

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 3-15.12 as follows:

6 (105 ILCS 5/3-15.12) (from Ch. 122, par. 3-15.12)

7 Sec. 3-15.12. High school equivalency ~~testing program~~. The
8 regional superintendent of schools and the Illinois Community
9 College Board shall make available for qualified individuals
10 residing within the region a High School Equivalency Testing
11 Program and alternative methods of credentialing, as
12 identified under this Section. For that purpose the regional
13 superintendent alone or with other regional superintendents
14 may establish and supervise a testing center or centers to
15 administer the secure forms for high school equivalency testing
16 to qualified persons. Such centers shall be under the
17 supervision of the regional superintendent in whose region such
18 centers are located, subject to the approval of the Executive
19 Director of the Illinois Community College Board. The Illinois
20 Community College Board shall also establish criteria and make
21 available alternative methods of credentialing throughout the
22 State.

23 An individual is eligible to apply to the regional

1 superintendent of schools for the region in which he or she
2 resides if he or she is: (a) a person who is 17 years of age or
3 older, has maintained residence in the State of Illinois, and
4 is not a high school graduate; (b) a person who is successfully
5 completing an alternative education program under Section
6 2-3.81, Article 13A, or Article 13B; or (c) a person who is
7 enrolled in a youth education program sponsored by the Illinois
8 National Guard. For purposes of this Section, residence is that
9 abode which the applicant considers his or her home. Applicants
10 may provide as sufficient proof of such residence and as an
11 acceptable form of identification a driver's license, valid
12 passport, military ID, or other form of government-issued
13 national or foreign identification that shows the applicant's
14 name, address, date of birth, signature, and photograph or
15 other acceptable identification as may be allowed by law or as
16 regulated by the Illinois Community College Board. Such
17 regional superintendent shall determine if the applicant meets
18 statutory and regulatory state standards.

19 If qualified the applicant shall at the time of such
20 application pay a fee established by the Illinois Community
21 College Board, which fee shall be paid into a special fund
22 under the control and supervision of the regional
23 superintendent. Such moneys received by the regional
24 superintendent shall be used, first, for the expenses incurred
25 in administering and scoring the examination, and next for
26 other educational programs that are developed and designed by

1 the regional superintendent of schools to assist those who
2 successfully complete high school equivalency testing or meet
3 the criteria for alternative methods of credentialing in
4 furthering their academic development or their ability to
5 secure and retain gainful employment, including programs for
6 the competitive award based on test scores of college or adult
7 education scholarship grants or similar educational
8 incentives. Any excess moneys shall be paid into the institute
9 fund.

10 Any applicant who has achieved the minimum passing
11 standards as established by the Illinois Community College
12 Board shall be notified in writing by the regional
13 superintendent and shall be issued a high school equivalency
14 certificate on the forms provided by the Illinois Community
15 College Board. The regional superintendent shall then certify
16 to the Illinois Community College Board the score of the
17 applicant and such other and additional information that may be
18 required by the Illinois Community College Board. The moneys
19 received therefrom shall be used in the same manner as provided
20 for in this Section.

21 The Illinois Community College Board shall establish
22 alternative methods of credentialing for the issuance of high
23 school equivalency certification. In addition to high school
24 equivalency testing, the following alternative methods of
25 receiving a high school equivalency credential shall be made
26 available to qualified individuals on or after January 1, 2018:

1 (A) High School Equivalency based on High School
2 Credit. A qualified candidate may petition to have his or
3 her high school transcripts evaluated to determine what the
4 candidate needs to meet criteria as established by the
5 Illinois Community College Board.

6 (B) High School Equivalency based on Post-Secondary
7 Credit. A qualified candidate may petition to have his or
8 her post-secondary transcripts evaluated to determine what
9 the candidate needs to meet criteria established by the
10 Illinois Community College Board.

11 (C) High School Equivalency based on a Foreign Diploma.
12 A qualified candidate may petition to have his or her
13 foreign high school or post-secondary transcripts
14 evaluated to determine what the candidate needs to meet
15 criteria established by the Illinois Community College
16 Board.

