

AN ACT concerning education.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The School Code is amended by changing Sections 10-22.6, 26-2a, and 26-12 as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/10-22.6) (from Ch. 122, par. 10-22.6)

Sec. 10-22.6. Suspension or expulsion of pupils; school searches.

(a) To expel pupils guilty of gross disobedience or misconduct, including gross disobedience or misconduct perpetuated by electronic means, pursuant to subsection (b-20) of this Section, and no action shall lie against them for such expulsion. Expulsion shall take place only after the parents have been requested to appear at a meeting of the board, or with a hearing officer appointed by it, to discuss their child's behavior. Such request shall be made by registered or certified mail and shall state the time, place and purpose of the meeting. The board, or a hearing officer appointed by it, at such meeting shall state the reasons for dismissal and the date on which the expulsion is to become effective. If a hearing officer is appointed by the board, he shall report to the board a written summary of the evidence heard at the meeting and the board may take such action thereon as it finds

appropriate. If the board acts to expel a pupil, the written expulsion decision shall detail the specific reasons why removing the pupil from the learning environment is in the best interest of the school. The expulsion decision shall also include a rationale as to the specific duration of the expulsion. An expelled pupil may be immediately transferred to an alternative program in the manner provided in Article 13A or 13B of this Code. A pupil must not be denied transfer because of the expulsion, except in cases in which such transfer is deemed to cause a threat to the safety of students or staff in the alternative program.

(b) To suspend or by policy to authorize the superintendent of the district or the principal, assistant principal, or dean of students of any school to suspend pupils guilty of gross disobedience or misconduct, or to suspend pupils guilty of gross disobedience or misconduct on the school bus from riding the school bus, pursuant to subsections (b-15) and (b-20) of this Section, and no action shall lie against them for such suspension. The board may by policy authorize the superintendent of the district or the principal, assistant principal, or dean of students of any school to suspend pupils guilty of such acts for a period not to exceed 10 school days. If a pupil is suspended due to gross disobedience or misconduct on a school bus, the board may suspend the pupil in excess of 10 school days for safety reasons.

Any suspension shall be reported immediately to the parents

or guardian of a pupil along with a full statement of the reasons for such suspension and a notice of their right to a review. The school board must be given a summary of the notice, including the reason for the suspension and the suspension length. Upon request of the parents or guardian, the school board or a hearing officer appointed by it shall review such action of the superintendent or principal, assistant principal, or dean of students. At such review, the parents or guardian of the pupil may appear and discuss the suspension with the board or its hearing officer. If a hearing officer is appointed by the board, he shall report to the board a written summary of the evidence heard at the meeting. After its hearing or upon receipt of the written report of its hearing officer, the board may take such action as it finds appropriate. If a student is suspended pursuant to this subsection (b), the board shall, in the written suspension decision, detail the specific act of gross disobedience or misconduct resulting in the decision to suspend. The suspension decision shall also include a rationale as to the specific duration of the suspension. A pupil who is suspended in excess of 20 school days may be immediately transferred to an alternative program in the manner provided in Article 13A or 13B of this Code. A pupil must not be denied transfer because of the suspension, except in cases in which such transfer is deemed to cause a threat to the safety of students or staff in the alternative program.

(b-5) Among the many possible disciplinary interventions

and consequences available to school officials, school exclusions, such as out-of-school suspensions and expulsions, are the most serious. School officials shall limit the number and duration of expulsions and suspensions to the greatest extent practicable, and it is recommended that they use them only for legitimate educational purposes. To ensure that students are not excluded from school unnecessarily, it is recommended that school officials consider forms of non-exclusionary discipline prior to using out-of-school suspensions or expulsions.

(b-10) Unless otherwise required by federal law or this Code, school boards may not institute zero-tolerance policies by which school administrators are required to suspend or expel students for particular behaviors.

(b-15) Out-of-school suspensions of 3 days or less may be used only if the student's continuing presence in school would pose a threat to school safety or a disruption to other students' learning opportunities. For purposes of this subsection (b-15), "threat to school safety or a disruption to other students' learning opportunities" shall be determined on a case-by-case basis by the school board or its designee. School officials shall make all reasonable efforts to resolve such threats, address such disruptions, and minimize the length of suspensions to the greatest extent practicable.

(b-20) Unless otherwise required by this Code, out-of-school suspensions of longer than 3 days, expulsions,

and disciplinary removals to alternative schools may be used only if other appropriate and available behavioral and disciplinary interventions have been exhausted and the student's continuing presence in school would either (i) pose a threat to the safety of other students, staff, or members of the school community or (ii) substantially disrupt, impede, or interfere with the operation of the school. For purposes of this subsection (b-20), "threat to the safety of other students, staff, or members of the school community" and "substantially disrupt, impede, or interfere with the operation of the school" shall be determined on a case-by-case basis by school officials. For purposes of this subsection (b-20), the determination of whether "appropriate and available behavioral and disciplinary interventions have been exhausted" shall be made by school officials. School officials shall make all reasonable efforts to resolve such threats, address such disruptions, and minimize the length of student exclusions to the greatest extent practicable. Within the suspension decision described in subsection (b) of this Section or the expulsion decision described in subsection (a) of this Section, it shall be documented whether other interventions were attempted or whether it was determined that there were no other appropriate and available interventions.

