

## 100TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY State of Illinois 2017 and 2018 HB4902

by Rep. Barbara Wheeler

## SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

New Act 105 ILCS 5/2-3.25g

from Ch. 122, par. 2-3.25q

Creates the School Districts of Innovation Act, the purpose of which is to grant school districts greater autonomy to implement innovative practices that improve student academic performance and benefit the whole child by removing obstacles that currently exist in law or rules. Provides that school districts seeking to obtain designation as a district of innovation from the State Superintendent of Education must establish an innovation committee to develop an innovation plan; sets forth provisions concerning the committee and plan. Contains provisions concerning statutory and regulatory mandates; innovation plan submission and designation; financial support for innovation planning; district of innovation review, renewal, and revocation; reporting; and rulemaking. Effective immediately.

LRB100 16360 NHT 31486 b

FISCAL NOTE ACT MAY APPLY

1 AN ACT concerning education.

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

- 4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the School
- 5 Districts of Innovation Act.
- 6 Section 5. Purpose. The purpose of this Act is to grant
- 7 school districts greater autonomy to implement innovative
- 8 practices that improve student academic performance and
- 9 benefit the whole child by removing obstacles that currently
- 10 exist in law or rules.
- 11 Section 10. Definitions. In this Act:
- 12 "District of innovation" means a school district that has
- 13 received such designation by the State Superintendent in
- 14 accordance with this Act.
- 15 "High-achieving district" means a school district that is
- 16 closing achievement gaps and has demonstrated significant
- 17 student growth as provided in Section 2-3.25c of the School
- 18 Code.
- "Innovation" means a new or creative alternative to
- 20 existing instructional and administrative practices that is
- 21 intended to improve academic performance and learning outcomes
- 22 for students.

1	"Innovation	committee"	means	a	committee	of

- 2 representatives of the school district convened and operating
- 3 in accordance with Section 15 of this Act.
- 4 "School district" means a public school district in this
- 5 State, excluding vocational schools and special education
- 6 cooperatives.
- 7 "State Superintendent" means the State Superintendent of
- 8 Education.
- 9 Section 15. Innovation committee.
- 10 (a) School districts seeking to obtain designation as a
- 11 district of innovation must establish an innovation committee
- that shall operate pursuant to the provisions of this Act. The
- innovation committee shall consist of all of the following
- 14 individuals:
- 15 (1) The school district superintendent or his or her
- designee.
- 17 (2) The president of the school district's school board
- or his or her designee.
- 19 (3) One principal of a building in the school district,
- appointed by the school district superintendent.
- 21 (4) Two teachers employed by the school district,
- 22 appointed by the exclusive bargaining representative of
- 23 the school district's teachers. If no exclusive bargaining
- 24 representative exists, then the school district
- 25 superintendent shall appoint the 2 teacher

1 representatives.

- (5) One employee of the school district defined as school personnel under subsection (b) of Section 27-23.7 of the School Code, other than the school district superintendent, a principal, or a teacher, appointed by the exclusive bargaining representative of the school personnel. If no exclusive bargaining representative exists, then the school district superintendent shall appoint the school personnel representative.
- (6) Two individuals not employed by the school district who reside in the geographic boundaries of the school district, appointed by the school district superintendent.
- (7) Two parents of students enrolled in the school district, appointed by the school district's parent organization or organizations. If no parent organization exists, then the parent representatives shall be appointed by the school district superintendent.
- (8) One student who is enrolled in the school district, appointed by the school district superintendent.
- (9) The regional superintendent of schools who holds supervision and control over the school district or his or her designee.
- (b) The innovation committee shall develop a public participation process for requesting and reviewing proposals from members of the broader school community in the school district.