17 (D) High School Equivalency based on Completion of a
18 Competency-Based Program as approved by the Illinois
19 Community College Board. The Illinois Community College
20 Board shall establish guidelines for competency-based high
21 school equivalency programs.

22 Any applicant who has attained the age of 17 years and
23 maintained residence in the State of Illinois and is not a high
24 school graduate, any person who has enrolled in a youth
25 education program sponsored by the Illinois National Guard, or
26 any person who has successfully completed an alternative

1 education program under Section 2-3.81, Article 13A, or Article
2 13B is eligible to apply for a high school equivalency
3 certificate (if he or she meets the requirements prescribed by
4 the Illinois Community College Board) upon showing evidence
5 that he or she has completed, successfully, high school
6 equivalency testing, administered by the United States Armed
7 Forces Institute, official high school equivalency testing
8 centers established in other states, Veterans' Administration
9 Hospitals, or the office of the State Superintendent of
10 Education for the Illinois State Penitentiary System and the
11 Department of Corrections. Such applicant shall apply to the
12 regional superintendent of the region wherein he or she has
13 maintained residence, and, upon payment of a fee established by
14 the Illinois Community College Board, the regional
15 superintendent shall issue a high school equivalency
16 certificate and immediately thereafter certify to the Illinois
17 Community College Board the score of the applicant and such
18 other and additional information as may be required by the
19 Illinois Community College Board.

20 Notwithstanding the provisions of this Section, any
21 applicant who has been out of school for at least one year may
22 request the regional superintendent of schools to administer
23 restricted high school equivalency testing upon written
24 request of: the director of a program who certifies to the
25 Chief Examiner of an official high school equivalency testing
26 center that the applicant has completed a program of

1 instruction provided by such agencies as the Job Corps, the
2 Postal Service Academy, or an apprenticeship training program;
3 an employer or program director for purposes of entry into
4 apprenticeship programs; another state's department of
5 education in order to meet regulations established by that
6 department of education; or a post high school educational
7 institution for purposes of admission, the Department of
8 Financial and Professional Regulation for licensing purposes,
9 or the Armed Forces for induction purposes. The regional
10 superintendent shall administer such testing, and the
11 applicant shall be notified in writing that he or she is
12 eligible to receive a high school equivalency certificate upon
13 reaching age 17, provided he or she meets the standards
14 established by the Illinois Community College Board.

15 Any test administered under this Section to an applicant
16 who does not speak and understand English may at the discretion
17 of the administering agency be given and answered in any
18 language in which the test is printed. The regional
19 superintendent of schools may waive any fees required by this
20 Section in case of hardship. The regional superintendent of
21 schools and the Illinois Community College Board shall waive
22 any fees required by this Section for an applicant who meets
23 all of the following criteria:

- 24 (1) The applicant qualifies as a homeless person,
25 child, or youth as defined in the Education for Homeless
26 Children Act.

1 (2) The applicant has not attained 25 years of age as
2 of the date of the scheduled test.

3 (3) The applicant can verify his or her status as a
4 homeless person, child, or youth. A homeless services
5 provider that is qualified to verify an individual's
6 housing status, as determined by the Illinois Community
7 College Board, and that has knowledge of the applicant's
8 housing status may verify the applicant's status for
9 purposes of this subdivision (3).

10 (4) The applicant has completed a high school
11 equivalency preparation course through an Illinois
12 Community College Board-approved provider.

13 (5) The applicant is taking the test at a testing
14 center operated by a regional superintendent of schools or
15 the Cook County High School Equivalency Office.

16 In counties of over 3,000,000 population, a high school
17 equivalency certificate shall contain the signatures of the
18 Executive Director of the Illinois Community College Board and
19 the superintendent, president, or other chief executive
20 officer of the institution where high school equivalency
21 testing instruction occurred and any other signatures
22 authorized by the Illinois Community College Board.

23 The regional superintendent of schools shall furnish the
24 Illinois Community College Board with any information that the
25 Illinois Community College Board requests with regard to
26 testing and certificates under this Section.

1 (Source: P.A. 98-718, eff. 1-1-15; 98-719, eff. 1-1-15; 99-78,
2 eff. 7-20-15; 99-742, eff. 1-1-17.)