(b-25) Students who are suspended out-of-school for longer than 4 school days shall be provided appropriate and available support services during the period of their suspension. For

purposes of this subsection (b-25), "appropriate and available support services" shall be determined by school authorities. Within the suspension decision described in subsection (b) of this Section, it shall be documented whether such services are to be provided or whether it was determined that there are no such appropriate and available services.

A school district may refer students who are expelled to appropriate and available support services.

A school district shall create a policy to facilitate the re-engagement of students who are suspended out-of-school, expelled, or returning from an alternative school setting.

(b-30) A school district shall create a policy by which suspended pupils, including those pupils suspended from the school bus who do not have alternate transportation to school, shall have the opportunity to make up work for equivalent academic credit. It shall be the responsibility of a pupil's parent or guardian to notify school officials that a pupil suspended from the school bus does not have alternate transportation to school.

(c) The Department of Human Services shall be invited to send a representative to consult with the board at such meeting whenever there is evidence that mental illness may be the cause for expulsion or suspension.

(c-5) School districts shall make reasonable efforts to provide ongoing professional development to teachers, administrators, school board members, school resource

officers, and staff on the adverse consequences of school exclusion and justice-system involvement, effective classroom management strategies, culturally responsive discipline, the appropriate and available supportive services for the promotion of student attendance and engagement, and developmentally appropriate disciplinary methods that promote positive and healthy school climates.

(d) The board may expel a student for a definite period of time not to exceed 2 calendar years, as determined on a case-by-case ~~case by case~~ basis. A student who is determined to have brought one of the following objects to school, any school-sponsored activity or event, or any activity or event that bears a reasonable relationship to school shall be expelled for a period of not less than one year:

(1) A firearm. For the purposes of this Section, "firearm" means any gun, rifle, shotgun, weapon as defined by Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code, firearm as defined in Section 1.1 of the Firearm Owners Identification Card Act, or firearm as defined in Section 24-1 of the Criminal Code of 2012. The expulsion period under this subdivision (1) may be modified by the superintendent, and the superintendent's determination may be modified by the board on a case-by-case basis.

(2) A knife, brass knuckles or other knuckle weapon regardless of its composition, a billy club, or any other object if used or attempted to be used to cause bodily

harm, including "look alike" of any firearm as defined in subdivision (1) of this subsection (d). The expulsion requirement under this subdivision (2) may be modified by the superintendent, and the superintendent's determination may be modified by the board on a case-by-case basis.

Expulsion or suspension shall be construed in a manner consistent with the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. A student who is subject to suspension or expulsion as provided in this Section may be eligible for a transfer to an alternative school program in accordance with Article 13A of the School Code.

(d-5) The board may suspend or by regulation authorize the superintendent of the district or the principal, assistant principal, or dean of students of any school to suspend a student for a period not to exceed 10 school days or may expel a student for a definite period of time not to exceed 2 calendar years, as determined on a case-by-case ~~case-by-case~~ basis, if (i) that student has been determined to have made an explicit threat on an Internet website against a school employee, a student, or any school-related personnel, (ii) the Internet website through which the threat was made is a site that was accessible within the school at the time the threat was made or was available to third parties who worked or studied within the school grounds at the time the threat was made, and (iii) the threat could be reasonably interpreted as threatening to the safety and security of the threatened

individual because of his or her duties or employment status or status as a student inside the school.

(e) To maintain order and security in the schools, school authorities may inspect and search places and areas such as lockers, desks, parking lots, and other school property and equipment owned or controlled by the school, as well as personal effects left in those places and areas by students, without notice to or the consent of the student, and without a search warrant. As a matter of public policy, the General Assembly finds that students have no reasonable expectation of privacy in these places and areas or in their personal effects left in these places and areas. School authorities may request the assistance of law enforcement officials for the purpose of conducting inspections and searches of lockers, desks, parking lots, and other school property and equipment owned or controlled by the school for illegal drugs, weapons, or other illegal or dangerous substances or materials, including searches conducted through the use of specially trained dogs. If a search conducted in accordance with this Section produces evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law, local ordinance, or the school's policies or rules, such evidence may be seized by school authorities, and disciplinary action may be taken. School authorities may also turn over such evidence to law enforcement authorities.

(f) Suspension or expulsion may include suspension or expulsion from school and all school activities and a

prohibition from being present on school grounds.

