



104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

HB5319

Introduced 2/10/2026, by Rep. Tracy Katz Muhl

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

110 ILCS 805/3-42.6 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 specified conditions are met. Requires the board of trustees to demonstrate that the community college district has the expertise, the resources, and sufficient student demand to offer a baccalaureate degree. Sets forth the application requirements. Prohibits a community college district from using semester credit hours generated in a baccalaureate degree program for certain grants. Sets forth limitations on community college districts for establishing baccalaureate programs. Requires a community college district that offers a baccalaureate degree program to submit an annual report to the Illinois Community College Board. Requires the Illinois Community College Board and the Board of Higher Education to conduct a statewide evaluation of all baccalaureate degree programs established under the amendatory Act and report the results of the evaluation on or before 5 years after the effective date of the amendatory Act, in addition to being made publicly available online. Effective immediately.

LRB104 20527 LNS 34001 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) The State's public and private universities and
7 community colleges have a longstanding tradition of
8 partnership with respect to the creation of seamless
9 transfer pathways, articulation agreements, and joint
10 programming that expand educational opportunities for
11 students.

12 (2) The State's public and private universities and
13 community colleges play a vital role in advancing this
14 State's higher education mission by delivering
15 high-quality academic programs, fostering innovation, and
16 supporting workforce development.

17 (3) The State's public and private universities and
18 community colleges serve a diverse student body, including
19 first generation students, low-income students, racial and
20 ethnic minorities, and working adults, helping them
21 achieve their academic and economic goals.

22 (4) The State benefits from a cohesive and
23 interconnected higher education ecosystem in which public
24 universities, private higher education institutions, and

1 community colleges work collaboratively to meet the
2 diverse needs of learners and the regional economies they
3 serve.

4 (5) Community colleges can play a roll in filling the
5 gaps in this State's higher education system by granting
6 baccalaureate degrees to meet the growing demand for a
7 skilled workforce, thereby increasing access and reducing
8 costs for students.

9 (6) Baccalaureate degree programs offered pursuant to
10 this Act do not alter the existing role and mission of
11 community colleges.

12 (7) Nothing in this Act reduces this State's
13 dedication to improving associate-to-baccalaureate
14 program transfer pathways for this State's students, based
15 on robust and longstanding partnerships with public and
16 private universities.

17 Section 5. The Public Community College Act is amended by
18 adding Section 3-42.6 as follows:

19 (110 ILCS 805/3-42.6 new)

20 Sec. 3-42.6. Baccalaureate degree program.

21 (a) As used in this Section:

22 "Accessibility" includes, but is not limited to, time and
23 distance to a program at a university or off-site location
24 during the time the program is offered, availability of public

1 transportation, and proximity to a workforce partner.

2 "Applied baccalaureate" means a baccalaureate degree that
3 is based on a curriculum that incorporates both theoretical
4 and applied knowledge and skills in a specific vocational or
5 technical field, which shall meet the following criteria:

6 (1) is titled as a Bachelor of Applied Science;

7 (2) is designed for workforce entry or career
8 advancement in technical or professional fields; and

9 (3) is built upon applied associate degrees or closely
10 aligned curricula.

11 "CCB Region" means the following community college
12 baccalaureate regions:

13 (1) CCB Region 1: The College of Lake County, Harper
14 College, Oakton College, Triton College, and Morton
15 College.

16 (2) CCB Region 2: Elgin Community College, Kishwaukee
17 College, Waubensee Community College, McHenry County
18 College, Rock Valley College, and the College of DuPage.

19 (3) CCB Region 3: Black Hawk College, Carl Sandburg
20 College, Highland Community College, John Wood Community
21 College, Sauk Valley Community College, and Spoon River
22 College.

23 (4) CCB Region 4: Heartland Community College,
24 Illinois Central College, Illinois Valley Community
25 College, Lincoln Land Community College, and Richland
26 Community College.

1 (5) CCB Region 5: Joliet Junior College, Prairie State
2 College, South Suburban College, Moraine Valley Community
3 College, and Kankakee Community College.

4 (6) CCB Region 6: Parkland College, Danville Area
5 Community College, Lake Land College, and Illinois Eastern
6 Community College.

7 (7) CCB Region 7: Rend Lake College, John A. Logan
8 College, Southeastern Illinois College, and Shawnee
9 Community College.

10 (8) CCB Region 8: Lewis and Clark Community College,
11 Southwestern Illinois College, and Kaskaskia College.

12 (9) CCB Region 9: The City Colleges of Chicago.

13 "Course scheduling flexibility" includes, but is not
14 limited to, the times and days of the week courses are offered
15 and the ability of a university or partnership to use shared
16 instructional spaces and scheduling models developed in
17 partnership with university centers located on community
18 college campuses.

