

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 Section 34-230 as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/34-230)

Sec. 34-230. School action public meetings and hearings.

(a) By October 1 of each year, the chief executive officer shall prepare and publish guidelines for school actions. The guidelines shall outline the academic and non-academic criteria for a school action. These guidelines shall be created with the involvement of local school councils, parents, educators, and community organizations. These guidelines, and each subsequent revision, shall be subject to a public comment period of at least 21 days before their approval.

(b) The chief executive officer shall announce all proposed school actions to be taken at the close of the current academic year consistent with the guidelines by December 1 of each year.

(c) On or before December 1 of each year, the chief executive officer shall publish notice of the proposed school actions.

(1) Notice of the proposal for a school action shall include a written statement of the basis for the school

action, an explanation of how the school action meets the criteria set forth in the guidelines, and a draft School Transition Plan identifying the items required in Section 34-225 of this Code for all schools affected by the school action. The notice shall state the date, time, and place of the hearing or meeting. For a school closure only, 8 months after notice is given, the chief executive officer must publish on the district's website a full financial report on the closure that includes an analysis of the closure's costs and benefits to the district.

(2) The chief executive officer or his or her designee shall provide notice to the principal, staff, local school council, and parents or guardians of any school that is subject to the proposed school action.

(3) The chief executive officer shall provide written notice of any proposed school action to the State Senator, State Representative, and alderman for the school or schools that are subject to the proposed school action.

(4) The chief executive officer shall publish notice of proposed school actions on the district's Internet website.

(5) The chief executive officer shall provide notice of proposed school actions at least 30 calendar days in advance of a public hearing or meeting. The notice shall state the date, time, and place of the hearing or meeting. No Board decision regarding a proposed school action may

take place less than 60 days after the announcement of the proposed school action.

(d) The chief executive officer shall publish a brief summary of the proposed school actions and the date, time, and place of the hearings or meetings in a newspaper of general circulation.

(e) The chief executive officer shall designate at least 3 opportunities to elicit public comment at a hearing or meeting on a proposed school action and shall do the following:

(1) Convene at least one public hearing at the centrally located office of the Board.

(2) Convene at least 2 additional public hearings or meetings at a location convenient to the school community subject to the proposed school action.

(f) Public hearings shall be conducted by a qualified independent hearing officer chosen from a list of independent hearing officers. The general counsel shall compile and publish a list of independent hearing officers by November 1 of each school year. The independent hearing officer shall have the following qualifications:

(1) he or she must be a licensed attorney eligible to practice law in Illinois;

(2) he or she must not be an employee of the Board; and

(3) he or she must not have represented the Board, its employees or any labor organization representing its employees, any local school council, or any charter or

contract school in any capacity within the last year.

The independent hearing officer shall issue a written report that summarizes the hearing and determines whether the chief executive officer complied with the requirements of this Section and the guidelines.

The chief executive officer shall publish the report on the district's Internet website within 5 calendar days after receiving the report and at least 15 days prior to any Board action being taken.

(g) Public meetings shall be conducted by a representative of the chief executive officer. A summary of the public meeting shall be published on the district's Internet website within 5 calendar days after the meeting.

(h) If the chief executive officer proposes a school action without following the mandates set forth in this Section, the proposed school action shall not be approved by the Board during the school year in which the school action was proposed. (Source: P.A. 97-473, eff. 1-1-12; 97-474, eff. 8-22-11; 97-813, eff. 7-13-12; 97-1133, eff. 11-30-12.)

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.