



104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

HB3717

Introduced 2/18/2025, by Rep. Tracy Katz Muhl

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

110 ILCS 805/3-29.28 new

Amends the Public Community College Act. Allows the board of trustees of a community college district to establish and offer a baccalaureate degree program and confer a bachelor's degree if the board of trustees and the program meet specified conditions. Provides for an application for approval from the Illinois Community College Board. Sets forth community college requirements and prohibitions for establishing a baccalaureate degree program. Provides that a community college district that offers a baccalaureate degree program shall submit an annual report to the Illinois Community College Board. Sets forth what that report shall include. Provides for a statewide evaluation of a baccalaureate degree program.

LRB104 11344 LNS 21432 b

1 AN ACT concerning education.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Findings. The General Assembly finds the
5 following:

6 (1) Four-year degrees in applied fields of study are
7 of increasing importance in enabling individuals to
8 qualify for and obtain jobs.

9 (2) It is a priority in this State to promote
10 equitable access and afford the citizens in this State,
11 particularly underserved student populations and those in
12 rural areas of this State, greater access to higher
13 education.

14 (3) Research has shown the following:

15 (A) Most students attend college within 50 miles
16 of their home, and many Illinois residents live
17 outside of commuting distance to a public institution
18 of higher education.

19 (B) In states where a community college
20 baccalaureate program has been implemented, typical
21 graduates are older, are working, or have family
22 responsibilities that preclude them from attending
23 traditional baccalaureate programs.

24 (C) Community college baccalaureate graduates are

1 often more racially diverse than counterparts in
2 similar programs of study.

3 (4) Community colleges can help fill the gaps in this
4 State's higher education system by granting baccalaureate
5 degrees to meet the growing demand for a skilled workforce
6 by increasing access and reducing costs for students.

7 (5) It is in this State's interest to enable community
8 colleges to seek authorization to offer baccalaureate
9 degrees.

10 (6) Baccalaureate degree programs offered pursuant to
11 this Act do not otherwise alter the role and mission of a
12 public community college. Nothing in this Act is intended
13 to reduce the State's commitment to improving associate to
14 baccalaureate program transfer pathways for Illinois
15 students.

16 Section 5. The Public Community College Act is amended by
17 adding Section 3-29.28 as follows:

18 (110 ILCS 805/3-29.28 new)

19 Sec. 3-29.28. Baccalaureate degree program.

20 (a) A board of trustees may establish and offer a
21 baccalaureate degree program and confer a bachelor's degree if
22 all the following conditions are met:

23 (1) The board of trustees meets all of the
24 requirements as set forth in subsection (b) of this

1 Section and has been approved by the State Board to offer a
2 bachelor's degree.

3 (2) After the program has been approved by the State
4 Board, the Board of Higher Education shall consider the
5 program for approval in a manner consistent with new
6 bachelor's degree programs at public and private
7 universities in this State.

8 (3) The board of trustees has identified and
9 documented, in writing, unmet workforce needs in the
10 region served by the community college in the subject area
11 of the baccalaureate degree program to be offered. The
12 board of trustees shall publish the documentation on the
13 community college district's website, make the
14 documentation publicly available, and shall present the
15 documentation to the State Board.

16 (4) The community college shall hold an applicable
17 accreditation for the baccalaureate degree program or have
18 applied for the accreditation.

19 (5) The board of trustees must demonstrate how the
20 baccalaureate degree program will demonstrate improved
21 racial and socioeconomic equity in student access,
22 enrollment, and completion by focusing outreach efforts on
23 and giving preference to those students to meet workforce
24 needs.

25 (6) Tuition per credit hour for the third and fourth
26 years of a 4-year baccalaureate program may not exceed

1 150% of the tuition per credit hour of related
2 lower-division course tuition.

3 (b) The board of trustees shall demonstrate the district
4 has the expertise, resources, and student interest to offer a
5 baccalaureate degree. An application for approval from the
6 State Board shall include, but is not limited to, all of the
7 following:

8 (1) The board of trustees shall describe the labor
9 market need as specified in paragraph (3) of subsection
10 (a).

