

104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

HB4241

Introduced 1/14/2026, by Rep. Jed Davis

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

New Act
105 ILCS 5/27A-5

Creates the School Book Rating and Transparency Act. Requires a publisher supplying books to a public or nonpublic school, including a charter school, or a school-sponsored book fair to assign a content rating to each book and provide that content rating. Provides that each school shall ensure that the content rating is displayed in at least one of the following locations: (1) the school library's online catalog entry; (2) the school library's website; (3) the classroom library's catalog or posted list; (4) printed or digital reading lists distributed to students; or (5) signage or catalogs displayed at a school-sponsored book fair. Requires the State Board of Education to develop and publish a one-page rating key, and requires a school to make the rating key available. Provides that no teacher, school librarian, school administrator, or school district employee is subject to liability, discipline, or adverse employment action for relying in good faith on publisher-provided content ratings. Requires the State Board to submit an annual report to the General Assembly containing an assessment of publisher compliance and any recommendations for system improvements. Authorizes the State Board to adopt any rules necessary to implement the Act. Amends the School Code to make a related change. Effective July 1, 2026.

LRB104 16741 LNS 30148 b

STATE MANDATES
ACT MAY REQUIRE
REIMBURSEMENT

A BILL FOR

1 AN ACT concerning education.

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

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the School
5 Book Rating and Transparency Act.

6 Section 5. Purpose; construction.

7 (a) The purpose of this Act is to provide parents,
8 guardians, and educators with clear, consistent, and
9 age-appropriate information regarding the content of books
10 available to students through school libraries, classroom
11 libraries, curriculum lists, and school-sponsored book fairs.

12 (b) Nothing in this Act shall be construed to:

13 (1) remove, ban, restrict, limit access to, or
14 prohibit the use of any book;

15 (2) authorize a publisher to restrict or condition the
16 sale of any book;

17 (3) require a school to limit access to any book; or

18 (4) authorize censorship, removal, or suppression of
19 any material.

20 Section 10. Applicability. This Act applies only to books
21 acquired, purchased, or newly added to school collections
22 after the effective date of this Act that are included in:

- 1 (1) school libraries;
- 2 (2) classroom libraries;
- 3 (3) required or suggested reading lists;
- 4 (4) digital or online reading platforms authorized by
- 5 a school; and
- 6 (5) school-sponsored book fairs.

7 Section 15. Definitions. As used in this Act:

8 "Age band" means one of the following recommended age
9 categories:

- 10 (1) E (Everyone).
- 11 (2) 10+.
- 12 (3) 13+.
- 13 (4) 16+.
- 14 (5) 18+ or Mature.

15 "Book" means any print or bound material, graphic novel,
16 illustrated work, or similar item offered to students through
17 a school library, classroom library, required reading list, or
18 school-sponsored book fair.

19 "Content flag" means one or more descriptors identifying
20 specific categories of sensitive content, including any of the
21 following:

- 22 (1) SC - sexual content.
- 23 (2) GC - graphic sexual content;
- 24 (3) SL - sexual language.
- 25 (4) V - violence.

(5) GV - graphic violence.

(6) D - drug or alcohol use.

(7) ST - sensitive or disturbing themes.

(8) L - strong or repeated profanity.

"Content rating" means the combined age band and content flags assigned to a book under this Act.

"Graphic sexual content" means explicit, detailed, or anatomically specific descriptions of sexual acts, sexualized touching, sexual manipulation, or sexualized anatomy, including sensory or physical details that depict sexual activity in a vivid, realistic, or emotionally evocative manner.

"Publisher" means any entity that produces, distributes, or supplies books for sale or use in schools, including book fair vendors.

"School" means any public or nonpublic elementary or secondary school in this State, including a charter school.

"School-sponsored book fair" means any book sale, literacy event, or similar activity held on school property or facilitated by a school in which books are offered for sale or displayed to students.

