



104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

SB1231

Introduced 1/24/2025, by Sen. Meg Loughran Cappel

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

105 ILCS 5/14-8.02

from Ch. 122, par. 14-8.02

Amends the Children with Disabilities Article of the School Code. Allows the school district to initiate an impartial due process hearing within 14 (rather than 5) days of any written parent request for an independent educational evaluation to show that its evaluation is appropriate. Requires an independent educational evaluation at public expense to be completed within 60 school days (rather than 30 days) of a parent's written request unless the school district initiates an impartial due process hearing or the parent or school district offers reasonable grounds to show that such time period should be extended. Provides that if the due process hearing decision indicates that the parent is entitled to an independent educational evaluation, it must be completed within 60 school days (rather than 30 days) of the decision unless the parent or the school district offers reasonable grounds to show that such period should be extended.

LRB104 05906 LNS 15938 b

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 5. The School Code is amended by changing Section
5 14-8.02 as follows:

6 (105 ILCS 5/14-8.02) (from Ch. 122, par. 14-8.02)

7 Sec. 14-8.02. Identification, evaluation, and placement of
8 children.

9 (a) The State Board of Education shall make rules under
10 which local school boards shall determine the eligibility of
11 children to receive special education. Such rules shall ensure
12 that a free appropriate public education be available to all
13 children with disabilities as defined in Section 14-1.02. The
14 State Board of Education shall require local school districts
15 to administer non-discriminatory procedures or tests to
16 English learners coming from homes in which a language other
17 than English is used to determine their eligibility to receive
18 special education. The placement of low English proficiency
19 students in special education programs and facilities shall be
20 made in accordance with the test results reflecting the
21 student's linguistic, cultural and special education needs.
22 For purposes of determining the eligibility of children the
23 State Board of Education shall include in the rules

1 definitions of "case study", "staff conference",
2 "individualized educational program", and "qualified
3 specialist" appropriate to each category of children with
4 disabilities as defined in this Article. For purposes of
5 determining the eligibility of children from homes in which a
6 language other than English is used, the State Board of
7 Education shall include in the rules definitions for
8 "qualified bilingual specialists" and "linguistically and
9 culturally appropriate individualized educational programs".
10 For purposes of this Section, as well as Sections 14-8.02a,
11 14-8.02b, and 14-8.02c of this Code, "parent" means a parent
12 as defined in the federal Individuals with Disabilities
13 Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1401(23)).

14 (b) No child shall be eligible for special education
15 facilities except with a carefully completed case study fully
16 reviewed by professional personnel in a multidisciplinary
17 staff conference and only upon the recommendation of qualified
18 specialists or a qualified bilingual specialist, if available.
19 At the conclusion of the multidisciplinary staff conference,
20 the parent of the child and, if the child is in the legal
21 custody of the Department of Children and Family Services, the
22 Department's Office of Education and Transition Services shall
23 be given a copy of the multidisciplinary conference summary
24 report and recommendations, which includes options considered,
25 and, in the case of the parent, be informed of his or her right
26 to obtain an independent educational evaluation if he or she

1 disagrees with the evaluation findings conducted or obtained
2 by the school district. If the school district's evaluation is
3 shown to be inappropriate, the school district shall reimburse
4 the parent for the cost of the independent evaluation. The
5 State Board of Education shall, with advice from the State
6 Advisory Council on Education of Children with Disabilities on
7 the inclusion of specific independent educational evaluators,
8 prepare a list of suggested independent educational
9 evaluators. The State Board of Education shall include on the
10 list clinical psychologists licensed pursuant to the Clinical
11 Psychologist Licensing Act. Such psychologists shall not be
12 paid fees in excess of the amount that would be received by a
13 school psychologist for performing the same services. The
14 State Board of Education shall supply school districts with
15 such list and make the list available to parents at their
16 request. School districts shall make the list available to
17 parents at the time they are informed of their right to obtain
18 an independent educational evaluation. However, the school
19 district may initiate an impartial due process hearing under
20 this Section within 14 ~~5~~ days of any written parent request for
21 an independent educational evaluation to show that its
22 evaluation is appropriate. If the final decision is that the
23 evaluation is appropriate, the parent still has a right to an
24 independent educational evaluation, but not at public expense.
25 An independent educational evaluation at public expense must
26 be completed within 60 school ~~30~~ days of a parent's written