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- 1 (c) The innovation committee may create subcommittees, 2 which may include non-committee members with specific 3 expertise, to work on developing portions of the innovation 4 plan under Section 20 of this Act.
- 5 Section 20. Innovation plan proposal.
  - (a) The innovation committee established under Section 15 of this Act shall develop an innovation plan, which shall outline the school district's proposal for improving student academic performance through innovation. The plan may identify mandates in Chapter 105 of the Illinois Compiled Statutes and applicable implementing rules that the innovation committee considers to be obstacles to achieving or maintaining high student performance and request to be exempted from those mandates. The plan shall be developed with significant input from the broader school district community.
    - (b) The innovation plan shall contain elements prescribed in the following:
      - (1) The goals or performance outcomes the school district expects to achieve as a result of being designated a district of innovation. The goals need to be ambitious, but achievable, and improve performance at or above that expected by State and federal accountability systems. The measurable goals shall provide a basis for renewing or modifying the innovation plan at the end of the period of authorization and shall address one or more of the

1	following areas:
2	(A) All students in kindergarten are assessed for
3	readiness.
4	(B) Ninety percent or more of third-grade students
5	are reading at or above grade level.
6	(C) Ninety percent or more of fifth-grade students
7	meet or exceed expectations in mathematics.
8	(D) Ninety percent or more of ninth-grade students
9	are on track to graduate with their cohort.
10	(E) Ninety percent or more students graduate from
11	high school ready for college and a career.
12	(F) All students are supported by highly prepared
13	and effective teachers and school leaders.
14	(G) Every school offers a safe and healthy learning
15	environment for all students.
16	(2) A description of the unique operational policies
17	and procedures that will be implemented in the district of
18	innovation and how such policies and procedures will
19	support the annual goals identified in the innovation plan.
20	(3) Specific requests for flexibility regarding
21	specific statutory or regulatory mandates. Such requests
22	must describe in detail the types of flexibility that will
23	be utilized and why such flexibility is necessary to
24	achieving the goals of the plan.
25	(4) Documentation of the collaborative process in

which the plan was developed.

- (5) Documentation of the approval of the plan by the teachers in the school district. A majority of school district employees licensed under Article 21B of the School Code shall vote in the positive to support the plan before submission for approval. The school board shall develop a procedure regarding the voting of an innovation plan in conjunction with the exclusive bargaining representative of that school district, if applicable.
- (6) A budget plan that describes how funds will be used differently in the proposed district of innovation.
- (7) Any other information requested by the regional superintendent of schools or the State Superintendent.
- (c) A school district may seek autonomy through innovation in any of the following areas, but need not be limited to the following:
  - (1) Flexibility to demonstrate measurable improvement among subgroups of students, including low-income students, English learners, or students receiving special education services.
  - (2) Flexibility to demonstrate reduction of achievement gaps among different groups of students.
  - (3) Flexibility to meet the graduation requirements set by this State, with an emphasis on using competency-based, performance-based assessments at the local level.
- (4) Flexibility to structure professional development

1	activities according to the needs of the students, staff,
2	and faculty of the school district. This may include any of
3	the following:

- (A) Modifying or transforming the structure or content of professional development activities to meet the specific needs of the school district's student population, regardless of the school district's professional development activities.
- (B) Restructuring the daily schedule in order to fully integrate professional development into the daily collaboration of teachers within the school district.
- (C) Ongoing and high-quality professional development opportunities designed to achieve the goals identified in the innovation plan for all staff members.
- (5) Flexibility to manage staff members as needed in order to create a healthy school community. This may include, but need not be limited to, any of the following:
  - (A) Establishing staffing patterns and creating job descriptions that best meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of students, with approved exemptions from Article 21B of the School Code.
  - (B) Hiring staff that best fit the needs of the school district.
    - (C) Providing services, including services for

gifted and talented students, services for English learners, educational services for students at risk of academic failure, expulsion, or dropping out, and support services provided by the Department of Human Services or county social services agencies.