(g) A school district may adopt a policy providing that if a student is suspended or expelled for any reason from any public or private school in this or any other state, the student must complete the entire term of the suspension or expulsion in an alternative school program under Article 13A of this Code or an alternative learning opportunities program under Article 13B of this Code before being admitted into the school district if there is no threat to the safety of students or staff in the alternative program.

(h) School officials shall not advise or encourage students to drop out voluntarily due to behavioral or academic difficulties.

(i) A student may not be issued a monetary fine or fee as a disciplinary consequence, though this shall not preclude requiring a student to provide restitution for lost, stolen, or damaged property.

(j) Subsections (a) through (i) of this Section shall apply to elementary and secondary schools, charter schools, special charter districts, and school districts organized under Article 34 of this Code.

(k) The expulsion of children enrolled in programs funded under Section 1C-2 of this Code is subject to the requirements under paragraph (7) of subsection (a) of Section 2-3.71 of this Code.

(Source: P.A. 99-456, eff. 9-15-16; 100-105, eff. 1-1-18;

revised 1-22-18.)

(105 ILCS 5/26-2a) (from Ch. 122, par. 26-2a)

Sec. 26-2a. A "truant" is defined as a child subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for a school day or portion thereof.

"Valid cause" for absence shall be illness, observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, family emergency, and shall include such other situations beyond the control of the student as determined by the board of education in each district, or such other circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the parent for the mental, emotional, or physical ~~safety or~~ health or safety of the student.

"Chronic or habitual truant" shall be defined as a child who is subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for 5% or more of the previous 180 regular attendance days.

"Truant minor" is defined as a chronic truant to whom supportive services, including prevention, diagnostic, intervention and remedial services, alternative programs and other school and community resources have been provided and have failed to result in the cessation of chronic truancy, or have been offered and refused.

A "dropout" is defined as any child enrolled in grades 9 through 12 whose name has been removed from the district enrollment roster for any reason other than the student's

death, extended illness, removal for medical non-compliance, expulsion, aging out, graduation, or completion of a program of studies and who has not transferred to another public or private school and is not known to be home-schooled by his or her parents or guardians or continuing school in another country.

"Religion" for the purposes of this Article, includes all aspects of religious observance and practice, as well as belief.

(Source: P.A. 96-1423, eff. 8-3-10; 97-218, eff. 7-28-11.)

(105 ILCS 5/26-12) (from Ch. 122, par. 26-12)

Sec. 26-12. Punitive action.

(a) No punitive action, including out of school suspensions, expulsions or court action, shall be taken against chronic truants for such truancy unless appropriate and available supportive services and other school resources have been provided to the student.

(b) A school district may not refer a truant, chronic truant, or truant minor to any other local public entity, as defined under Section 1-206 of the Local Governmental and Governmental Employees Tort Immunity Act, for that local public entity to issue the child a fine or a fee as punishment for his or her truancy.

(c) A school district may refer any person having custody or control of a truant, chronic truant, or truant minor to any

other local public entity, as defined under Section 1-206 of the Local Governmental and Governmental Employees Tort Immunity Act, for that local public entity to issue the person a fine or fee for the child's truancy only if the school district's truant officer, regional office of education, or intermediate service center has been notified of the truant behavior and the school district, regional office of education, or intermediate service center has offered all appropriate and available supportive services and other school resources to the child. Before a school district may refer a person having custody or control of a child to a municipality, as defined under Section 1-1-2 of the Illinois Municipal Code, the school district must provide the following appropriate and available services:

(1) For any child who is a homeless child, as defined under Section 1-5 of the Education for Homeless Children Act, a meeting between the child, the person having custody or control of the child, relevant school personnel, and a homeless liaison to discuss any barriers to the child's attendance due to the child's transitional living situation and to construct a plan that removes these barriers.

(2) For any child with a documented disability, a meeting between the child, the person having custody or control of the child, and relevant school personnel to review the child's current needs and address the

appropriateness of the child's placement and services. For any child subject to Article 14 of this Code, this meeting shall be an individualized education program meeting and shall include relevant members of the individualized education program team. For any child with a disability under Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794), this meeting shall be a Section 504 plan review and include relevant members of the Section 504 plan team.

(3) For any child currently being evaluated by a school district for a disability or for whom the school has a basis of knowledge that the child is a child with a disability under 20 U.S.C. 1415(k)(5), the completion of the evaluation and determination of the child's eligibility for special education services.

(d) Before a school district may refer a person having custody or control of a child to a local public entity under this Section, the school district must document any appropriate and available supportive services offered to the child. In the event a meeting under this Section does not occur, a school district must have documentation that it made reasonable efforts to convene the meeting at a mutually convenient time and date for the school district and the person having custody or control of the child and, but for the conduct of that person, the meeting would have occurred.

(Source: P.A. 85-234.)