

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 14-8.02 as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/14-8.02) (from Ch. 122, par. 14-8.02)

Sec. 14-8.02. Identification, evaluation, and placement of children.

(a) The State Board of Education shall make rules under which local school boards shall determine the eligibility of children to receive special education. Such rules shall ensure that a free appropriate public education be available to all children with disabilities as defined in Section 14-1.02. The State Board of Education shall require local school districts to administer non-discriminatory procedures or tests to English learners coming from homes in which a language other than English is used to determine their eligibility to receive special education. The placement of low English proficiency students in special education programs and facilities shall be made in accordance with the test results reflecting the student's linguistic, cultural and special education needs. For purposes of determining the eligibility of children the State Board of Education shall include in the rules

definitions of "case study", "staff conference", "individualized educational program", and "qualified specialist" appropriate to each category of children with disabilities as defined in this Article. For purposes of determining the eligibility of children from homes in which a language other than English is used, the State Board of Education shall include in the rules definitions for "qualified bilingual specialists" and "linguistically and culturally appropriate individualized educational programs". For purposes of this Section, as well as Sections 14-8.02a, 14-8.02b, and 14-8.02c of this Code, "parent" means a parent as defined in the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1401(23)).

(b) No child shall be eligible for special education facilities except with a carefully completed case study fully reviewed by professional personnel in a multidisciplinary staff conference and only upon the recommendation of qualified specialists or a qualified bilingual specialist, if available. At the conclusion of the multidisciplinary staff conference, the parent of the child and, if the child is in the legal custody of the Department of Children and Family Services, the Department's Office of Education and Transition Services shall be given a copy of the multidisciplinary conference summary report and recommendations, which includes options considered, and, in the case of the parent, be informed of his or her right to obtain an independent educational evaluation if he or she

disagrees with the evaluation findings conducted or obtained by the school district. If the school district's evaluation is shown to be inappropriate, the school district shall reimburse the parent for the cost of the independent evaluation. The State Board of Education shall, with advice from the State Advisory Council on Education of Children with Disabilities on the inclusion of specific independent educational evaluators, prepare a list of suggested independent educational evaluators. The State Board of Education shall include on the list clinical psychologists licensed pursuant to the Clinical Psychologist Licensing Act. Such psychologists shall not be paid fees in excess of the amount that would be received by a school psychologist for performing the same services. The State Board of Education shall supply school districts with such list and make the list available to parents at their request. School districts shall make the list available to parents at the time they are informed of their right to obtain an independent educational evaluation. However, the school district may initiate an impartial due process hearing under this Section within 7 school ~~5~~ days of any written parent request for an independent educational evaluation to show that its evaluation is appropriate. If the final decision is that the evaluation is appropriate, the parent still has a right to an independent educational evaluation, but not at public expense. An independent educational evaluation at public expense must be completed within 60 school ~~30~~ days of a

parent's written request unless the school district initiates an impartial due process hearing or the parent or school district offers reasonable grounds to show that such ~~30-day~~ time period should be extended. If the due process hearing decision indicates that the parent is entitled to an independent educational evaluation, it must be completed within 60 school ~~30~~ days of the decision unless the parent or the school district offers reasonable grounds to show that such ~~30-day~~ period should be extended. If a parent disagrees with the summary report or recommendations of the multidisciplinary conference or the findings of any educational evaluation which results therefrom, the school district shall not proceed with a placement based upon such evaluation and the child shall remain in his or her regular classroom setting. No child shall be eligible for admission to a special class for children with a mental disability who are educable or for children with a mental disability who are trainable except with a psychological evaluation and recommendation by a school psychologist. Consent shall be obtained from the parent of a child before any evaluation is conducted. If consent is not given by the parent or if the parent disagrees with the findings of the evaluation, then the school district may initiate an impartial due process hearing under this Section. The school district may evaluate the child if that is the decision resulting from the impartial due process hearing and the decision is not appealed or if the

decision is affirmed on appeal. The determination of eligibility shall be made and the IEP meeting shall be completed within 60 school days from the date of written parental consent. In those instances when written parental consent is obtained with fewer than 60 pupil attendance days left in the school year, the eligibility determination shall be made and the IEP meeting shall be completed prior to the first day of the following school year. Special education and related services must be provided in accordance with the student's IEP no later than 10 school attendance days after notice is provided to the parents pursuant to Section 300.503 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations and implementing rules adopted by the State Board of Education. The appropriate program pursuant to the individualized educational program of students whose native tongue is a language other than English shall reflect the special education, cultural and linguistic needs. No later than September 1, 1993, the State Board of Education shall establish standards for the development, implementation and monitoring of appropriate bilingual special individualized educational programs. The State Board of Education shall further incorporate appropriate monitoring procedures to verify implementation of these standards. The district shall indicate to the parent, the State Board of Education, and, if applicable, the Department's Office of Education and Transition Services the nature of the services the child will

receive for the regular school term while awaiting placement in the appropriate special education class. At the child's initial IEP meeting and at each annual review meeting, the child's IEP team shall provide the child's parent or guardian and, if applicable, the Department's Office of Education and Transition Services with a written notification that informs the parent or guardian or the Department's Office of Education and Transition Services that the IEP team is required to consider whether the child requires assistive technology in order to receive free, appropriate public education. The notification must also include a toll-free telephone number and internet address for the State's assistive technology program.