- (D) Faculty recruitment, preparation and professional development, and compensation, which may include the ability to conduct independent recruitment and hiring processes, the design of professional development, the use of peer-based evaluations, or the implementation of a site-based pay incentive program.
- (E) Preparation and counseling of students for the transition to higher education or the workforce.
- (F) Accountability measures, including expanding the use of a variety of accountability measures, such as graduation or exit examinations, student portfolio reviews, competency-based pathways, or student and parent accountability contracts.
- (6) Flexibility to set longer school days and calendar years for both students and faculty and scheduling that allows for faculty planning time during the summer and school year that may contribute to a more unified school community. This may include increasing planning and professional development time for faculty.
- Section 25. Statutory and regulatory mandates. School

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- districts shall not be relieved from any of the following statutory or regulatory mandates:
- 3 (1) The Illinois Learning Standards established by the State Board of Education.
- 5 (2) Accountability measures pursuant to Section 6 2-3.25a of the School Code.
- 7 (3) Student achievement on the annual State 8 assessments as required by Section 2-3.64a-5 of the School 9 Code.
- 10 (4) Provisions of the federal Every Student Succeeds
  11 Act.
- 12 (5) Mandates required to maintain federal grant
  13 awards.
  - (6) Provisions outside of Chapter 105 of the Illinois Compiled Statutes or their implementing rules.
    - (7) Non-curricular health and safety requirements.
    - (8) Mandates related to civil rights and student access to district educational and non-educational programs.
- 19 (9) Mandates contained in Article 24 or 24A of the 20 School Code or their implementing rules.
- No provision of this Act relieves or compromises any party's rights or obligations under the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act.
- Section 30. Innovation plan submission and designation.
- 25 (a) A school district seeking designation as a district of

- innovation must develop an innovation plan in accordance with this Act.
  - (b) A school board shall post the innovation plan approved by the innovation committee and eligible employees on the school district's public Internet website for 30 days prior to a final vote on the plan. A majority vote of the school board is required at a regularly scheduled school board meeting to approve the plan. If more than one school district is included in the innovation plan, each school board must approve the plan.
  - (c) Once a school board has approved an innovation plan, the plan shall be submitted for review to the regional superintendent of schools that holds supervision and control over the district. An innovation plan for a school district organized under Article 34 of the School Code shall be submitted directly to the State Superintendent.
  - (d) The regional superintendent of schools shall certify that, at a minimum, the following provisions have been addressed:
  - (1) the overall vision for the school district, including improving school performance and student achievement related to the measurable goals prescribed in Section 20 of this Act:
- 24 (2) the specific needs or challenges the district of 25 innovation will be designed to address;
  - (3) the number of students the district of innovation

- is anticipated to serve and the number of staff expected to be employed within the district of innovation;
  - (4) an assessment of the autonomy and flexibility that the school district is seeking;
  - (5) why the flexibility is desirable to carry out the objectives of the school district;
  - (6) a description of the process that was used to involve appropriate stakeholders in the development of the innovation plan; and
  - (7) a proposed timetable for development and establishment of the district of innovation.
  - (e) The regional superintendent of schools shall certify that a school district's innovation plan contains the specifications and satisfies the requirements of this Act and, if so, shall submit the innovation plan to the State Superintendent within 30 calendar days after receipt of the innovation plan.
  - (f) The State Superintendent may approve or deny a school district's innovation plan within 45 days after receipt. If the State Superintendent fails to act within 45 days, the innovation plan shall be deemed approved by the State Superintendent.
  - (g) Districts of innovation are exempt from the School Code waiver process under Section 2-3.25g of the School Code and applicable rules. This exemption applies only to those items approved in the innovation plan.

