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Fwd: Senate pushes House bills across finish line

1 message

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Mon, May 20, 2019 at 7:27 AM

June Board Meeting

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Volume 25, Number 33, May 20, 2019

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Senate pushes House bills across finish line

By Jim Broadway, Publisher, Illinois School News Service

It was a good week last week for education bills that originated in the House. The Senate gave passing votes to a dozen of them (listed below) Since they were not amended in the Senate, there's no need for the House to concur with anything the Senate did. The bills' next stop is the desk of Gov. JB Pritzker.

The House, meanwhile, has given no education bills (and few on any subject at this writing) originating in the Senate a final passage vote. But, of course, as the ([recently updated](#)) ISNS bill-tracking page shows, relatively few bills of interest to public education advocates originated in the Senate.

With Friday's third-reading action deadline approaching, both chambers will have to bear down and crank out the bills. Hundreds remain on the calendars awaiting attention. Although some committees are scheduled to convene, most of the action (monitor the House [here](#) or the Senate [here](#)) will be on the floor.

The Senate Education Committee is to convene at 2 p.m. Tuesday to consider only [HB 2627](#), which asserts that no student under 18 years of age may be detained or questioned by law enforcement or school officials in relation to "suspected or alleged criminal activity" unless his or her parents (or designee) are present.

In a similar circumstance, a student who is 18 or older may request the presence of his or her parents (or designee) before he or she is questioned or detained, and the student must be advised of that right. The bill essentially creates protocols under which a school location is turned into a "booking station." HB 2627 was controversial in the House. It passed with 78 votes but most Republicans, and a few Democrats, [voted against it or withheld](#) their votes.

A Senate bill in the House has taken a strangely interesting turn. [SB 1569](#) seems like a very simple bill. Under current law, in addition to other requirements, a student must take a course (music, art, foreign language or vocational education) in order to graduate. The bill just adds "speech" to that list of options.

The bill does not require students to take a speech course. It's just another option. How could anyone oppose that? But in the [Senate roll call](#), SB 1569 got only 34 votes. Three voted against it (two Republicans and one Democrat). Other senators were recorded as "not voting." (Perhaps many were absent at that moment.)

But in the House, things turned weird. The bill arrived April 11 and nothing happened. It didn't get assigned to committee until April 30 - and then it went to the House Executive Committee rather than to the PK-12 committee on curriculum. Then it missed its committee deadline and got sent back to House Rules (graveyard).

But now the bill is back in House Executive and posted for a hearing on Wednesday. House Executive, you should know, is a committee that is specifically designed to be "responsive to the Speaker's office," as Speaker Michael Madigan has said.

What is going on? I'm guessing SB 1569 was revived to be used as a "vehicle" for some high-impact education purpose. I'd be surprised if there's no amendment filed on this bill by Tuesday.

[Click to see the [House bills that have passed](#) both chambers.]

This is the final scheduled week for action on non-appropriation bills. All "substantive" bills still pending in the second chamber are to be voted up or down by the Friday deadline. As you know, however, it is not unusual (especially in the Senate) for a bill to receive a deadline extension.

There are many bills of all kinds still pending, many that would amend the School Code or other statutes of interest to educators and public school advocates. Deadlines notwithstanding, third-reading votes will continue until adjournment. At that point, most bills still pending will become comatose for good.

These special ISNS features will be updated regularly: the [bill-tracking web page](#) showing the status of viable bills that could affect public education policy, and a page of links to all [ISNS newsletters so far delivered](#) in 2019. (The URL for these pages was changed for May 13, so only ISNS readers can access them.)

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