

ED-RED EQUITY AD HOC COMMITTEE

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF ANTICIPATED WORK IN 2020-21

Over the last several years, the General Assembly has discussed multiple legislative initiatives aimed at closing the equity gap across Illinois school districts. ED-RED works to negotiate bills both to ensure consistent implementation and to respect the work and progress that has been made in many suburban districts.

In light of recent events, ED-RED has created an Equity Ad Hoc Committee which will consist of school board members and administrators to discuss the work, both past and future, that ED-RED districts are doing to close the equity gap. The goal of this committee is to use this work to determine ED-RED's role in the conversation and to develop policy standards for future legislative negotiations.

The Equity Ad Hoc committee will also focus on discussing past legislative proposals that we expect to be reintroduced this legislative session. We would like to revisit these legislative proposals and discuss ED-RED's recommendations for moving these issues forward, as well as addressing outstanding concerns with the legislation.

Additionally, in the event that this Ad Hoc Committee identifies new legislative initiatives that would address the equity gap in Illinois, we would like to present those initiatives to the ED-RED Executive Board this fall to determine whether a legislative sponsor should be identified and whether ED-RED should work to advance such legislative initiatives.

Because of the overwhelming interest and size of the Equity Ad Hoc Committee, we will be dividing the Equity Ad Hoc Committee into four subcommittees. This will be something we discuss at our first meeting. Members would still have the option of joining any or all of these subcommittees which would likely include: 1) Student Discipline and SRO/Police Presence on School Grounds; 2) Data Reporting (Discipline and Arrest Data); 3) Curriculum; and 4) Increasing Minority Candidates/Hiring and Professional Development.

Recent Legislative Proposals

We have divided up previous (and likely upcoming) legislative initiatives into these four categories for purposes of our discussion:

Student Discipline and SRO/Police Presence on School Grounds

1. School Resource Officers/Police in Schools

While SB100 primarily focused on student discipline, in the bill's original form (SB3004 – 98th General Assembly) (see: p.8-9 105 ILCS 5/10-22.6(i)

<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/fulltext.asp?DocName=09800SB3004&GA=98&SessionId=85&DocType=d=SB&LegID=79272&DocNum=3004&GAID=12&Session=>) it did touch on the issue of policing in schools and prohibiting the arrest of students in schools. While the student arrest language in the original bill (SB3004) was eventually removed from the bill that passed (SB100), we have seen legislative proposals providing for the removal and/or limitations on SROs/police in schools every legislative session since.

In the past months, we have also seen a movement across the United States (including Chicago, as well as member districts) to eliminate police/SROs in schools. While CPS may be the focus of this discussion, legislative changes would likely impact all Illinois schools.

2. [HB3935/Police Questioning of Students on School Grounds](#)

Representative Kifowit was successful in passing some legislation on this issue last year but refiled a bill again this year and referenced a “loophole” in the previous legislation. Session was cancelled before this bill was brought to committee, but will likely be reintroduced and we are interested in whether additional changes to the bill are needed.

Data Reporting

1. [HB 2084 \(Welch/Lightford\)/Discipline Data collection](#)

HB2084 increases discipline reporting requirements for districts, including new reporting requirements for “lower-level” offenses, identifying the length of out-of-school suspensions for all suspension incidents and reporting on recidivism rates. This subcommittee will explore whether there is a need to provide additional disciplinary data, what that data is and how it should be reported most effectively, as well as how State and Federal data reporting can be consolidated.

If there is interest by the group, we would like to holistically explore the data reporting that districts are currently providing to the State and offer possible legislative solutions for reducing/consolidating overall State data reporting while also ensuring that we meet new reporting mandates. However, we want to ensure that all data mandates provide meaningful and useful data to communities and districts and that there is a process for eliminating those data reporting requirements that are not or are no longer meaningful or useful.

Curriculum

1. [HB 4954 \(Ford\)/African American History](#)

This bill was negotiated (without language being finalized) to create a task force to study how Illinois school districts can implement a change in history curriculum to include the contributions of African Americans throughout history. Representative Ford is passionate about this issue and we hope to meaningfully engage with him in the development of this legislation (and possible Task Force).

2. HB5817 (Flowers) – NEW K-12 Required Books about Racism

This bill sets forth a list of 21 nonfiction, 13 fiction and 9 children's books about racism that shall be required reading for students in every public elementary and secondary school. This is a newly introduced bill, so we expect to discuss the best approach to ensuring that K-12 students are receiving meaningful instruction on racism.