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- A school district designated as a district of (h) innovation shall have its innovation plan approved for a 2-year period, renewable for subsequent 2-year periods, as determined by the State Superintendent and based on reviews conducted by applicable regional superintendent of schools, accordance with Section 40 of this Act. A school district designated as a high-achieving district and awarded a 7 designation as a district of innovation shall have its innovation plan approved for a 4-year period, renewable for subsequent 4-year periods.
- 11 Section 35. Financial support for innovation planning. 12 Each school district and school board is authorized and encouraged to seek and accept public and private gifts, grants, 1.3 14 and donations to offset the costs of developing and 15 implementing innovation plans and plans for creating districts 16 of innovation.
- Section 40. District of innovation review, renewal, and 17 revocation. 18
  - Regional superintendents of schools that hold supervision and control over one or more districts of innovation shall evaluate districts of innovation every 2 years or, in the case of a high-achieving district, every 4 years. The evaluation is to determine progress on goals articulated in the school district's innovation plan and to assess

- 1 implementation. The regional superintendent of schools shall
- 2 transmit the evaluation to the district of innovation and the
- 3 State Superintendent.
- The review shall assess progress on specific goals related
- 5 to the following:

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- 6 (1) All students in kindergarten are assessed for readiness.
  - (2) Ninety percent or more third-grade students are reading at or above grade level.
    - (3) Ninety percent or more fifth-grade students meet or exceed expectations in mathematics.
    - (4) Ninety percent or more of ninth-grade students are on track to graduate with their cohort.
    - (5) Ninety percent or more students graduate from high school ready for college and a career.
    - (6) All students are supported by highly prepared and effective teachers and school leaders.
- 18 (7) Every school offers a safe and healthy learning
  19 environment for all students.
  - Reviews may include feedback collected from focus groups of staff, students, and families, as well as community partners, and a review of student work and exhibitions.
    - (b) Districts of innovation may seek renewal at the end of the initial 2-year approval period or 4-year approval period in the case of high-achieving districts. Requests for renewal shall be made to the regional superintendents of schools that

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hold supervision and control over the district of innovation at 1 2 the time of the 2-year or 4-year review. Regional superintendents of schools shall include the renewal request in 3 the evaluation transmitted to the district of innovation and 5 the State Superintendent.

The State Superintendent may grant renewal of a district of innovation designation if sufficient progress has been made in achieving the goals as prescribed in the innovation plan.

A district of innovation may submit amendments or revisions to an existing innovation plan considered for renewal to the regional superintendent of schools for certification and transmittal to the State Superintendent for approval. If the proposed changes make substantive changes to the innovation plan, the initial approval process outlined in Section 20 of this Act must be followed.

(c) The State Superintendent may revoke the district of innovation designation if a district of innovation fails to substantially fulfill the innovation plan, meet goals and performance targets, or comply with applicable laws or rules.

The State Superintendent shall notify a district of innovation of a decision to revoke the school district's district of innovation designation within 15 days after such decision. The State Superintendent shall communicate the reasons for the revocation to the school district. The innovation committee may amend and resubmit the innovation plan to begin the process described in Section 30 of this Act.

- 1 Section 80. Reporting. The State Board of Education shall 2 submit a report to the Governor and General Assembly regarding 3 the participation and outcomes of this Act on or before 4 December 15, 2019 and annually on or before December 15 5 thereafter. A comprehensive report that includes measurements 6 of demonstrated student achievement and college and career readiness in districts of innovation shall be submitted to the 7 8 Governor and General Assembly on or before December 15, 2025.
- 9 Districts of innovation must provide any and all data 10 requested by the State Board of Education to generate reports 11 under this Section.
- Section 85. Rules. The State Board of Education may adopt rules as necessary to implement this Act.
- Section 90. The School Code is amended by changing Section 2-3.25g as follows:
- 16 (105 ILCS 5/2-3.25g) (from Ch. 122, par. 2-3.25g)
- 17 Sec. 2-3.25g. Waiver or modification of mandates within the 18 School Code and administrative rules and regulations.
- 19 (a) In this Section:
- "Board" means a school board or the governing board or administrative district, as the case may be, for a joint agreement.

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"Eligible applicant" means a school district, joint agreement made up of school districts, or regional superintendent of schools on behalf of schools and programs operated by the regional office of education.

"Implementation date" has the meaning set forth in Section 24A-2.5 of this Code.

