

ED-RED NOVEMBER 2025 MEETING

2025 Legislative Updates

Presented by Ruchi Verma

FRANCZEK

Meet Your Host

Ruchi counsels K-12 clients on policy and board governance issues, strategy and operations, student privacy rights, and public and charter school compliance. She provides practical advice to school boards and administrators to devise student-centered solutions.

With over 20 years of experience, including as General Counsel for CPS, Ruchi is a skilled problem-solver with vast knowledge of a variety of complex school law issues.

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Senate Bill 243 – OMA & FOIA

Open Meetings Act

- Expansion of closed session exception for self-evaluation “when meeting with a representative of a statewide or regional association of which the public body is a member.”
- Public bodies are prohibited from scheduling or holding a meeting on election day.
- Performance of active military duty as a service member is a permissible reason for remote attendance at a public meeting.

Freedom of Information Act

- Public body may require a requester “to verify orally or in writing that the requester is a person”
- To assist with cybersecurity, public bodies are not required to open electronically attached files or hyperlinks to view or access details of a request.
- Updated definition of a “person”
- Public records do not include “junk mail”
- Displaying certain information on website; If no website then must post the information at each of its administrative or regional offices.

Public Act 104-0288 – Safe Schools for All Act

Prohibits the denial of free public education or exclusion from participation in any program or activity based on perceived or actual citizenship or immigration status.

Schools cannot threaten to disclose or disclose anything related to perceived or actual citizenship or immigration status to any other person or an immigration or law enforcement agency.

By July 1, 2026, schools must develop procedures for reviewing and authorizing requests from law enforcement attempting to enter a school or school facility.

Beginning July 1, 2026, those aggrieved by violations of this Act may bring a civil lawsuit.

Public Act 104-0128 - Teacher Preparation

- Exempts individuals seeking a PEL with a school support personnel or CSBO endorsement from requirements to take coursework in psychology/identification/instruction of exceptional children and methods of reading
- Requires that ISBE incorporate, by 7/1/27, certain topics into exams for individuals seeking a PEL endorsed in teaching or administration (excluding those seeking CSBO endorsement)
- Exempts applicants seeking school support personnel endorsement with active professional teaching license from taking test of content area knowledge
- Extends exemption from passing teacher performance assessment for those completing a teacher preparation program through 8/31/26
- Establishes the Paraprofessional to Teacher Pathway Program

Public Act 104-0020 - Teacher Evaluations & Student Growth

- Beginning 7/1/2025, data and indicators of student growth may be included, but are not required, in rating teaching or principal performance
- Collective bargaining implications



Public Act 104-0399 - Artificial Intelligence

- Requires ISBE to develop statewide guidance on the use of AI by July 1, 2026
- Also requires that by July 1, 2026, ISBE encourage school districts to collect teaching resources to support American Sign Language programs.



Public Act 104-0211 – Special Education Settlement Agreements

A mediation, resolution or settlement agreement may include, as a condition of settlement, a prospective waiver of legal right or claim if:

1. The waiver is related only to the student who is the subject of the proceeding
2. The waiver is only related to the claims in the complaint being settled; and
3. The waiver is for a reasonable duration not to exceed the duration of the agreement

Public Act 104-0368 - Independent Educational Evaluations

1

School districts may initiate impartial due process hearings within **7 school days** (instead of 5) of a parent's request for IEE

2

Generally, an IEE at public expense must be completed within **60 school days** (rather than 30) of a parent's written request

3

If a due process hearing decision indicates the student is entitled to an IEE, the IEE must be completed within **60 school days*** (rather than 30) of the decision

Public Act 104-0388 - Cyber-Bullying Definition



- Specifies that one form of bullying includes “posting or distributing sexually explicit images”
- Beginning with the 26-27 SY, the definition of cyber-bullying also includes the posting or distribution of an unauthorized digital replica by electronic means
- Digital replica means – an electronic representation of the identity of an actual individual using AI

Public Act 104-0391 – School Fees or Fines

- Prohibits discrimination, punishing or penalizing a student because of unpaid fees or fines
- Prohibition includes the lowering of grades, exclusion from extracurriculars, or withholding records, grades, transcripts or diplomas

Public Act 104-0430 – School Ticketing & Law Enforcement Referrals

- Prohibits issuing fines/tickets/citations to students as school based disciplinary consequences OR for violations of municipal ordinances on school grounds during school hours or while taking school transportation
- In 27-28 SY, school districts must report to ISBE:
 - The # of K-12 students referred to law enforcement AND
 - The # of instances of referral to law enforcement for K-12 students
- Starting January 31, 2029, ISBE will report student referrals to law enforcement annually
- Prohibits school personnel from referring a truant, chronic truant, or truant minor to an SRO or peace officer for the issuance of a fine or fee as punishment for truancy
- SRO agreements must have certain provisions

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