago Public Schools elected school board with 10 members that will be elected and 11 members appointed by the Mayor this year. The bill was highly debated with concerns expressed that the entire CPS school board should be elected instead of allowing the Mayor to appoint half of the board. Ultimately the bill passed through Committee 9-4 and proceeded to the Senate floor where it passed third reading 37-20. The bill moved quickly over to the House where it was immediately heard in the House Executive Committee and passed with a 9-3 vote. After second and third readings, the bill passed the House with a 75-31-3 vote and will be sent to the Governor for signature.

## **3. Senate Transportation Committee**

### **SB2696 (Morrison) - School Bus Seat Belts (Subject Matter Hearing Only)**

This bill requires Type I or Type II school buses to be equipped with a set of 3-point seat belts or any other federally approved restraint system. All newly purchased school buses after January 1, 2028, must be equipped with the same restraint system for each passenger. Testimony was given that this mandate would create an increase of \$10,000 per bus, and considering each bus would seat fewer students, additional buses and drivers would be required. The need to fund any mandate to support districts was stressed.

Currently only eight states have laws requiring seat belts on school buses, as there is data to support both sides of the argument. The bill remains in the Committee.

#### 4. Behavioral and Mental Health Committee

##### **[SB3316](#) (Feigenholtz) - Children Mental Health Screenings**

This bill is a proposal that will further the work of the Children's Behavioral Health Transformation Initiative (CBHTI) launched by Governor Pritzker in March of 2022 to evaluate and redesign the delivery of behavioral health services for children in Illinois. Part of the initiative includes a readiness assessment performed by ISBE that will gauge the field's ability to perform mental health screenings for all children. ISBE shall issue a report to the Governor and the General Assembly on school district readiness and plan for a phased approach to universal mental health screening of students on or before April 1, 2025. This bill does not require mental health screenings for all students but establishes capacity for offering the screenings. The bill passed out of Committee unanimously and will move to the Senate floor.

## Advocacy Ambassador Update

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Advocacy Ambassadors met with our Governmental Relations team on March 1 and had a great in-depth conversation on legislation that is currently moving through the General Assembly. The group discussed the Governor's proposed budget, Evidence-Based Funding, pension reform, mandates and mandate relief proposals, school board specific bills, and other hot bills. Members were also given a tour of the ILGA website and shown how to file a witness slip.

How do you join? The IASB Advocacy Ambassador Program is a grassroots program designed to build relationships between school board members and state and federal legislators. Advocacy Ambassadors help IASB meet its advocacy goals by sharing personal stories and expertise on policies related to education. No experience is necessary to become an Advocacy Ambassador – all you need is your voice, your passion, and commitment to making a difference. [Sign up](#) today!

Be on the lookout for advocacy opportunities this spring and contact our staff with any questions. The [Governmental Relations team](#) is honored to serve our members this year and looks forward to a successful session!

## Other Senate Bills that Passed out of Committee this Week

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### **[SB2824](#) (McClure) Nonresident Pupil Waiver**

This bill provides that if DCFS removes a student from the custody of one custodial parent and places a student into temporary custody with the child's other custodial parent (who does not live in the district), that student may stay in their current district and the child should not be charged as a nonresident. Currently if a child is placed by DCFS into foster care outside the district, the child can remain at school and is not charged non-resident tuition even if they no longer reside in the district. Essentially, the bill extends this to placements with the other custodial parent. The bill passed out of Committee unanimously.

### **[SB2920](#) (Martwick) Pension Code Return to Service - CPTF**

This bill applies to CPS only and extends the date to July 1, 2027 (from July 1, 2024), which the pension shall not be cancelled in the case of a pensioner who is re-employed as a teacher or an administrator on a temporary and non-annual basis or on an hourly basis, so long as the person does not work as a teacher or an administrator for compensation on more than 140 days in a school year.

### **[SB2987](#) (Loughran Cappel) School Board Member Training**

As introduced, this ISBE initiative would have mandated an extra three hours of training related to student outcomes for school board members and would have required this training to be taken every two years. IASB Governmental Relations staff worked with ISBE to amend the bill and add student outcomes to the already mandated four hours of school board member training currently in statute. That amendment passed out of Committee 11-0.

### **[SB3156](#) (Johnson) Various School Code Clean-Up Changes**

This bill is an initiative of ISBE and is primarily a clean-up of current statutes. IASB did express some concerns with some of the changes that would have reduced flexibility to distributing job duties among school employees. Those concerns will be addressed in a subsequent amendment.