"Sexual content" means nongraphic references to or depictions of romantic or sexual themes, including nonexplicit descriptions of affection, relationships, dating, sexual orientation, or implied sexual activity that does not describe sexual acts or anatomy in detail.

1 Section 20. Publisher content rating requirement.

2 (a) A publisher supplying books to a school or a
3 school-sponsored book fair shall assign a content rating to
4 each book.

5 (b) A publisher under subsection (a) shall provide the
6 content rating for a book to:

7 (1) the purchasing school or school district;

8 (2) the vendor operating the school-sponsored book
9 fair; or

10 (3) the school receiving donated books.

11 (c) A publisher shall use objective, good-faith criteria
12 consistent with the definitions in this Act in assigning a
13 content rating under subsection (a).

14 Section 25. Display of ratings. Each school shall ensure
15 that the content rating for a book under Section 20 is
16 displayed in at least one of the following locations:

17 (1) the school library's online catalog entry;

18 (2) the school library's website;

19 (3) the classroom library's catalog or posted list;

20 (4) printed or digital reading lists distributed to
21 students; or

22 (5) signage or catalogs displayed at a
23 school-sponsored book fair.

24 A school is not required to affix a label to the physical

1 book under this Section.

2 Section 30. Rating key.

3 (a) The State Board of Education shall develop and publish
4 a one-page rating key explaining:

5 (1) each age band;

6 (2) each content flag;

7 (3) the definitions in this Act; and

8 (4) the informational nature of the system under this
9 Act.

10 (b) A school shall:

11 (1) make the State Board's rating key available on the
12 school district's or school's website;

13 (2) post the rating key in the school library;

14 (3) include the rating key in any digital library
15 catalogs; and

16 (4) make the rating key available to parents upon
17 request.

18 Section 35. Protections for educators. No teacher, school
19 librarian, school administrator, or school district employee
20 is subject to liability, discipline, or adverse employment
21 action for relying in good faith on publisher-provided content
22 ratings under this Act.

23 Section 40. Reporting. The State Board of Education shall

1 submit an annual report not to exceed 3 pages to the General
2 Assembly containing an assessment of publisher compliance and
3 any recommendations for system improvements under this Act.

4 Section 90. Rulemaking. The State Board of Education may
5 adopt any rules necessary to implement this Act.

6 Section 95. The School Code is amended by changing Section
7 27A-5 as follows:

8 (105 ILCS 5/27A-5)

9 Sec. 27A-5. Charter school; legal entity; requirements.

10 (a) A charter school shall be a public, nonsectarian,
11 nonreligious, non-home based, and non-profit school. A charter
12 school shall be organized and operated as a nonprofit
13 corporation or other discrete, legal, nonprofit entity
14 authorized under the laws of the State of Illinois.

15 (b) A charter school may be established under this Article
16 by creating a new school or by converting an existing public
17 school or attendance center to charter school status. In all
18 new applications to establish a charter school in a city
19 having a population exceeding 500,000, operation of the
20 charter school shall be limited to one campus. This limitation
21 does not apply to charter schools existing or approved on or
22 before April 16, 2003.

23 (b-5) (Blank).

1 (c) A charter school shall be administered and governed by
2 its board of directors or other governing body in the manner
3 provided in its charter. The governing body of a charter
4 school shall be subject to the Freedom of Information Act and
5 the Open Meetings Act. A charter school's board of directors
6 or other governing body must include at least one parent or
7 guardian of a pupil currently enrolled in the charter school
8 who may be selected through the charter school or a charter
9 network election, appointment by the charter school's board of
10 directors or other governing body, or by the charter school's
11 Parent Teacher Organization or its equivalent.