1 request unless the school district initiates an impartial due
2 process hearing or the parent or school district offers
3 reasonable grounds to show that such ~~30-day~~ time period should
4 be extended. If the due process hearing decision indicates
5 that the parent is entitled to an independent educational
6 evaluation, it must be completed within 60 school ~~30~~ days of
7 the decision unless the parent or the school district offers
8 reasonable grounds to show that such ~~30-day~~ period should be
9 extended. If a parent disagrees with the summary report or
10 recommendations of the multidisciplinary conference or the
11 findings of any educational evaluation which results
12 therefrom, the school district shall not proceed with a
13 placement based upon such evaluation and the child shall
14 remain in his or her regular classroom setting. No child shall
15 be eligible for admission to a special class for children with
16 a mental disability who are educable or for children with a
17 mental disability who are trainable except with a
18 psychological evaluation and recommendation by a school
19 psychologist. Consent shall be obtained from the parent of a
20 child before any evaluation is conducted. If consent is not
21 given by the parent or if the parent disagrees with the
22 findings of the evaluation, then the school district may
23 initiate an impartial due process hearing under this Section.
24 The school district may evaluate the child if that is the
25 decision resulting from the impartial due process hearing and
26 the decision is not appealed or if the decision is affirmed on

1 appeal. The determination of eligibility shall be made and the
2 IEP meeting shall be completed within 60 school days from the
3 date of written parental consent. In those instances when
4 written parental consent is obtained with fewer than 60 pupil
5 attendance days left in the school year, the eligibility
6 determination shall be made and the IEP meeting shall be
7 completed prior to the first day of the following school year.
8 Special education and related services must be provided in
9 accordance with the student's IEP no later than 10 school
10 attendance days after notice is provided to the parents
11 pursuant to Section 300.503 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal
12 Regulations and implementing rules adopted by the State Board
13 of Education. The appropriate program pursuant to the
14 individualized educational program of students whose native
15 tongue is a language other than English shall reflect the
16 special education, cultural and linguistic needs. No later
17 than September 1, 1993, the State Board of Education shall
18 establish standards for the development, implementation and
19 monitoring of appropriate bilingual special individualized
20 educational programs. The State Board of Education shall
21 further incorporate appropriate monitoring procedures to
22 verify implementation of these standards. The district shall
23 indicate to the parent, the State Board of Education, and, if
24 applicable, the Department's Office of Education and
25 Transition Services the nature of the services the child will
26 receive for the regular school term while awaiting placement

1 in the appropriate special education class. At the child's
2 initial IEP meeting and at each annual review meeting, the
3 child's IEP team shall provide the child's parent or guardian
4 and, if applicable, the Department's Office of Education and
5 Transition Services with a written notification that informs
6 the parent or guardian or the Department's Office of Education
7 and Transition Services that the IEP team is required to
8 consider whether the child requires assistive technology in
9 order to receive free, appropriate public education. The
10 notification must also include a toll-free telephone number
11 and internet address for the State's assistive technology
12 program.

13 If the child is deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually
14 impaired or has an orthopedic impairment or physical
15 disability and he or she might be eligible to receive services
16 from the Illinois School for the Deaf, the Illinois School for
17 the Visually Impaired, or the Illinois Center for
18 Rehabilitation and Education-Roosevelt, the school district
19 shall notify the parents, in writing, of the existence of
20 these schools and the services they provide and shall make a
21 reasonable effort to inform the parents of the existence of
22 other, local schools that provide similar services and the
23 services that these other schools provide. This notification
24 shall include, without limitation, information on school
25 services, school admissions criteria, and school contact
26 information.

1 In the development of the individualized education program
2 for a student who has a disability on the autism spectrum
3 (which includes autistic disorder, Asperger's disorder,
4 pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified,
5 childhood disintegrative disorder, and Rett Syndrome, as
6 defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental
7 Disorders, fourth edition (DSM-IV, 2000)), the IEP team shall
8 consider all of the following factors:

9 (1) The verbal and nonverbal communication needs of
10 the child.

11 (2) The need to develop social interaction skills and
12 proficiencies.

13 (3) The needs resulting from the child's unusual
14 responses to sensory experiences.

15 (4) The needs resulting from resistance to
16 environmental change or change in daily routines.

17 (5) The needs resulting from engagement in repetitive
18 activities and stereotyped movements.

19 (6) The need for any positive behavioral
20 interventions, strategies, and supports to address any
21 behavioral difficulties resulting from autism spectrum
22 disorder.

23 (7) Other needs resulting from the child's disability
24 that impact progress in the general curriculum, including
25 social and emotional development.