"State Board" means the State Board of Education.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this School Code or any other law of this State to the contrary, eligible applicants may petition the State Board of Education for the waiver or modification of the mandates of this School Code or of the administrative rules and regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education. Waivers or modifications administrative rules and regulations and modifications of mandates of this School Code may be requested when an eligible applicant demonstrates that it can address the intent of the rule or mandate in a more effective, efficient, or economical manner or when necessary to stimulate innovation or improve student performance. Waivers of mandates of the School Code may be requested when the waivers are necessary to stimulate innovation or improve student performance or when the applicant demonstrates that it can address the intent of the mandate of the School Code in a more effective, efficient, or economical manner. Waivers may not be requested from laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to special education, teacher educator licensure, teacher tenure and seniority, or Section 5-2.1 of

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this Code or from compliance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (Public Law 114-95). Eligible applicants may not seek a waiver or seek a modification of a mandate regarding the requirements for (i) student performance data to be a significant factor in teacher or principal evaluations or (ii) teachers and principals to be rated using the 4 categories of "excellent", "proficient", "needs improvement", or "unsatisfactory". On September 1, 2014, any previously authorized waiver or modification from such requirements shall terminate.

(c) Eligible applicants, as a matter of inherent managerial policy, and any Independent Authority established under Section 2-3.25f-5 of this Code may submit an application for a waiver or modification authorized under this Section. Each application must include a written request by the eligible applicant or Independent Authority and must demonstrate that the intent of the mandate can be addressed in a more effective, efficient, or economical manner or be based upon a specific plan for improved student performance and school improvement. Any eligible applicant requesting a waiver or modification for the reason that intent of the mandate can be addressed in a more economical manner shall include in the application a fiscal analysis showing current expenditures on the mandate and projected savings resulting from the waiver or modification. Applications and plans developed by eligible applicants must be approved by the board or regional superintendent of schools

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applying on behalf of schools or programs operated by the regional office of education following a public hearing on the application and plan and the opportunity for the board or regional superintendent to hear testimony from staff directly involved in its implementation, parents, and students. The time period for such testimony shall be separate from the time period established by the eligible applicant for public comment on other matters.

(c-5) If the applicant is a school district, then the district shall post information that sets forth the time, date, place, and general subject matter of the public hearing on its Internet website at least 14 days prior to the hearing. If the district is requesting to increase the fee charged for driver education authorized pursuant to Section 27-24.2 of this Code, the website information shall include the proposed amount of the fee the district will request. All school districts must publish a notice of the public hearing at least 7 days prior to the hearing in a newspaper of general circulation within the school district that sets forth the time, date, place, and general subject matter of the hearing. Districts requesting to increase the fee charged for driver education shall include in the published notice the proposed amount of the fee the district will request. If the applicant is a joint agreement or regional superintendent, then the joint agreement or regional superintendent shall post information that sets forth the time, date, place, and general subject matter of the public hearing

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on its Internet website at least 14 days prior to the hearing. If the joint agreement or regional superintendent is requesting to increase the fee charged for driver education authorized pursuant to Section 27-24.2 of this Code, the information shall include the proposed amount of the fee the applicant will request. All joint agreements and regional superintendents must publish a notice of the public hearing at least 7 days prior to the hearing in a newspaper of general circulation in each school district that is a member of the joint agreement or that is served by the educational service region that sets forth the time, date, place, and general subject matter of the hearing, provided that a notice appearing in a newspaper generally circulated in more than one school district shall be deemed to fulfill this requirement with respect to all of the affected districts. Joint agreements or regional superintendents requesting to increase charged for driver education shall include in the published notice the proposed amount of the fee the applicant will request. The eligible applicant must notify in writing the affected exclusive collective bargaining agent and those State legislators representing the eligible applicant's territory of its intent to seek approval of a waiver or modification and of the hearing to be held to take testimony from staff. The affected exclusive collective bargaining agents shall be notified of such public hearing at least 7 days prior to the date of the hearing and shall be allowed to attend such public

- 1 hearing. The eligible applicant shall attest to compliance with
- 2 all of the notification and procedural requirements set forth
- 3 in this Section.