12 (c-5) No later than January 1, 2021 or within the first
13 year of his or her first term, every voting member of a charter
14 school's board of directors or other governing body shall
15 complete a minimum of 4 hours of professional development
16 leadership training to ensure that each member has sufficient
17 familiarity with the board's or governing body's role and
18 responsibilities, including financial oversight and
19 accountability of the school, evaluating the principal's and
20 school's performance, adherence to the Freedom of Information
21 Act and the Open Meetings Act, and compliance with education
22 and labor law. In each subsequent year of his or her term, a
23 voting member of a charter school's board of directors or
24 other governing body shall complete a minimum of 2 hours of
25 professional development training in these same areas. The
26 training under this subsection may be provided or certified by

1 a statewide charter school membership association or may be
2 provided or certified by other qualified providers approved by
3 the State Board.

4 (d) For purposes of this subsection (d), "non-curricular
5 health and safety requirement" means any health and safety
6 requirement created by statute or rule to provide, maintain,
7 preserve, or safeguard safe or healthful conditions for
8 students and school personnel or to eliminate, reduce, or
9 prevent threats to the health and safety of students and
10 school personnel. "Non-curricular health and safety
11 requirement" does not include any course of study or
12 specialized instructional requirement for which the State
13 Board has established goals and learning standards or which is
14 designed primarily to impart knowledge and skills for students
15 to master and apply as an outcome of their education.

16 A charter school shall comply with all non-curricular
17 health and safety requirements applicable to public schools
18 under the laws of the State of Illinois. The State Board shall
19 promulgate and post on its Internet website a list of
20 non-curricular health and safety requirements that a charter
21 school must meet. The list shall be updated annually no later
22 than September 1. Any charter contract between a charter
23 school and its authorizer must contain a provision that
24 requires the charter school to follow the list of all
25 non-curricular health and safety requirements promulgated by
26 the State Board and any non-curricular health and safety

1 requirements added by the State Board to such list during the
2 term of the charter. Nothing in this subsection (d) precludes
3 an authorizer from including non-curricular health and safety
4 requirements in a charter school contract that are not
5 contained in the list promulgated by the State Board,
6 including non-curricular health and safety requirements of the
7 authorizing local school board.

8 (e) Except as otherwise provided in the School Code, a
9 charter school shall not charge tuition; provided that a
10 charter school may charge reasonable fees for textbooks,
11 instructional materials, and student activities.

12 (f) A charter school shall be responsible for the
13 management and operation of its fiscal affairs, including, but
14 not limited to, the preparation of its budget. An audit of each
15 charter school's finances shall be conducted annually by an
16 outside, independent contractor retained by the charter
17 school. The contractor shall not be an employee of the charter
18 school or affiliated with the charter school or its authorizer
19 in any way, other than to audit the charter school's finances.
20 To ensure financial accountability for the use of public
21 funds, on or before December 1 of every year of operation, each
22 charter school shall submit to its authorizer and the State
23 Board a copy of its audit and a copy of the Form 990 the
24 charter school filed that year with the federal Internal
25 Revenue Service. In addition, if deemed necessary for proper
26 financial oversight of the charter school, an authorizer may

1 require quarterly financial statements from each charter
2 school.

3 (g) A charter school shall comply with all provisions of
4 this Article, the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act,
5 all federal and State laws and rules applicable to public
6 schools that pertain to special education and the instruction
7 of English learners, and its charter. A charter school is
8 exempt from all other State laws and regulations in this Code
9 governing public schools and local school board policies;
10 however, a charter school is not exempt from the following:

11 (1) Sections 10-21.9 and 34-18.5 of this Code
12 regarding criminal history records checks and checks of
13 the Statewide Sex Offender Database and Statewide Murderer
14 and Violent Offender Against Youth Database of applicants
15 for employment;

16 (2) Sections 10-20.14, 10-22.6, 22-100, 24-24, 34-19,
17 and 34-84a of this Code regarding discipline of students;

18 (3) the Local Governmental and Governmental Employees
19 Tort Immunity Act;

20 (4) Section 108.75 of the General Not For Profit
21 Corporation Act of 1986 regarding indemnification of
22 officers, directors, employees, and agents;

23 (5) the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act;

