



Bridgett Heinrich &lt;bheinrich@panaschools.com&gt;

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## Fwd: Capitol Watch: COVID Relief for TRS Employees, edTPA and Other Proposals We're Monitoring

1 message

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Jason Bauer <jbauer@panaschools.com>  
To: Bridgett Heinrich <bheinrich@panaschools.com>

Fri, Mar 12, 2021 at 5:40 PM

Pleas put in the board packet. You can do this Monday.

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** IASA <[iasa@iasaedu.org](mailto:iasa@iasaedu.org)>  
**Date:** March 12, 2021 at 4:11:28 PM CST  
**To:** [jbauer@panaschools.com](mailto:jbauer@panaschools.com)  
**Subject:** Capitol Watch: COVID Relief for TRS Employees, edTPA and Other Proposals We're Monitoring  
**Reply-To:** [iasa@iasaedu.org](mailto:iasa@iasaedu.org)



### COVID Relief for TRS Employees, edTPA Eliminated and Other Proposals We're Monitoring

The Illinois General Assembly continues to methodically work through a logjam of bills as the March 26 deadline for legislation to pass out of committee in the House and Senate closes in.

Meanwhile, it's been a monumental few days for public education with a series of major announcements that includes:

- New IDPH/ISBE **guidance** that halves the 6-foot social distancing rule and relaxes capability limits. A follow-up **FAQ** was released Thursday.
- The signing of the education omnibus bill that passed during the January lame duck session.
- The signing of the **American Rescue Plan**, which includes around \$5 billion in relief for K-12 schools in Illinois.

- The Illinois State Board of Education breaking from the governor's budget proposal and **requesting** an additional \$362.1 million to Evidence-Based Funding formula and \$50 million in early childhood education grants.

There's never a slow news day in these unprecedented times. As we shared last week, we are closely monitoring nearly 700 bills in the House and Senate that directly impact public education. With such a high volume of bills, we're trying to narrow our focus and spotlight certain bills in each Capitol Watch that have either been posted or heard in committee.

It's important to keep in mind many of the proposals that have surfaced will not make it to the finish line — and many will never even get out of the starting blocks. The situation is incredibly fluid as lawmakers continue to jockey behind the scenes and try to garner support for their legislation.

This slate of bills is a mix of measures we support and oppose. I also want to encourage you to reach out to your local legislators and make your voice heard on these issues. Witness slips are available to sign on several of the bills detailed below.

**COVID Relief for TRS Employees, Rep. Dave Severin (R-Benton)**  
**HB 2997 Sign Witness Slip in support**  
**HB 2998 Sign Witness Slip in support**  
**Personnel and Pensions Committee**

Each proposal seeks to achieve the same end goal of providing teachers a pathway to accumulate additional service credit for working during the pandemic.

**HB 2997** would require teachers to pay into TRS to earn the additional service credit for time worked between March 16, 2020 and June 30, 2021. The benefit would be limited to teachers who taught in person, under the current proposal. The legislation sets out specifications to waive the reduction in retirement annuity for Tier 1 and Tier 2 members.

**HB 2998** is more straightforward in that it says service credits shall be granted without any additional employee or employer contribution. The proposal says teachers who worked during the COVID-19 pandemic shall receive one additional day of service credit for each day of service credit earned during that period, notwithstanding any limitation on the amount of service credit that may be earned in a single year.

Both pieces of legislation have been posted to the House Personnel and Pensions Committee. The committee is scheduled to meet **March 19 at 9 a.m.**

**Redefine Administrative Cost; Change Administrative Cap**  
**HB 2983, Rep. Thomas Morrison, R-Palatine**  
**Elementary & Secondary Education: Administration, Licensing & Charter School**  
**Sign Witness Slip in opposition**

HB 2983 would redefine administrative cost and change the administrative cap. General (2300) and School (2400) administration expenditures would each be considered on a per pupil basis (EBF enrollment) and limited to the lesser of Consumer Price Index or 5 percent.

We are opposed to the bill because the administrative cap is already one of the biggest reason districts seek legislative waivers. This bill, if enacted, would increase the number of waivers significantly.

In addition, limiting the CPI on a per pupil basis will compress a district's salary structure, making it more difficult to recruit administrators.

The legislation has been assigned to the Elementary & Secondary Education: Administration, Licensing & Charter School Committee. The committee's next hearing is **March 17 at 2 p.m.**

**Eliminate edTPA Requirement**  
**HB 655; Rep. Thomas Bennett (R-Gibson City) and Rep. Chris Miller (R-Oakland)**  
**Elementary & Secondary Education: Administration, Licensing & Charter School**  
**Sign Witness Slip in support**

The proposal removes the requirement that educator licensure candidates pass a teacher performance assessment, commonly known as the edTPA. The edTPA is often cited as a major barrier to educators earning their teaching certificate.

Nearly 500 people have signed witness slips as proponents of this bill. Click the link above to fill out a witness slip.

The House Elementary & Secondary Education: Administration, Licensing & Charter School committee is scheduled to meet on **March 17 at 2 p.m.**

**Shared Superintendent**  
**SB 1637, Sen. Sue Rezin (R-Morris)**  
**Senate Education Committee**  
**Sign Witness Slip in opposition**

SB 1637 is an ill-advised proposal we have seen before. The bill attempts to give voters the authority to force their locally-elected school boards into resource-sharing agreements with other districts.