26 Public Act 95-257 does not create any new entitlement to a

1 service, program, or benefit, but must not affect any
2 entitlement to a service, program, or benefit created by any
3 other law.

4 If the student may be eligible to participate in the
5 Home-Based Support Services Program for Adults with Mental
6 Disabilities authorized under the Developmental Disability and
7 Mental Disability Services Act upon becoming an adult, the
8 student's individualized education program shall include plans
9 for (i) determining the student's eligibility for those
10 home-based services, (ii) enrolling the student in the program
11 of home-based services, and (iii) developing a plan for the
12 student's most effective use of the home-based services after
13 the student becomes an adult and no longer receives special
14 educational services under this Article. The plans developed
15 under this paragraph shall include specific actions to be
16 taken by specified individuals, agencies, or officials.

17 (c) In the development of the individualized education
18 program for a student who is functionally blind, it shall be
19 presumed that proficiency in Braille reading and writing is
20 essential for the student's satisfactory educational progress.
21 For purposes of this subsection, the State Board of Education
22 shall determine the criteria for a student to be classified as
23 functionally blind. Students who are not currently identified
24 as functionally blind who are also entitled to Braille
25 instruction include: (i) those whose vision loss is so severe
26 that they are unable to read and write at a level comparable to

1 their peers solely through the use of vision, and (ii) those
2 who show evidence of progressive vision loss that may result
3 in functional blindness. Each student who is functionally
4 blind shall be entitled to Braille reading and writing
5 instruction that is sufficient to enable the student to
6 communicate with the same level of proficiency as other
7 students of comparable ability. Instruction should be provided
8 to the extent that the student is physically and cognitively
9 able to use Braille. Braille instruction may be used in
10 combination with other special education services appropriate
11 to the student's educational needs. The assessment of each
12 student who is functionally blind for the purpose of
13 developing the student's individualized education program
14 shall include documentation of the student's strengths and
15 weaknesses in Braille skills. Each person assisting in the
16 development of the individualized education program for a
17 student who is functionally blind shall receive information
18 describing the benefits of Braille instruction. The
19 individualized education program for each student who is
20 functionally blind shall specify the appropriate learning
21 medium or media based on the assessment report.

22 (d) To the maximum extent appropriate, the placement shall
23 provide the child with the opportunity to be educated with
24 children who do not have a disability; provided that children
25 with disabilities who are recommended to be placed into
26 regular education classrooms are provided with supplementary

1 services to assist the children with disabilities to benefit
2 from the regular classroom instruction and are included on the
3 teacher's regular education class register. Subject to the
4 limitation of the preceding sentence, placement in special
5 classes, separate schools or other removal of the child with a
6 disability from the regular educational environment shall
7 occur only when the nature of the severity of the disability is
8 such that education in the regular classes with the use of
9 supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved
10 satisfactorily. The placement of English learners with
11 disabilities shall be in non-restrictive environments which
12 provide for integration with peers who do not have
13 disabilities in bilingual classrooms. Annually, each January,
14 school districts shall report data on students from
15 non-English speaking backgrounds receiving special education
16 and related services in public and private facilities as
17 prescribed in Section 2-3.30. If there is a disagreement
18 between parties involved regarding the special education
19 placement of any child, either in-state or out-of-state, the
20 placement is subject to impartial due process procedures
21 described in Article 10 of the Rules and Regulations to Govern
22 the Administration and Operation of Special Education.

23 (e) No child who comes from a home in which a language
24 other than English is the principal language used may be
25 assigned to any class or program under this Article until he
26 has been given, in the principal language used by the child and

1 used in his home, tests reasonably related to his cultural
2 environment. All testing and evaluation materials and
3 procedures utilized for evaluation and placement shall not be
4 linguistically, racially or culturally discriminatory.

5 (f) Nothing in this Article shall be construed to require
6 any child to undergo any physical examination or medical
7 treatment whose parents object thereto on the grounds that
8 such examination or treatment conflicts with his religious
9 beliefs.

