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Fwd: Capitol Watch: Senate 3rd Reading Wrap-Up & House Committee Highlights

1 message

Jason Bauer <jbauer@panaschools.com>
To: Ruth Gibson <ruth.gibson@panaschools.com>

Sun, Apr 14, 2024 at 1:24 PM

FYI - PLEASE PUT THIS in the April board meeting agenda.

Jason

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **IASA** <iasa@iasaedu.org>
Date: Fri, Apr 12, 2024 at 3:01 PM
Subject: Capitol Watch: Senate 3rd Reading Wrap-Up & House Committee Highlights
To: <jbauer@panaschools.com>



Insights from Senate 3rd Reading Deadline & House Committee Updates

Happy Friday!

As we reflect on the events of the Senate's third reading deadline week, it is evident that our collective advocacy efforts continue to shape the future of education policy in Illinois. From engaging discussions to pivotal decisions to filed witness slips, this week underscored the importance of making our voices heard to drive positive change for our schools and communities.

Prior to finalizing floor action in the Senate this week, there were a few additional measures heard in committee that had not been previously heard. A few highlights of those bills are below:

Senate Education

SB 463 (Loughran Cappel; D-Crest Hill) addresses the upcoming sunset of the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC), which is scheduled for June 30, 2024. PEAC has been integral in providing advisory support to ISBE for the implementation of the current teacher evaluation system, so the bill would create the Performance Evaluation Advisory Committee to take the place of the Council, effective July 1, 2024. The bill does not include a sunset date for the committee. A floor amendment included language that clarifies that teachers in career and technical education programs are eligible for tenure under the same procedures as

other licensed educators. The bill was passed out of committee on Tuesday, and passed by the full Senate today.

SB 458 (Gillespie; D-Arlington Heights) would direct school districts, special education cooperatives, and nonpublic schools to adhere to additional guidelines related to isolated time out and restraint. Specifically, the bill would require that all employees who have regular contact with students must receive annual deescalation. Additionally, schools would need to reduce incidents of restraint and isolated time out by 10% every year for a period of 7 years, and the reduction plan is required to be submitted to the state by July 1. It further charges ISBE with conducting on-site investigations within 7 days of receiving a complaint about a violation of the statute. The bill faced opposition from labor unions, management groups, and ISBE in the committee hearing. As a result, the sponsor committed to continuing discussions with the opponents, who brought the bill forward due to claims of increases in the use of restraint and isolated time out in the last few years, before moving the bill forward for a floor vote.

Senate Third Reading Deadline

As the deadline for Senate bills to receive floor votes expires today, the chamber has passed over 30 bills that will have an impact on K12 public education in some way. Some of the most notable measures that were passed through the Senate chamber are listed below:

SB 1 (Lightford; D-Hillside) creates the new Department of Early Childhood, and will consolidate certain services from ISBE, DCFS, and DHS into a new agency. The new agency is an initiative of, and priority for, the Governor's office, and will begin operations on July 1, 2024, with a target date for full operations on July 1, 2026.

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 are 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 state budget request to date.

SB 3455 (Martwick; D-Chicago) directs the Department of Revenue, in conjunction with the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, to conduct a comprehensive study on the current property tax system in Illinois. An amendment included language that would allow the department to consult with units of local government to collect essential information for the study, and also allows local government units the opportunity to provide public comment during the study period. The department is directed to complete the study and provide a final report to the General Assembly by July 1, 2026.

Although the deadline for bills to be out of the Senate has expired, there are a number of measures that have received extensions due to work still being done on amendments. Please check the online bill tracker tool on the IASA website for a full list of Senate bills that have passed out of the first chamber. All bills can be found on the "Bills Moving CY 2024" tab on the sheet.

