



# WomanView

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## Illinois Legislative Update: Education

Five bills related to education need only Gov. Pat Quinn's signature to become law after both houses of the Illinois General Assembly passed them before the end of the regular legislative session.

**House Bill 740** amends the School Code to require the State Board of Education to establish a state grant program, pending appropriations, which will develop two-year pilot programs to assist in the creation of green career and technical education programs in public secondary schools. These programs will introduce students to green industries and open opportunities for them to advance along careers in solar technology, biofuels, organic and community food production, and energy and water system retrofitting.

**House Bill 973** amends the Critical Health Problems and Comprehensive Health Education Act to provide that the Comprehensive Health Education Program—which designates areas of curricula for all elementary and secondary schools in the state—may include instruction on teen-dating violence for grades 8 through 12.

**House Bill 2448** amends the School Code to allow a school district, by resolution of its school board, to establish a remote educational program, which is defined as an educational program delivered to students in the home or other location outside of a school building and complying with specified criteria. In establishing a remote educational program, a school board's adopted policy must include standards for determining that the program will best serve a student's individual learning needs, including consideration of a student's prior attendance, disciplinary record, and academic history. The remote educational program's curriculum must align with state learning standards, and the program must offer instruction and educational experiences consistent with those given to students at the same grade level in the district. Remote educational program instructors are subject to the same qualification requirements established in the School Code's teacher certification provisions and the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Each student participating in a remote educational program must have a written remote educational plan that includes, among other criteria, specific achievement goals, a description of assessments designated to measure student progress, the identification of a school district administrator who will oversee the program on behalf of the school district, and the identification of a parent, guardian, or other responsible adult who will directly supervise the program. School districts that adopt a policy for a remote educational program must submit a copy of the policy as well as data on student participation to the State Board of Education. Students participating in a remote educational program must be tested as part of all assessments administered by the school district. H.B. 2448 also provides that days of attendance by students in remote educational programs may be claimed by the school district as school work for General State Aid distribution purposes.

**Senate Bill 1508** amends the Illinois School Student Records Act to provide that nothing contained in the Act may be used to impair or limit the confidentiality of information communicated in confidence to a school social worker, school counselor, school psychologist, or any interns who work under the direct supervision of a school social worker, school counselor, or school psychologist. The Act already stipulates that nothing in the Act may be construed to impair or limit the confidentiality of information communicated in confidence to a physician, psychologist, or other psychotherapist. S.B. 1508 further provides that school employees who act to protect communications as privileged or confidential pursuant to applicable state or federal laws or regulations will not be subjected to adverse employment action, the threat of adverse employment action, or any manner of discrimination.

**Senate Bill 1796** establishes the Illinois Hope and Opportunity Pathways through Education (IHOPE) Program. IHOPE is to develop a comprehensive system to reenroll high school dropouts in programs that will enable them to earn their high school diploma. Subject to appropriations, the State Board of Education will award IHOPE grants to regional offices of education (ROEs) and school districts to assist in establishing reenrollment programs and services. Funding levels will be based upon the proportion of dropouts in a school district or ROE to the total number of dropouts in the state. In order to be eligible for grants, school districts and ROEs must submit to the State Board of Education an IHOPE plan that includes proposed partnerships with public community colleges and nonprofit community-based organizations. High school dropouts, up to and including age 21, may voluntarily reenroll in an IHOPE program which may include comprehensive year-round programming, evening school, summer school, community college courses, adult education, vocational training, work experience, online programs, self-concept-enhancing programs, and parenting courses. S.B. 1796 designates that, in order for IHOPE programs to be effective, administrators should implement high student-learning standards that integrate work experience and education and establish performance-based goals related to attendance, skill building, graduation, and transition to college and employment.

To read the full text of these bills or see a list of their sponsors, go to the Illinois General Assembly's website, [www.ilga.gov](http://www.ilga.gov), and search for the legislation by bill number.

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