If the child is deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired or has an orthopedic impairment or physical disability and he or she might be eligible to receive services from the Illinois School for the Deaf, the Illinois School for the Visually Impaired, or the Illinois Center for Rehabilitation and Education-Roosevelt, the school district shall notify the parents, in writing, of the existence of these schools and the services they provide and shall make a reasonable effort to inform the parents of the existence of other, local schools that provide similar services and the services that these other schools provide. This notification shall include, without limitation, information on school services, school admissions criteria, and school contact

information.

In the development of the individualized education program for a student who has a disability on the autism spectrum (which includes autistic disorder, Asperger's disorder, pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified, childhood disintegrative disorder, and Rett Syndrome, as defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fourth edition (DSM-IV, 2000)), the IEP team shall consider all of the following factors:

(1) The verbal and nonverbal communication needs of the child.

(2) The need to develop social interaction skills and proficiencies.

(3) The needs resulting from the child's unusual responses to sensory experiences.

(4) The needs resulting from resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines.

(5) The needs resulting from engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements.

(6) The need for any positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports to address any behavioral difficulties resulting from autism spectrum disorder.

(7) Other needs resulting from the child's disability that impact progress in the general curriculum, including social and emotional development.

Public Act 95-257 does not create any new entitlement to a service, program, or benefit, but must not affect any entitlement to a service, program, or benefit created by any other law.

If the student may be eligible to participate in the Home-Based Support Services Program for Adults with Mental Disabilities authorized under the Developmental Disability and Mental Disability Services Act upon becoming an adult, the student's individualized education program shall include plans for (i) determining the student's eligibility for those home-based services, (ii) enrolling the student in the program of home-based services, and (iii) developing a plan for the student's most effective use of the home-based services after the student becomes an adult and no longer receives special educational services under this Article. The plans developed under this paragraph shall include specific actions to be taken by specified individuals, agencies, or officials.

(c) In the development of the individualized education program for a student who is functionally blind, it shall be presumed that proficiency in Braille reading and writing is essential for the student's satisfactory educational progress. For purposes of this subsection, the State Board of Education shall determine the criteria for a student to be classified as functionally blind. Students who are not currently identified as functionally blind who are also entitled to Braille instruction include: (i) those whose vision loss is so severe

that they are unable to read and write at a level comparable to their peers solely through the use of vision, and (ii) those who show evidence of progressive vision loss that may result in functional blindness. Each student who is functionally blind shall be entitled to Braille reading and writing instruction that is sufficient to enable the student to communicate with the same level of proficiency as other students of comparable ability. Instruction should be provided to the extent that the student is physically and cognitively able to use Braille. Braille instruction may be used in combination with other special education services appropriate to the student's educational needs. The assessment of each student who is functionally blind for the purpose of developing the student's individualized education program shall include documentation of the student's strengths and weaknesses in Braille skills. Each person assisting in the development of the individualized education program for a student who is functionally blind shall receive information describing the benefits of Braille instruction. The individualized education program for each student who is functionally blind shall specify the appropriate learning medium or media based on the assessment report.

(d) To the maximum extent appropriate, the placement shall provide the child with the opportunity to be educated with children who do not have a disability; provided that children with disabilities who are recommended to be placed into

regular education classrooms are provided with supplementary services to assist the children with disabilities to benefit from the regular classroom instruction and are included on the teacher's regular education class register. Subject to the limitation of the preceding sentence, placement in special classes, separate schools or other removal of the child with a disability from the regular educational environment shall occur only when the nature of the severity of the disability is such that education in the regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. The placement of English learners with disabilities shall be in non-restrictive environments which provide for integration with peers who do not have disabilities in bilingual classrooms. Annually, each January, school districts shall report data on students from non-English speaking backgrounds receiving special education and related services in public and private facilities as prescribed in Section 2-3.30. If there is a disagreement between parties involved regarding the special education placement of any child, either in-state or out-of-state, the placement is subject to impartial due process procedures described in Article 10 of the Rules and Regulations to Govern the Administration and Operation of Special Education.