### **[SB3348](#) (Martwick) Debt Limit Exception**

This bill creates a debt limitation exception for Union Ridge School District 86 to issue bonds provided that the voters of the school district approve a referendum.

**SB3349 (Ellman) Global Scholar Certificate**

Provides that ISBE shall adopt rules to provide students attending schools that do not offer State Global Scholar Certification, the opportunity to earn that Certification remotely beginning with the 2026-2027 school year. A student may not earn State Global Scholar Certification remotely if the course was offered prior to 2026-2027. The bill passed out of Committee unanimously.

**SB3473 (Sims) Diabetes Information**

Provides that ISBE, in coordination with the Department of Public Health, shall develop Type 1 diabetes informational materials for parents and guardians of students and shall be accessible through each district's student handbook and on ISBE's website.

**SB3553 (Lightford) Accelerated Placement**

This bill provides that a school district can waive a course or unit of instruction if the course is required as a prerequisite to receive a diploma if the student has shown mastery or competency. The school district shall maintain documentation and notify the parent or guardian that the student is receiving a waiver. We understand that this bill will continue to be negotiated, but the bill passed out of committee unanimously.

## Other Bills that Passed out of House Committees this Week

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**HB4520 (McLaughlin) Junior Color Guard**

This bill offers guidelines for school districts when establishing a color guard program to promote the value of and honor military personnel. This bill is not a mandate and it was noted that districts can already offer these color guard programs. The bill passed out of Committee with a unanimous vote and will move to the House floor.

**HB4653 (Mussman) Trauma Training**

This bill is an initiative of the Illinois Principals Association and aligns trauma training for staff into the 5-year cycle that was established last session. This is merely a clean-up bill to continue streamlining efforts. The bill passed out of Committee 12-1 and will move to the House floor.

**HB4902 (Faver Dias) School Improvement Planning Reading**

This bill aligns the Illinois Literacy Plan that was adopted by the State Board of Education (ISBE) in January with ISBE IL-Empower vendors. These vendors provide services to comprehensive and targeted schools throughout

the state and this is a step to ensure that these vendors align their products with the State Literacy plan. The bill passed out of Committee with an 11-2 vote and will move to the House floor.

#### **HB5008 (Gill) Police at CPS Schools**

This bill allows local school councils (CPS) in Chicago to contract with the Chicago Police Department to have police officers or school resource officers on school grounds. Passed out of the Police and Fire Committee with a vote of 13-0.

#### **HB5043 (Hirschauer) Meningitis Education**

This bill repeals a requirement for the Department of Public Health to provide to school districts educational materials on meningococcal disease and meningococcal vaccines. Passed out of the Public Health Committee with a vote of 9-0.

#### **HB5057 (Scherer) Primary School Teacher Test**

This bill establishes a content area test for applicants seeking a state license to teach in any of grades kindergarten through eight, (but will be amended to K-5 teachers). The intent is to remove certain aspects of the content test that do not apply to these teachers and are a stumbling block for them to pass the content test. Those specific areas are music, physical education, and higher-level math. Those content areas would be optional additional tests and not included in the overall cut score for the teacher. The bill passed out of Committee 8-0 and will be brought back with an amendment.

#### **HB5393 (Mayfield) Teacher License Content Test**

This bill creates a pathway for teachers who have completed four years of college but are struggling to pass the content test. This will create a two-year provisional license and allow teachers to prepare to re-take the content test while being able to be in the classroom. This bill is another attempt to address the teacher shortage and ease teacher testing requirements. The bill passed out of Committee with an 8-0 vote and will be coming back to Committee with an amendment that the sponsor is working on with ISBE.

#### **HB5632 (Mayfield) 4-Year Moratorium on Non-Academic State Mandates**

This bill creates a moratorium for all non-academic mandates beginning July 1, 2024, through July 1, 2028. This would provide school districts with time to catch up with learning loss experienced through the pandemic. Current laws would remain, but no new non-academic mandates would be enacted for a four-year period. The bill passed out of Committee 6-1 and will move to the House floor for further debate. IASB appreciates the focus on reducing mandates but remains cautious to not inadvertently allow mandates to accumulate and then overload districts in 2028.

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## Lighting the Way to Excellence in School Governance

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