19 "Mode of delivery" includes, but is not limited to, online
20 courses, hybrid courses, and off-site courses.

21 "Workforce need" includes, but is not limited to, the
22 anticipated annual earnings of degree holders and the current
23 number of related employment vacancies, evidence of sustained
24 need that accounts for local or regional education and
25 training providers, and employer support within a community
26 college district.

1 (b) The board of trustees of a community college district
2 may establish and offer a baccalaureate degree program and
3 confer a bachelor's degree if all the following conditions are
4 met:

5 (1) The community college district meets all of the
6 requirements as set forth in subsection (c) as
7 demonstrated through an application to offer a
8 baccalaureate degree that has been submitted and approved
9 by the State Board and the Board of Higher Education. The
10 State Board and the Board of Higher Education shall
11 collaborate on the development of an application process
12 that is no less restrictive than program approval of new
13 bachelor's degree programs at public and private
14 universities in this State.

15 (2) The community college district has identified, in
16 a feasibility study, unmet workforce needs, including the
17 number of potential students and workers necessary to meet
18 those needs, in the region served by the community college
19 in the subject area of the baccalaureate degree program to
20 be offered and student interest in the new degree. The
21 board of trustees shall publish the documentation on the
22 community college district's website, make the
23 documentation publicly available, and present the
24 documentation to the State Board.

25 (3) The community college shall hold an applicable
26 accreditation and be approved to offer baccalaureate

1 degrees by the Higher Learning Commission.

2 (4) The community college district shall demonstrate
3 how the baccalaureate degree program will demonstrate
4 improved equity in student access, enrollment, and
5 completion.

6 (5) Tuition and fees per credit hour for the third and
7 fourth years of a 4-year baccalaureate program may not
8 exceed 150% of the tuition and fees per credit hour of
9 related lower-division course tuition and fees, and the
10 tuition charged a student who is a State resident shall
11 not exceed the amount that the student was charged at the
12 time he or she first entered the upper division program.

13 (6) The community college district provides a notice
14 of intent to consider offering a baccalaureate degree to
15 the State Board. The State Board shall provide the notice
16 of intent to the Board of Higher Education, all public
17 universities, and the Federation of Independent Illinois
18 Colleges and Universities. The State Board shall also
19 publish the notice on the State Board's website.

20 (7) At least 60 days before submission of an
21 application, the board of trustees shall publish a
22 feasibility study as set forth in paragraph (2) and notify
23 the State Board. The State Board shall provide notice to
24 the Board of Higher Education, all public universities,
25 and the Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and
26 Universities.

1 (8) After publication of the feasibility study, the
2 community college district shall enter into a good faith
3 collaboration process with interested universities. The
4 discussions during the good faith collaboration process
5 may include the university's ability to serve the
6 identified population to meet workforce need, alternative
7 pathways to meet student need, the ability of the
8 university to develop a new or expand a current program to
9 meet the unmet workforce need or student need in a timely
10 manner, or the creation of a new partnership. If, at the
11 end of 60 days, the community college and a university
12 cannot agree to pursue or establish, in writing, a new
13 partnership agreement or no interest has been expressed in
14 writing, a community college district may submit its
15 application. This good faith collaboration process shall
16 be documented by the community college district in its
17 application. Nothing in this paragraph (8) requires a
18 community college to enter into a partnership agreement
19 with a university.

20 (9) After the submission of an application, the State
21 Board shall post a reconsideration period of at least 30
22 days for universities to submit their documentation of
23 communication with the community college during the good
24 faith collaboration period, as well as any evidence that a
25 new community college baccalaureate program will be
26 duplicative, as set forth in paragraph (3) of subsection

1 (c). The State Board and the Board of Higher Education
2 shall consider this documentation in their application
3 review process. Based on information submitted by a
4 university, the State Board and the Board of Higher
5 Education may jointly or individually request that an
6 applicant continue working toward some form of
7 collaboration before proceeding in the application
8 process. Nothing in this paragraph (9) requires a
9 community college to enter into a partnership agreement or
10 expand an existing partnership agreement with a
11 university.

12 (c) The board of trustees shall demonstrate that the
13 community college district has the expertise, the resources,
14 and sufficient student demand to offer a baccalaureate degree.
15 An application for approval to the State Board shall include,
16 but is not limited to, all of the following:

17 (1) The community college district shall describe the
18 employment goals for those individuals that will complete
19 the baccalaureate program, including the types of
20 licenses, jobs, and career paths for which the program
21 will train graduates.

22 (2) The community college district shall describe how
23 the proposed baccalaureate degree program addresses an
24 unmet workforce need as specified in paragraph (2) of
25 subsection (b).