The legislation amends the school code to say that if at least 8 percent of the school district's voters in the last consolidated sign a petition to share the services of a superintendent or other administrator it triggers a referendum.

IASA opposes this bill because it strips away local control from school boards and puts the decision to voters, who likely are not as educated about school matters as their locally elected school board.

This bill goes beyond stripping away local control. Superintendents manage millions of dollars and many are also asked to serve as principal as well. Unnecessarily forcing one superintendent to run two large businesses is likely going to result in additional compensation or the hiring of additional administrative staff.

Furthermore, the proposal forces districts to do something they already have the ability to do. Twenty-eight districts (14 superintendents) in Illinois have entered into shared service agreements because they decided it was best for their communities. That number is up from 22 districts in 2019. In addition, there are around 120 superintendent/principal positions in Illinois currently.

We encourage you to voice your opposition to local legislators and sign a witness slip. This bill could be called at the Senate Education Committee's next meeting on **March 16 at 1 p.m.**

**ISBE/ IDPH Guidance**

Switching gears, ISBE/IDPH released new **guidance** on Monday that "supports the return to in-person instruction as soon as practicable in each community" and outlines mitigation strategies for safe return to the classrooms.

On Thursday, ISBE provided an updated **FAQ document** that clarified social distancing guidelines, capacity limits and providing a remote learning option. There were a lot of questions about the remote learning option, so I'll share what ISBE is saying:

Must school districts continue to offer a remote education options to students? (3/9/21)  
Students who are at increased risk of severe illness, who have special health care needs, or who live with people at increased risk must be given the option of remote instruction. Students who are not at increased risk of severe illness, who do not have special health care needs, or who don't live with people at increased risk may be given the option of remote instruction. If a district chooses to discontinue remote education for students who

are not at increased risk of severe illness, who do not have special health care needs, or who don't live with people at increased risk, the district must provide sufficient time and support for families to make plans for in-person instruction, including ensuring that students transferring to in-person instruction from remote education have had an opportunity to obtain required health examinations and immunizations if not already compliant.

We applaud ISBE and IDPH for revising the guidance and removing hurdles for school districts seeking to return to full, in-person learning.

### **Education Omnibus Bill**

On Monday, Gov. Pritzker signed the education omnibus bill that was passed during the January lame duck session. We wrote about the bill in [Capitol Watch](#), and the Illinois State Board of Education provided an analysis of the bill [here](#).

Key provisions in the bill include:

#### **Primary and Secondary Education**

- Adds new graduation requirements that will better prepare students in computer literacy, laboratory science and foreign languages.
- Increases access to accelerated placement programs for students meeting or exceeding state standards in English language arts, math, or science.
- Expands the required Black history coursework to include pre-enslavement of Black people, why Black people came to be enslaved and the American Civil Rights renaissance.
- Requires the Illinois P-20 Council to make recommendations for the short-term and long-term learning recovery actions for public school students in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Establishes a 22-person Inclusive American History Commission.
- Requires the Professional Review Panel to study various issues to strengthen the equity components in the state's evidence-based school funding formula.
- Creates the Whole Child Task Force to focus on expanding trauma-responsive school services.
- Establishes a freedom school network to supplement learning in public schools.

#### **Early Childhood Education**

- Expands access to the Early Intervention program by allowing children who turn 3 years old between May and August to continue receiving services until the beginning of the next school year.
- Requires the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to annually assess all public-school students entering kindergarten to measure their readiness.
- Requires that behavioral health providers use diagnostic codes and descriptions that are developmentally and age appropriate for children under the age of 5.

### **American Rescue Plan**

On Thursday, President Joe Biden signed the American Rescue Plan, a historic \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief package.

The bill provides \$128.6 billion in funding to K-12 education. Illinois will receive \$5.2 billion of that figure, bringing our state's total haul of COVID-19 stimulus funding to more than \$8 billion since last spring.

State Superintendent of Education Carmen Ayala has said that school districts will have to use at least 20 percent of the latest federal emergency funds on addressing learning loss. Besides that, schools will have the ability to use the money for anything from buying personal protective equipment to setting up after-school programs and tutoring interventions. The funds have to be spent by September 2024.

### **ISBE EBF Request**

Earlier this week in the House Appropriation - Elementary and Secondary Education Committee, ISBE requested \$362.1 million to EBF and \$50 million in early childhood education grants, pushing back on the governor's proposal to keep state K-12 education funding flat next fiscal year.

In total, ISBE recommended a \$406 million, or 4.6 percent, increase in FY 2022 in state general revenue funding, increasing the state's share of education funding to \$9.3 billion for the budget year that begins July 1.

We were pleased to see ISBE make this request and try to help districts move closer to their adequacy targets. A number of lawmakers have indicated their support for additional funding, including Rep. Will Davis, D-Homewood.

"I'm just wondering if there's a way to change the conversation until we feel a little bit more obligated to fund it appropriately," Davis said. "And that's at the minimum that we talked about, which is \$350 million."

We will continue to update you on legislation that impacts public education via Capitol Watch once the bills are posted or heard in committee. One last reminder to close, please consider reaching out to your local legislators and make your voice heard on these bills.

Thanks for reading.

Sincerely,

Diane Hendren  
Director of Governmental Relations  
Illinois Association of School Administrators

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