



Illinois State Board of Education New Rules on Isolated Time Outs Provide Needed Clarity, but Lack Adequate Training Requirements

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SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) released on Friday its newly-written rules regarding isolated time outs and physical restraint and while the rules provided much-needed clarity, the policy does not require districts to provide enough training to staff in either de-escalation techniques or in physical restraint.

The need for clarification became clear after a series of articles was published by ProPublica and the Chicago Tribune in November and December of 2019. The proposed changes will be discussed at ISBE's board meeting Tuesday and are contained in the [board materials posted](#) on the agency's website Friday.

"We believe this is a step in the right direction for the students of the Illinois and we appreciate the Illinois State Board of Education's efforts," said Kathi Griffin, president of the Illinois Education Association. "There were some unintended consequences of the emergency rules that were put into place in November, including districts that misinterpreted the rules, an increase in staff injuries and in some places, an increase in the number of times police had to be called to the school to handle students who were out of control. The clarity in the new rules is welcomed."

However, there are some areas of concern with the new rules, as well. First and foremost, is the lack of training the rules require for school employees.

"We would like to see every staff member in a school trained in verbal de-escalation and any specially-trained staff, those who would physically touch a student, have much more than eight hours a year of training," Griffin said. "If we're serious about helping kids, we need to be serious about training staff."

In addition, requiring an adult to be in the isolation room, door closed, with a student who “is in imminent danger of serious physical harm because the student is unable to cease actively engaging in extreme physical aggression” is also dangerous for the adult.

“The door is only closed if the student is a physical threat to himself or others. It is almost certain that the adult will end up injured in that situation,” Griffin said. “We’d prefer that there be an adult outside the room, but in constant view of the student so they can make sure the student is safe and, in fact, calming down.”

There is currently a group of stakeholders looking at possible changes in legislation regarding isolated time out rooms, as well.

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The 135,000 member Illinois Education Association (IEA) is the state’s largest education employee’s organization. IEA represents preK-12 teachers outside of the city of Chicago and education support staff, higher education faculty, retired education employees and students preparing to become teachers, statewide.