



# Gov. Pritzker Signs Remote Learning Legislation to Protect Students and Educators

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Springfield – To ensure Illinois school districts have the necessary tools to effectively carry out remote learning and other necessary operations during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Governor JB Pritzker signed SB 1569 into law to provide support for educators, students, and families.

"As we face the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, Illinois is doing all it can to ensure our students receive the quality education they deserve," said Governor JB Pritzker. "Educators and administrators are doing what they do best, helping students continue to learn, providing meals, and looking out for the wellbeing of our children and families. This legislation will support that critical work and I applaud the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois General Assembly for coming together to support our schools and students across the state."

"The Illinois State Board of Education will release guidance in the coming days to support a safe transition back to in-person learning this fall," said State Superintendent of Education Dr. Carmen I. Ayala. "We emphasize in-person learning for all students to the greatest extent possible, while realizing that may not be feasible in all situations. Senate Bill 1569 creates a Blended Remote Learning Day option that gives schools additional flexibility as they develop plans for fall. Schools that plan to utilize Blended Remote Learning Days should consider equity and prioritize in-person learning for our students with greater needs."

Due to the disruptions to in-person learning during the pandemic, the legislation allows school districts to use remote learning during a declared public health emergency. The legislation allows remote learning days and up to five remote learning planning days to

be considered attendance days. The legislation also waives student assessment requirements if the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has received a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education.

To assist teachers, the legislation provides a year-long licensure extension for those with teaching and education support professional licenses set to expire on June 30, 2020. To address the performance rating system for educators, the law outlines procedures and protections for evaluations, such as carrying over an “Excellent” rating from the previous evaluation period. To support educator recruitment, modifications to the School Code include:

- Makes licenses endorsed for visiting international educators valid for five years (currently three);
- Allows career and technical education teachers to renew their licenses with a test of workplace proficiency, not solely educators whose license was issued July 1, 2015 or after; and
- Updates language to conform with current licensure nomenclature.

The law also affirms that constitution exams can be administered remotely.

Building on efforts to provide support for child care providers, the law allows recipients of preschool education grants funded by ISBE to care for the children of essential workers who are under the age of 12 years old.

For parents, the law expands the requirement that they receive copies of all written materials used during a meeting to determine a child’s eligibility for special education and related services. Additionally, the legislation allows parents to choose how they wish to receive those materials and copies of their child’s school student records prior to the meeting.

The law ensures graduating high school seniors can graduate and earn their diploma. Additionally, ISBE may adopt rules to modify the requirements of the high school graduation requirements.

Regarding higher education, the law requires courses taken during the calendar year 2020 to be transferable for students receiving a passing grade and to fulfill the prerequisite requirements for advanced courses.

“With no time to prepare, the COVID-19 pandemic challenged educators to find new and innovative ways to meet the physical, social emotional, and academic needs of their students. We are grateful that the General Assembly, working in collaboration with Governor Pritzker, swiftly passed Senate Bill 1569 to codify the flexibility and

creativity educators required to provide essential services to our states young people,” said Dr. Jason Leahy, Executive Director of the Illinois Principals Association.

“Throughout this pandemic, the Governor and State Board of Education have worked to provide guidance to districts and make adjustments to school operations with the primary focus always on serving students,” said Illinois Federation of Teachers President Dan Montgomery. “Through Executive Orders and now the signing of this legislation, the Governor is sending a clear message that in these difficult times our focus should be on meeting the basic instructional, social, and emotional needs of students and not testing and bureaucracy. We applaud this effort.”

“We are very thankful that lawmakers saw fit to provide guidance in law that allows educators to concentrate on teaching and working to meet the needs of students in an emergency situation, to continue to work toward fixing the teacher shortage and to listen to the concerns of all involved when coming up with these solutions. It's a true testament to collaboration and to what we can do as a state when we pull together in the best interest of students," said Illinois Education Association President Kathi Griffin.

"During this unprecedented time in our state's history, SB 1569, the Education Omnibus all is comprehensive legislation to account for and acknowledge the real-time learning progress of our students and provide out entire educational system flexibility needed for successful students outcomes. No matter what the future holds for teaching and learning nationwide, Illinois is now better equipped to address out students' educational needs," said Assistant Majority Leader Will Davis.

“Teachers and administrators throughout our state stepped up to the plate and performed under extremely unusual circumstance,” said Sen. Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant. “I’m pleased to the Governor is signing our education bill, which allows our schools to serve our students to the best of their ability during these unique times.”

SB 1569 takes effect immediately.