In addition to floor action in the Senate, the House was busy with subject matter hearings and committee action as the chamber prepared for its own third reading deadline next Friday, April 19th. Below are some highlights of what occurred in the House chamber this week:

House Revenue & Finance Committee

The committee held a subject matter hearing on a range of property tax bills that have been filed this session. The purpose of the hearing was to review the range of different proposals and discuss the reasoning behind them, concerns from the opposition, and possibly pathways forward for the measures, if any. It is typical procedure for the House Revenue committee to hear potential bills in subject matter before they can receive full consideration in a hearing, but many, if not all, will remain in the Rules committee and not receive a vote this session. That being said, we believe it is important for members to be aware of the discussions surrounding these proposals, especially as we prepare for a comprehensive study of the property tax system that will take place if [SB 3455](#) (Martwick; D-Chicago) is passed into law this year. A few of the bills that were heard are listed below:

A handful of bills that would make changes to the senior exemption were discussed, including [HB 1074](#) (Reick; R-Woodstock). The measure would increase the maximum income limitation for eligible exemption to \$73,700 from \$65,000, and provides for the future income levels to be adjusted upward each year based on a factor of CPI. Representative Reick explained that the income level had not been increased since 2018, and many seniors are experiencing social security increases that are pushing them beyond the threshold, resulting in them no longer being eligible for the freeze. The committee recognized a need to provide property tax relief for those residents on fixed incomes, but also acknowledged that exemptions generally provide relief for certain taxpayers at the expense of increased tax burdens for others.

[HB 5516](#) (Stephens; R-Norridge) would require the board of review to provide notice 90 days before hearing a complaint for a change in assessment of more than \$100,000. Currently, only 14 days notice is provided. The bill intends to provide taxing bodies more time to prepare to participate in hearings for assessment changes that may impact their districts, but the bill faces opposition from the Cook County Assessor's office, which indicated to the proponents that this change could further delay the issuance of property tax bills.

[HB 1427](#) (Sosnowski, R-Machesney Park), which would allow taxpayers to place a binding referendum on the ballot that would direct taxing districts to lower their aggregate extensions up to 10% from the previous taxable year, received testimony from Americans for Prosperity and Wirepoints. The organizations pointed to Illinois' high property tax burden, and the intersection between increasing property taxes, Illinois' low home value growth compared to other states, Illinois' population loss, and Illinois' largest number of taxing bodies in the country.

House Appropriations - Elementary & Secondary Education Committee

[HB 5418](#) (B. Hernandez; D-Aurora) allows ISBE to authorize school maintenance grants to regional offices of education and intermediate service centers and provides grants that are specifically meant to be used for taking care of school buildings and facilities that are owned by the government and open to the public.

[HB 5480](#) (Delgado; D-Chicago) allows state-authorized charter schools to get reimbursed for transportation expenses. If a charter school is approved by the state,

the state covers the cost of transporting eligible students, adjusted based on previous year's enrollment and area value. The reimbursement rate matches that of the charter school's district. If the district lacks a specific transportation tax rate, the state still covers costs proportionate to enrollment. Charter schools offering transportation can claim reimbursement through a system like regular districts. If they received transportation grant funding previously or during the law's implementation year.

Currently, Illinois has nine state-authorized charter schools and the proponents indicated that this could be between \$2-\$5 million dollars. Allowing state-authorized charter schools access to the transportation line item may continue to prorate reimbursement levels for school districts across the state.

HB 3446 (Davis; D-East Hazel Crest) would require ISBE to include information that districts currently provide through their Evidence-Based Funding Spending Plans on the school report cards.

House Elementary & Secondary Education: Administration, Licensing & Charter Schools

A few hours before the committee was scheduled to begin, it was unexpectedly canceled, and with it, the opportunity for **HB 3907** (Stuart; D-Collinsville) to be called for a hearing. We again want to extend our appreciation to everyone who has filed a witness slip on this legislation, and reiterate that we are continuing to work with the sponsor to articulate the concerns related to the organizational and financial impact that mandating 45 minutes of uninterrupted, individual plan time for all educators would have on school systems. With the House third reading deadline scheduled for next Friday, April 19th, there is likely one more chance that the bill could be scheduled for a committee next week, so as always, please be alert to a possible call to action.

Next Week!

Next week, both chambers are set to convene, and we are anticipating a burst of activity in the House as members hasten to meet the deadline for the third reading of their bills. Meanwhile, the Senate is expected to address lingering issues by proposing amendments to bills that were granted extensions, facilitating crucial negotiations. With a flurry of engagements anticipated, please stay vigilant for Calls to Action regarding any last-minute bills that may emerge.

As always, thank you for reading, and for your engagement in educational advocacy on behalf of our association and all public schools in Illinois!

Sincerely,

Your Government Relations Team



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