



104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

HB4354

Introduced 1/14/2026, by Rep. Dave Vella

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

105 ILCS 5/2-3.214 new

Amends the School Code. Requires the State Board of Education to establish and administer a program to strengthen this State's workforce by creating structured pipelines from public high schools into in-demand careers through public-private partnerships with employers, public community colleges, and school districts. Under the program, provides that the school board of each school district maintaining a high school shall allow the high school to partner with local employers and the community college district where the high school is located to establish a pathway program for careers in priority sectors. Requires the State Board and the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to jointly approve the pathway program prior to implementation and maintain a registry of participating high schools and employers. Sets forth pathway program requirements. Provides that an employer participating in a pathway program that provides a qualifying paid internship or apprenticeship pathway shall receive from the State Board a \$1,000 grant per student holding the internship or apprenticeship, not exceed \$50,000 per year. Provides that at least 25% of any funds appropriated for implementation must be used to support pathway programs in high schools in high-poverty or rural school districts.

LRB104 16854 LNS 30264 b

STATE MANDATES
ACT MAY REQUIRE
REIMBURSEMENT

A BILL FOR

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 5. The School Code is amended by adding Section
5 2-3.214 as follows:

6 (105 ILCS 5/2-3.214 new)

7 Sec. 2-3.214. Pathway program for careers in priority
8 sectors.

9 (a) The State Board of Education shall establish and
10 administer a program to strengthen this State's workforce by
11 creating structured pipelines from public high schools into
12 in-demand careers through public-private partnerships with
13 employers, public community colleges, and school districts.
14 Under the program, the school board of each school district
15 maintaining a high school shall allow the high school to
16 partner with local employers and the community college
17 district where the high school is located to establish a
18 pathway program for careers in priority sectors. The State
19 Board and the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
20 shall jointly approve the pathway program prior to
21 implementation of the pathway program and maintain a registry
22 of participating high schools and employers.

23 (b) A pathway program established under this Section must

1 include the following pathways:

2 (1) a paid internship or apprenticeship in a priority
3 sector;

4 (2) dual credit coursework aligned to an industry
5 certification in a priority sector; or

6 (3) a job shadowing or mentorship opportunity in a
7 priority sector.

8 (c) An employer participating in a pathway program
9 established under this Section that provides a qualifying paid
10 internship or apprenticeship under paragraph (1) of subsection
11 (b) shall receive from the State Board a \$1,000 grant per
12 student holding the internship or apprenticeship; however, the
13 grant may not exceed \$50,000 per year.

14 (d) At least 25% of any funds appropriated to implement
15 this Section must be used to support pathway programs in high
16 schools in high-poverty or rural school districts.