24 (5.5) subsection (b) of Section 10-23.12 and
25 subsection (b) of Section 34-18.6 of this Code;

26 (6) the Illinois School Student Records Act;

1 (7) Section 10-17a of this Code regarding school
2 report cards;

3 (8) the P-20 Longitudinal Education Data System Act;

4 (9) Section 22-110 of this Code regarding bullying
5 prevention;

6 (10) Section 2-3.162 of this Code regarding student
7 discipline reporting;

8 (11) Sections 22-80 and 22-105 of this Code;

9 (12) Sections 10-20.60 and 34-18.53 of this Code;

10 (13) Sections 10-20.63 and 34-18.56 of this Code;

11 (14) Sections 22-90 and 26-18 of this Code;

12 (15) Section 22-30 of this Code;

13 (16) Sections 24-12 and 34-85 of this Code;

14 (17) the Seizure Smart School Act;

15 (18) Section 2-3.64a-10 of this Code;

16 (19) Sections 10-20.73 and 34-21.9 of this Code;

17 (20) Section 10-22.25b of this Code;

18 (21) Section 27-1015 of this Code;

19 (22) Section 27-1010 of this Code;

20 (23) Section 34-18.8 of this Code;

21 (24) Article 26A of this Code;

22 (25) Section 2-3.188 of this Code;

23 (26) Section 22-85.5 of this Code;

24 (27) subsections (d-10), (d-15), and (d-20) of Section
25 10-20.56 of this Code;

26 (28) Sections 10-20.83 and 34-18.78 of this Code;

(29) Section 10-20.13 of this Code;

(30) (blank);

(31) Section 34-21.6 of this Code;

(32) Section 22-85.10 of this Code;

(33) Section 2-3.196 of this Code;

(34) Section 22-95 of this Code;

(35) Section 34-18.62 of this Code;

(36) the Illinois Human Rights Act;

(37) Section 2-3.204 of this Code; ~~and~~

(38) Section 22-106 ~~22-105~~ of this Code; ~~and~~ -

(39) the School Book Rating and Transparency Act.

The change made by Public Act 96-104 to this subsection (g) is declaratory of existing law.

(h) A charter school may negotiate and contract with a school district, the governing body of a State college or university or public community college, or any other public or for-profit or nonprofit private entity for: (i) the use of a school building and grounds or any other real property or facilities that the charter school desires to use or convert for use as a charter school site, (ii) the operation and maintenance thereof, and (iii) the provision of any service, activity, or undertaking that the charter school is required to perform in order to carry out the terms of its charter. Except as provided in subsection (i) of this Section, a school district may charge a charter school reasonable rent for the use of the district's buildings, grounds, and facilities. Any

1 services for which a charter school contracts with a school
2 district shall be provided by the district at cost. Any
3 services for which a charter school contracts with a local
4 school board or with the governing body of a State college or
5 university or public community college shall be provided by
6 the public entity at cost.

7 (i) In no event shall a charter school that is established
8 by converting an existing school or attendance center to
9 charter school status be required to pay rent for space that is
10 deemed available, as negotiated and provided in the charter
11 agreement, in school district facilities. However, all other
12 costs for the operation and maintenance of school district
13 facilities that are used by the charter school shall be
14 subject to negotiation between the charter school and the
15 local school board and shall be set forth in the charter.

16 (j) A charter school may limit student enrollment by age
17 or grade level.

18 (k) If the charter school is authorized by the State
19 Board, then the charter school is its own local education
20 agency.

21 (Source: P.A. 103-154, eff. 6-30-23; 103-175, eff. 6-30-23;
22 103-472, eff. 8-1-24; 103-605, eff. 7-1-24; 103-641, eff.
23 7-1-24; 103-806, eff. 1-1-25; 104-288, eff. 1-1-26; 104-391,
24 eff. 8-15-25; 104-417, eff. 8-15-25; revised 9-12-25.)

25 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect July 1,
26 2026.