



## 104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

HB4296

Introduced 1/14/2026, by Rep. Jed Davis

#### SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

New Act

Creates the Workforce Pipeline Act. Provides that beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, each institution (defined as a public high school, school district, or nonpublic high school recognized by the State Board of Education) shall provide access to at least one Pipeline Program in a high-need occupation. Requires the State Board, in consultation with the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, to develop a model memorandum of understanding for an institution and a local workforce partner. Requires an employer participating in a Pipeline Program to maintain workers' compensation and general liability insurance. Provides that participation in a Pipeline Program does not create civil liability for an employer beyond the employer's statutory duties, as long as the employer acts in good faith and complies with safety requirements. Provides that an institution's chief procurement office shall establish a bid preference, not to exceed 5%, for an employer participating in a Pipeline Program. Allows a student to participate in a Pipeline Program with parental consent if under the age of 18. Provides that an institution and a local workforce partner may establish articulation agreements for credit, credentials, or hours earned. Requires an employer to comply with all safety standards applicable to minors and a mentor or supervisor to comply with an institution's volunteer or contractor background-check procedures. Requires the State Board to submit a one-page summary on Pipeline Programs to the General Assembly. Provides that nothing in the Act may be construed as a mandate requiring an institution to incur additional expenditures or establish new programs. Allows the State Board and the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to adopt any rules necessary to implement the Act. Repeals the Act on July 1, 2032. Makes other changes. Effective immediately.

LRB104 16861 LNS 30271 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. Short title. This Act may be cited as the  
5 Workforce Pipeline Act.

6 Section 5. Definitions. As used in this Act:

7 "Access" means availability of a pathway option through  
8 direct school district programming, a regional partnership, or  
9 an agreement with a qualified provider.

10 "High-need occupation" means an occupation identified  
11 annually by the Department of Commerce and Economic  
12 Opportunity as experiencing shortages or high regional demand.

13 "Institution" means a public high school, school district,  
14 or nonpublic high school recognized by the State Board of  
15 Education that elects to participate in a Pipeline Program  
16 under this Act.

17 "Local workforce partner" includes an employer, trade  
18 organization, labor organization, public community college,  
19 regional vocational center, or similar entity providing  
20 training or supervised work experience.

21 "Memorandum of understanding" means a written agreement  
22 between an institution and a local workforce partner  
23 establishing roles, responsibilities, and program

1 expectations.

2 "Pipeline Program" means a structured sequence of  
3 instruction, training, or supervised employment that prepares  
4 a student for entry into a high-need occupation.

5 Section 10. Access requirement.

6 (a) Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, each  
7 institution shall provide access to at least one Pipeline  
8 Program in a high-need occupation.

9 (b) Access may be offered through:

- 10 (1) direct programming;  
11 (2) a regional vocational center;  
12 (3) a public community college partnership;  
13 (4) an employer or trade organization partnership; or  
14 (5) any combination of paragraphs (1) through (4).

15 (c) No institution is required to establish new programs,  
16 hire new personnel, construct facilities, or incur additional  
17 operational costs to comply with this Act.

18 Section 15. Memorandum of understanding.

19 (a) The State Board of Education, in consultation with the  
20 Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, shall develop  
21 a model memorandum of understanding for an institution and a  
22 local workforce partner.

23 (b) The model memorandum of understanding shall include:

- 24 (1) student responsibilities;

- 1 (2) supervision requirements;
- 2 (3) safety protocols;
- 3 (4) attendance and reporting expectations;
- 4 (5) credit or credential options;
- 5 (6) employer responsibilities;
- 6 (7) program duration; and
- 7 (8) procedures for program review.

8 (c) An institution and a local workforce partner may  
9 modify the model memorandum of understanding by mutual  
10 agreement.

11 Section 20. Employer participation; liability protections.

12 (a) An employer participating in a Pipeline Program shall  
13 maintain workers' compensation and general liability insurance  
14 consistent with requirements for workplace safety.

15 (b) Participation in a Pipeline Program does not create  
16 civil liability for an employer beyond the employer's  
17 statutory duties, as long as the employer acts in good faith  
18 and complies with safety requirements.

19 (c) No employer is subject to an increased standard of  
20 care or a new cause of action due to participation in a  
21 Pipeline Program.

22 Section 25. Employer incentives.

23 (a) An institution's chief procurement office shall  
24 establish a bid preference, not to exceed 5%, for an employer

1 participating in a Pipeline Program. The chief procurement  
2 office shall determine the precise percentage and the  
3 conditions for applying the preference.

4 (b) Subject to appropriation, the Department of Commerce  
5 and Economic Opportunity may establish competitive grants to  
6 support employer participation, student supervision, or  
7 equipment needs.

8 (c) Nothing in this Section requires the General Assembly  
9 to appropriate funds.

10 Section 30. Student participation.

11 (a) A student may participate in a Pipeline Program with  
12 parental consent if under the age of 18.

13 (b) Student compensation is optional and may be determined  
14 by the local workforce partner, subject to applicable labor  
15 laws.

16 (c) Student participation may not reduce or replace core  
17 academic requirements unless otherwise authorized by the State  
18 Board of Education.

19 (d) A participating student may not be considered an  
20 employee for purposes of unemployment insurance or benefits  
21 eligibility.

22 Section 35. Credit and credential recognition.

23 (a) An institution and a local workforce partner may  
24 establish articulation agreements for credit, credentials, or

1 hours earned.

2 (b) The State Board of Education shall encourage, but not  
3 require, uniform credit standards under this Section.

4 (c) A Pipeline Program may include hours toward  
5 apprenticeship, industry-recognized credentials, or  
6 qualifications aligned with a high-need occupation.

7 Section 40. Safety standards and background checks.

8 (a) An employer participating in a Pipeline Program shall  
9 comply with all safety standards applicable to minors.

10 (b) A mentor or supervisor participating in a Pipeline  
11 Program shall comply with an institution's volunteer or  
12 contractor background-check procedures.

13 No additional background-check requirements may be imposed  
14 under this Act.

15 Section 45. Reporting.

16 (a) By December 31 of each year, the State Board of  
17 Education shall submit a one-page summary on Pipeline Programs  
18 to the General Assembly identifying:

- 19 (1) the total student participation;  
20 (2) the industries represented;  
21 (3) employer participation rates;  
22 (4) notable regional partnerships; and  
23 (5) recommendations for program refinement.

24 (b) An institution is not required to submit any report

1 beyond minimal participation data requested by the State Board  
2 of Education.

3 Section 50. No new mandates. Nothing in this Act may be  
4 construed as a mandate requiring an institution to incur  
5 additional expenditures or establish new programs.

6 Section 90. Rulemaking. The State Board of Education and  
7 the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity may adopt  
8 any rules necessary to implement this Act. Rules shall be  
9 limited to administrative procedures and may not impose  
10 material costs on an institution or employer.

11 Section 95. Repeal. This Act is repealed on July 1, 2032.

12 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon  
13 becoming law.