(e) No child who comes from a home in which a language other than English is the principal language used may be assigned to any class or program under this Article until he

has been given, in the principal language used by the child and used in his home, tests reasonably related to his cultural environment. All testing and evaluation materials and procedures utilized for evaluation and placement shall not be linguistically, racially or culturally discriminatory.

(f) Nothing in this Article shall be construed to require any child to undergo any physical examination or medical treatment whose parents object thereto on the grounds that such examination or treatment conflicts with his religious beliefs.

(g) School boards or their designee shall provide to the parents of a child or, if applicable, the Department of Children and Family Services' Office of Education and Transition Services prior written notice of any decision (a) proposing to initiate or change, or (b) refusing to initiate or change, the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child or the provision of a free appropriate public education to their child, and the reasons therefor. For a parent, such written notification shall also inform the parent of the opportunity to present complaints with respect to any matter relating to the educational placement of the student, or the provision of a free appropriate public education and to have an impartial due process hearing on the complaint. The notice shall inform the parents in the parents' native language, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so, of their rights and all procedures available pursuant to this Act

and the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-446); it shall be the responsibility of the State Superintendent to develop uniform notices setting forth the procedures available under this Act and the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-446) to be used by all school boards. The notice shall also inform the parents of the availability upon request of a list of free or low-cost legal and other relevant services available locally to assist parents in initiating an impartial due process hearing. The State Superintendent shall revise the uniform notices required by this subsection (g) to reflect current law and procedures at least once every 2 years. Any parent who is deaf or does not normally communicate using spoken English and who participates in a meeting with a representative of a local educational agency for the purposes of developing an individualized educational program or attends a multidisciplinary conference shall be entitled to the services of an interpreter. The State Board of Education must adopt rules to establish the criteria, standards, and competencies for a bilingual language interpreter who attends an individualized education program meeting under this subsection to assist a parent who has limited English proficiency.

(g-5) For purposes of this subsection (g-5), "qualified professional" means an individual who holds credentials to evaluate the child in the domain or domains for which an

evaluation is sought or an intern working under the direct supervision of a qualified professional, including a master's or doctoral degree candidate.

To ensure that a parent can participate fully and effectively with school personnel in the development of appropriate educational and related services for his or her child, the parent, an independent educational evaluator, or a qualified professional retained by or on behalf of a parent or child must be afforded reasonable access to educational facilities, personnel, classrooms, and buildings and to the child as provided in this subsection (g-5). The requirements of this subsection (g-5) apply to any public school facility, building, or program and to any facility, building, or program supported in whole or in part by public funds. Prior to visiting a school, school building, or school facility, the parent, independent educational evaluator, or qualified professional may be required by the school district to inform the building principal or supervisor in writing of the proposed visit, the purpose of the visit, and the approximate duration of the visit. The visitor and the school district shall arrange the visit or visits at times that are mutually agreeable. Visitors shall comply with school safety, security, and visitation policies at all times. School district visitation policies must not conflict with this subsection (g-5). Visitors shall be required to comply with the requirements of applicable privacy laws, including those laws

protecting the confidentiality of education records such as the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and the Illinois School Student Records Act. The visitor shall not disrupt the educational process.

(1) A parent must be afforded reasonable access of sufficient duration and scope for the purpose of observing his or her child in the child's current educational placement, services, or program or for the purpose of visiting an educational placement or program proposed for the child.

(2) An independent educational evaluator or a qualified professional retained by or on behalf of a parent or child must be afforded reasonable access of sufficient duration and scope for the purpose of conducting an evaluation of the child, the child's performance, the child's current educational program, placement, services, or environment, or any educational program, placement, services, or environment proposed for the child, including interviews of educational personnel, child observations, assessments, tests or assessments of the child's educational program, services, or placement or of any proposed educational program, services, or placement. If one or more interviews of school personnel are part of the evaluation, the interviews must be conducted at a mutually agreed-upon time, date, and place that do not interfere with the school employee's school

duties. The school district may limit interviews to personnel having information relevant to the child's current educational services, program, or placement or to a proposed educational service, program, or placement.

(h) In the development of the individualized education program or federal Section 504 plan for a student, if the student needs extra accommodation during emergencies, including natural disasters or an active shooter situation, then that accommodation shall be taken into account when developing the student's individualized education program or federal Section 504 plan.

(Source: P.A. 102-199, eff. 7-1-22; 102-264, eff. 8-6-21; 102-558, eff. 8-20-21; 102-813, eff. 5-13-22; 102-1072, eff. 6-10-22; 103-197, eff. 1-1-24; 103-605, eff. 7-1-24.)