10 (g) School boards or their designee shall provide to the
11 parents of a child or, if applicable, the Department of
12 Children and Family Services' Office of Education and
13 Transition Services prior written notice of any decision (a)
14 proposing to initiate or change, or (b) refusing to initiate
15 or change, the identification, evaluation, or educational
16 placement of the child or the provision of a free appropriate
17 public education to their child, and the reasons therefor. For
18 a parent, such written notification shall also inform the
19 parent of the opportunity to present complaints with respect
20 to any matter relating to the educational placement of the
21 student, or the provision of a free appropriate public
22 education and to have an impartial due process hearing on the
23 complaint. The notice shall inform the parents in the parents'
24 native language, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so, of
25 their rights and all procedures available pursuant to this Act
26 and the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education

1 Improvement Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-446); it shall be the
2 responsibility of the State Superintendent to develop uniform
3 notices setting forth the procedures available under this Act
4 and the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education
5 Improvement Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-446) to be used by all
6 school boards. The notice shall also inform the parents of the
7 availability upon request of a list of free or low-cost legal
8 and other relevant services available locally to assist
9 parents in initiating an impartial due process hearing. The
10 State Superintendent shall revise the uniform notices required
11 by this subsection (g) to reflect current law and procedures
12 at least once every 2 years. Any parent who is deaf or does not
13 normally communicate using spoken English and who participates
14 in a meeting with a representative of a local educational
15 agency for the purposes of developing an individualized
16 educational program or attends a multidisciplinary conference
17 shall be entitled to the services of an interpreter. The State
18 Board of Education must adopt rules to establish the criteria,
19 standards, and competencies for a bilingual language
20 interpreter who attends an individualized education program
21 meeting under this subsection to assist a parent who has
22 limited English proficiency.

23 (g-5) For purposes of this subsection (g-5), "qualified
24 professional" means an individual who holds credentials to
25 evaluate the child in the domain or domains for which an
26 evaluation is sought or an intern working under the direct

1 supervision of a qualified professional, including a master's
2 or doctoral degree candidate.

3 To ensure that a parent can participate fully and
4 effectively with school personnel in the development of
5 appropriate educational and related services for his or her
6 child, the parent, an independent educational evaluator, or a
7 qualified professional retained by or on behalf of a parent or
8 child must be afforded reasonable access to educational
9 facilities, personnel, classrooms, and buildings and to the
10 child as provided in this subsection (g-5). The requirements
11 of this subsection (g-5) apply to any public school facility,
12 building, or program and to any facility, building, or program
13 supported in whole or in part by public funds. Prior to
14 visiting a school, school building, or school facility, the
15 parent, independent educational evaluator, or qualified
16 professional may be required by the school district to inform
17 the building principal or supervisor in writing of the
18 proposed visit, the purpose of the visit, and the approximate
19 duration of the visit. The visitor and the school district
20 shall arrange the visit or visits at times that are mutually
21 agreeable. Visitors shall comply with school safety, security,
22 and visitation policies at all times. School district
23 visitation policies must not conflict with this subsection
24 (g-5). Visitors shall be required to comply with the
25 requirements of applicable privacy laws, including those laws
26 protecting the confidentiality of education records such as

1 the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and the
2 Illinois School Student Records Act. The visitor shall not
3 disrupt the educational process.

4 (1) A parent must be afforded reasonable access of
5 sufficient duration and scope for the purpose of observing
6 his or her child in the child's current educational
7 placement, services, or program or for the purpose of
8 visiting an educational placement or program proposed for
9 the child.

10 (2) An independent educational evaluator or a
11 qualified professional retained by or on behalf of a
12 parent or child must be afforded reasonable access of
13 sufficient duration and scope for the purpose of
14 conducting an evaluation of the child, the child's
15 performance, the child's current educational program,
16 placement, services, or environment, or any educational
17 program, placement, services, or environment proposed for
18 the child, including interviews of educational personnel,
19 child observations, assessments, tests or assessments of
20 the child's educational program, services, or placement or
21 of any proposed educational program, services, or
22 placement. If one or more interviews of school personnel
23 are part of the evaluation, the interviews must be
24 conducted at a mutually agreed-upon time, date, and place
25 that do not interfere with the school employee's school
26 duties. The school district may limit interviews to

1 personnel having information relevant to the child's
2 current educational services, program, or placement or to
3 a proposed educational service, program, or placement.

4 (h) In the development of the individualized education
5 program or federal Section 504 plan for a student, if the
6 student needs extra accommodation during emergencies,
7 including natural disasters or an active shooter situation,
8 then that accommodation shall be taken into account when
9 developing the student's individualized education program or
10 federal Section 504 plan.

11 (Source: P.A. 102-199, eff. 7-1-22; 102-264, eff. 8-6-21;
12 102-558, eff. 8-20-21; 102-813, eff. 5-13-22; 102-1072, eff.
13 6-10-22; 103-197, eff. 1-1-24; 103-605, eff. 7-1-24.)