11 (2) The board of trustees must demonstrate that the
12 baccalaureate degree program will not unnecessarily
13 duplicate the degree programs offered by other
14 institutions of higher education in the community
15 college's district.

16 (3) The board of trustees shall describe the program's
17 purpose and its target population, related occupations,
18 and career paths.

19 (4) The board of trustees may demonstrate that the
20 baccalaureate degree program is built on existing
21 associate degree programs and that the baccalaureate
22 degree program prepares graduates for professional and
23 technical employment and opportunity to matriculate to
24 graduate degree programs, when applicable.

25 (5) The board of trustees shall demonstrate that the
26 community college has developed quality curricula that

1 align with federal, State, and local requirements and will
2 prepare students with the appropriate level of skill to
3 meet students' educational goals.

4 (6) The board of trustees shall demonstrate student
5 demand for the baccalaureate program.

6 (7) The board of trustees shall verify the community
7 college has the fiscal resources in place or has budgeted
8 for financial support for the program in a cost-effective
9 manner.

10 (8) The board of trustees shall identify and document
11 the faculty available for teaching the program, including
12 the number of full-time faculty anticipated to teach in
13 the program, a description of the faculty's
14 qualifications, including the highest degree earned,
15 teaching experience, professional experience, and licenses
16 held by the faculty. The board of trustees must also
17 indicate how faculty are to be evaluated.

18 (c) A community college district is prohibited from using
19 semester credit hours generated in a baccalaureate degree
20 program for grants received pursuant to Section 2-16.02 of
21 this Act.

22 (d) The board of trustees of a community college
23 developing a baccalaureate degree program located in the same
24 community college district as the main campus of any public
25 institution of higher education shall notify that public
26 institution of higher education at least 60 days before

1 submitting the application under subsection (b) to the State
2 Board. Within 30 days after the date the board of trustees
3 submits the notice, the public institution of higher education
4 may provide a written response to the State Board for its
5 review. A public institution of higher education may not
6 prevent a community college from offering a baccalaureate
7 degree program.

8 (e) A community college district that offers a
9 baccalaureate degree program shall submit an annual report to
10 the State Board, which shall include all of the following:

11 (1) The total number of students pursuing a bachelor's
12 degree at the community college district pursuant to this
13 Section.

14 (2) The total number of bachelor's degrees completed
15 at the community college district.

16 (3) Workforce data showing demand for the
17 baccalaureate degree programs offered at the community
18 college district.

19 (4) The average cost of tuition per credit hour for
20 the bachelor's degrees offered at the community college
21 district.

22 (f) The State Board shall conduct a statewide evaluation
23 of all baccalaureate degree programs established under this
24 Section. The results of the evaluation shall be reported, in
25 writing, on or before 5 years after the effective date of this
26 amendatory Act of the 104th General Assembly to all of the

1 following:

2 (1) The Board of Higher Education.

3 (2) The Speaker of the House of Representatives.

4 (3) The Minority Leader of the House of
5 Representatives.

6 (4) The President of the Senate.

7 (5) The Minority Leader of the Senate.

8 (6) The Governor's Office of Management and Budget.

9 The evaluation shall include, but is not limited to, all
10 of the following:

11 (A) All baccalaureate degree programs implemented.

12 (B) Information identifying applicants, admissions,
13 enrollments, demographic characteristics of students, and
14 degree recipients.

15 (C) The extent to which each baccalaureate degree
16 program established under this Section fulfills identified
17 workforce demands that require 4-year baccalaureate
18 degrees.

19 (D) Information on the pace of employment of students
20 and the subsequent job placement of graduates.

21 (E) The cost of each baccalaureate degree program and
22 the funding sources used to finance each program.

23 (F) For each baccalaureate degree program, the costs
24 to students, the amount of financial aid offered, and the
25 student debt levels of graduates.

26 (G) Time-to-degree rates and completion rates for each

1 new baccalaureate degree program established under this
2 Section.

3 (H) The extent to which a baccalaureate degree program
4 established under this Section is in compliance with the
5 requirements of this Section.

6 A board of trustees shall submit the information necessary
7 to conduct the evaluation required under this subsection (f),
8 as determined by the evaluators, to the State Board.