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for a waiver or modification (d) Α request of 5 administrative rules and regulations or for a modification of mandates contained in this School Code shall be submitted to 6 7 the State Board of Education within 15 days after approval by 8 regional superintendent of schools. board or 9 application as submitted to the State Board of Education shall 10 include a description of the public hearing. Following receipt 11 of the waiver or modification request, the State Board shall 12 have 45 days to review the application and request. If the 13 State Board fails to disapprove the application within that 45 day period, the waiver or modification shall be deemed granted. 14 15 The State Board may disapprove any request if it is not based 16 upon sound educational practices, endangers the health or 17 safety of students or staff, compromises equal opportunities for learning, or fails to demonstrate that the intent of the 18 19 rule or mandate can be addressed in a more effective, 20 efficient, or economical manner or have improved student 21 performance as a primary goal. Any request disapproved by the 22 State Board may be appealed to the General Assembly by the 23 eligible applicant as outlined in this Section.

A request for a waiver from mandates contained in this School Code shall be submitted to the State Board within 15 days after approval by the board or regional superintendent of

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schools. The application as submitted to the State Board of 1 2 Education shall include a description of the public hearing. 3 The description shall include, but need not be limited to, the means of notice, the number of people in attendance, the number 5 of people who spoke as proponents or opponents of the waiver, a brief description of their comments, and whether there were any 6 7 written statements submitted. The State Board shall review the 8 applications and requests for completeness and shall compile 9 the requests in reports to be filed with the General Assembly. 10 The State Board shall file reports outlining the waivers 11 requested by eligible applicants and appeals by eligible 12 applicants of requests disapproved by the State Board with the 13 Senate and the House of Representatives before each March 1 and 14 October 1.

The report shall be reviewed by a panel of 4 members consisting of:

- (1) the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- 18 (2) the Minority Leader of the House of 19 Representatives;
  - (3) the President of the Senate; and
- 21 (4) the Minority Leader of the Senate.

The State Board of Education may provide the panel recommendations on waiver requests. The members of the panel shall review the report submitted by the State Board of Education and submit to the State Board of Education any notice of further consideration to any waiver request within 14 days

after the member receives the report. If 3 or more of the panel members submit a notice of further consideration to any waiver request contained within the report, the State Board of Education shall submit the waiver request to the General Assembly for consideration. If less than 3 panel members submit a notice of further consideration to a waiver request, the waiver may be approved, denied, or modified by the State Board. If the State Board does not act on a waiver request within 10 days, then the waiver request is approved. If the waiver request is denied by the State Board, it shall submit the waiver request to the General Assembly for consideration.

The General Assembly may disapprove any waiver request submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to this subsection (d) in whole or in part within 60 calendar days after each house of the General Assembly next convenes after the waiver request is submitted by adoption of a resolution by a record vote of the majority of members elected in each house. If the General Assembly fails to disapprove any waiver request or appealed request within such 60 day period, the waiver or modification shall be deemed granted. Any resolution adopted by the General Assembly disapproving a report of the State Board in whole or in part shall be binding on the State Board.

(e) An approved waiver or modification may remain in effect for a period not to exceed 5 school years and may be renewed upon application by the eligible applicant. However, such waiver or modification may be changed within that 5-year period

- 1 by a board or regional superintendent of schools applying on
- 2 behalf of schools or programs operated by the regional office
- 3 of education following the procedure as set forth in this
- 4 Section for the initial waiver or modification request. If
- 5 neither the State Board of Education nor the General Assembly
- 6 disapproves, the change is deemed granted.
- 7 (f) (Blank).
- 8 (g) A district of innovation, as defined in the School
- 9 Districts of Innovation Act, is exempt from the waiver process
- 10 under this Section to the extent provided in subsection (g) of
- 11 Section 30 of the School Districts of Innovation Act.
- 12 (Source: P.A. 99-78, eff. 7-20-15; 100-465, eff. 8-31-17.)
- 13 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon
- 14 becoming law.