Minority Candidates/Hiring and Professional Development

1. [HB 4029 \(West\)/Minority candidates](#)

This intent of this bill (to interview and hire more minority candidates) is a good one. Unfortunately, the way in which this legislation tries to achieve this outcome could be extremely problematic for our districts given the overall teacher shortage and shortage of minority candidates in particular. In future conversations with Representative West, we would like to offer feasible suggestions for increasing minority candidates and employees in our schools, as well as ways to improve the school climate/culture for those employees.

2. Professional Development Requirements

Generally, when a new educational legislative initiative is introduced that addresses an issue that historically has not been given the attention it deserves, we often see new mandates requiring professional development for teachers, administration and/or other staff in the bill (i.e. suicide awareness, asbestos training, concussions, epilepsy, etc.).

SB100 (<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=099-0456>) included language that districts must use their "best efforts" to provide training on the impact of school exclusions and the impact of justice-system involvement on students. Given that there may be renewed interest in providing this type of training, and now requiring it, this could be a great opportunity to develop a new approach to these PD trainings with the goal of making all trainings meaningful, comprehensive and reflective of the topics needing to be addressed in our rapidly changing environment.

Each training requirement is different: some are required annually, others biannually, some trainings are just recommended and others are unclear if they are required or optional. This piecemeal approach to teacher/staff professional development has led to three significant problems that we would like to address holistically:

- a) There is considerable confusion as to what trainings are required each year for each teacher, staff member and administrator. Many districts have developed comprehensive spreadsheets to try to keep track of these training requirements;
- b) Because of the quantity of these trainings and limitations on time and resources, many trainings have become compliance focused, rather than meaningful and impactful for school personnel. If districts want or are mandated to offer implicit bias training or training on the impact of justice-system involvement, we want to make sure that it can be done in a meaningful way; and
- c) There is no uniform process in Illinois to help districts provide new, timely, meaningful and relevant training for these Professional Development requirements.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: RECENT NEWS ARTICLES

Student Discipline Data and SRO/Police Presence

- Legislation (from 21018) would require additional training “school-based policing” for SRO’s
https://www.nwherald.com/2018/05/11/illinois-looks-to-mandate-school-resource-officer-training/ale3onr/?fb_comment_id

Curriculum

- LGBTQ+
<https://www.sj-r.com/news/20200226/bill-would-require-more-inclusive-k-12-sex-education>
<https://news.wttw.com/2020/07/01/teaching-lgbtq-history-new-law-calls-curriculum-inclusion>
- Black History
<https://dailynorthwestern.com/2020/08/02/city/state-rep-calls-for-a-diverse-history-curriculum-and-the-suspension-of-illinois-history-classes-until-that-is-achieved/>

Human Resources: Hiring and Culture

- Legislation to help grow bilingual teachers (both legislators represent Chicago):
<https://chicago.suntimes.com/education/2020/2/3/21120458/chicago-bilingual-teachers-public-school-grants-college>
- Removal of the Basic Skills Test: Legislation already in place but adds to the conversation of ensuring equity for POC candidates.
<https://chicago.chalkbeat.org/2019/8/8/21108588/illinois-says-goodbye-to-the-basic-skills-test-long-a-barrier-for-teacher-candidates-of-color>

ED-RED Member District Equity Work

- SRO’s
 - Evanston Township High School:
<https://evanstonroundtable.com/Content/Schools/Schools/Article/District-202-School-Board-React-to-Emails-About-Eliminating-School-Resource-Officers/16/27/18276>
 - Oak 97:
<https://patch.com/illinois/oakpark/district-97-board-issues-statement-school-resource-officers>
- LGBTQ+
 - District 91:
<https://www.forestparkreview.com/News/Articles/9-24-2019/D91-to-teach-LGBT-contributions/>

National Articles & Misc.:

- Article: Student mobilization around requesting diverse curriculum (7/29/2020)

<https://www.vox.com/identities/2020/7/29/21345114/students-diversify-curriculum-change-antiracist>

- Article: Deciding what ethnic studies should be included as part of the curriculum
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/15/us/california-ethnic-studies.html>
- Article: Governor Newsom Signs Legislation
<https://www.gov.ca.gov/2019/10/12/governor-newsom-signs-legislation-to-create-more-inclusive-schools-and-expand-k-12-student-protections/>