

# **Elik Was House Sponsor: Gov. Pritzker Signs Legislation Re-enforcing Value of Illinois High School Diploma**

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**CHICAGO** - Today Governor JB Pritzker signed SB3792 into law, amending the code of multiple acts and agencies to replace references to high school equivalency certificates to State of Illinois High School Diplomas.



State Rep. Amy Elik (R-Alton) expressed pride to be the House sponsor of this new law.

"This will encourage more individuals to complete their GED because their achievement will be the equivalent of a high school diploma," she said. "This will increase job opportunities and improve the future for people and their families," she added.

This change recognizes the equal value of a State of Illinois High School Diploma and will aid Illinois graduates in establishing reciprocity with educational requirements in other states.

"Graduates of Illinois schools should never have to start their post-secondary career or schooling at a disadvantage," said Governor JB Pritzker. "This legislation reflects the high standards to which we hold our high school students and protects graduates from unfair misconceptions, both in our state and in others."

In the past, the term "equivalency certificate" carried a stigma and the incorrect assumption that the graduate had received a lower level of degree. This change accurately reflects that the high school equivalency certificate is a diploma, ensuring no graduates of Illinois high schools will face challenges based on an inaccurate assessment of educational level.

This legislation also changes school codes to recognize high school equivalency certificates from other states as the equivalent of a State of Illinois High School Diploma, allowing ease of reciprocity when transferring educational requirements across state lines.

The Illinois College Board is also increasing GED test discounts to encourage Illinoisans to complete their secondary degrees. \$430,000 of discounts will be available to all test takers and bring the total costs of testing down to \$40 for in-person tests and \$56 for online tests. Previous discount programs in 2020 and 2021 were redeemed by nearly 20,000 test-takers. Test takers can use the code ILSAVE20 to reduce the cost of each module when checking out.

"We are thrilled that the Governor is allocating funds to offset the cost of testing for high school equivalency exams," said Mark Klaisner, President of the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools. "By significantly reducing the cost, more Illinoisans will be able to follow their dreams and open doors to a brighter future."

"We hope by redefining the value of a high school equivalency, combined with the large discount offered to take the GED test more people will be encouraged to earn their State of Illinois High School Diploma and get started on a path to a better-paying career," said Illinois Community College Board Executive Director, Brian Durham.

“Students who’ve completed the requirements to have functionally completed high school deserve the same recognition as those who’ve taken a more traditional path,” said State Senator Cristina Castro (D-Elgin). “By recognizing this achievement as a ‘diploma’, we’re telling our students and their future employers that they are ready to succeed beyond high school, regardless of the path it took them to get there.”

“We supported this change because it makes it clearer to employers and colleges that, whatever a student’s path was to completing their high school education, they’ve demonstrated that they meet the standards to move on—whether that’s into the workforce or to postsecondary education or training,” said Eric Zarnikow, Executive Director of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC). “If we can remove an unnecessary barrier between students and their career goals, it just makes sense to do so.”

“The signing of SB 3792 demonstrates the Governor and Legislature’s commitment to opening access to rewarding futures for the many individuals throughout the state who are working toward a high school equivalency. By lowering the cost of the GED tests, the state is removing barriers for the many individuals who have worked hard to earn a State of Illinois High School Diploma,” Illinois Council of Community College Presidents Chair and Lake Land College President Josh Bullock said.

The following acts are amended under SB3792: the Children and Family Services Act, the Illinois Youthbuild Act, the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Administrative Act, the School Code, the Public University Uniform Admission Pilot Program Act, the Public Community College Act, the Higher Education Student Assistance Act, the Illinois Insurance Code, the Pharmacy Practice Act, the Structural Pest Control Act, the Community Association Manager Licensing and Disciplinary Act, the Home Inspector License Act, the Real Estate License Act of 2000, the Illinois Public Aid Code, the Firearm Concealed Carry Act, the Illinois Vehicle Code, and the Unified Code of Corrections. This law goes into effect on January 1, 2023.