26 (3) The State Board and the Board of Higher Education

1 shall evaluate whether a proposed program is duplicative
2 based upon the following factors:

3 (A) A potential degree program shall be considered
4 duplicative if any of the following conditions are
5 met:

6 (i) The proposed degree program shares the
7 same 4-digit Classification of Instruction Program
8 (CIP) code as a degree program at a university or
9 community college within the community college's
10 district or within the following proximity:

11 (I) For the City Colleges of Chicago, the
12 proposed site at which the new degree program
13 will be offered is within a 20-mile radius of
14 a university site or community college site
15 outside of the City Colleges of Chicago.

16 (II) For all other community college
17 districts, the site at which the new degree
18 program will be offered is within a 40-mile
19 radius of a university site or community
20 college site outside of the community college
21 district.

22 (ii) The proposed degree program shares the
23 same 4-digit CIP code as an existing partnership
24 between the community college and a university.

25 (B) A proposed baccalaureate degree program
26 determined to be duplicative based upon the factors in

1 this paragraph (3) may proceed for consideration by
2 the State Board and the Board of Higher Education if it
3 addresses unmet workforce need and student demand, as
4 demonstrated in the feasibility study, after
5 consideration of the following factors in its
6 evaluation of the proposed program:

7 (i) The estimated average out-of-pocket costs
8 for students for net tuition and fees, including
9 any scholarships, tuition discounts, or financial
10 assistance, including Monetary Award Program and
11 Pell grants, available to students in the proposed
12 baccalaureate degree program, when compared to the
13 same baccalaureate degree program offered by a
14 university, a partnership agreement, or another
15 community college.

16 (ii) Available program capacity sufficient to
17 meet unmet workforce need and student demand, as
18 well as the ability of a university to develop a
19 new program or expand a current program to meet
20 the unmet workforce need or student demand in a
21 timely manner as outlined in the university's
22 reconsideration documentation.

23 (iii) Course scheduling flexibility and the
24 university's ability and willingness to offer
25 course scheduling options that meet students'
26 needs.

1 (iv) The mode of delivery of the program and
2 how this mode is able to meet students' needs.

3 (v) The accessibility of the proposed
4 baccalaureate degree program when compared to a
5 current degree program or partnership agreement at
6 a university or community college campus as it
7 pertains to students' needs.

8 (vi) Evaluation of the impact on existing
9 programs at community colleges and universities,
10 including a measurement of current transfer rates
11 to other community colleges and universities and
12 access for current programs to required learning
13 experiences, such as clinical placements.

14 (C) A proposed applied baccalaureate is not
15 considered duplicative if it does not share the same
16 6-digit CIP code with a university as outlined in this
17 paragraph (3).

18 (D) The State Board and the Board of Higher
19 Education shall use information gathered from the
20 application, documentation of good faith
21 collaboration, and reconsideration comments submitted
22 by universities to determine whether there is a
23 significant need to justify duplication. The State
24 Board and the Board of Higher Education may request
25 additional information from a university or a
26 community college to further examine duplication as a

1 part of their review process.

2 (4) The community college district shall provide
3 evidence that it has budgeted for financial support for
4 the program in a cost-effective manner. This shall
5 include, but not be limited to, faculty costs,
6 administrator costs, other personnel costs, equipment
7 costs, library costs, and other facilities and
8 instructional costs as directed by the State Board. The
9 community college district shall also demonstrate that it
10 has the infrastructure to support the program.

11 (5) The community college district shall provide
12 information demonstrating how student demand supports the
13 establishment of the baccalaureate program. The community
14 college district shall also describe the target population
15 of the proposed program.

16 (6) The community college district shall provide a
17 plan for attracting, recruiting, retaining, and completing
18 a diverse group of students.

19 (7) The community college district shall describe how
20 it has developed quality curricula that aligns with
21 federal, State, and local requirements, is responsive to
22 local workforce needs, and will prepare graduates with the
23 appropriate level of skill to meet their educational and
24 employment goals.

25 (8) The community college district shall document the
26 availability of faculty for teaching the program,

1 including the number of full-time faculty anticipated to
2 teach in the program, and a description of the faculty's
3 qualifications, including the highest degree earned,
4 teaching experience, professional experience, and licenses
5 held. The community college district shall also indicate
6 anticipated market salaries for each faculty position and
7 how faculty are to be evaluated.

8 (9) The community college district shall demonstrate
9 that the baccalaureate degree program is built on existing
10 associate degree programs and will result in the earning
11 of an associate degree after approximately 60 credit hours
12 as students matriculate toward baccalaureate degrees,
13 preparing graduates for professional and technical
14 employment and the opportunity to matriculate to graduate
15 degree programs, if applicable.

16 (d) A community college district is prohibited from using
17 semester credit hours generated in a baccalaureate degree
18 program for grants received pursuant to Section 2-16.02. A
19 baccalaureate degree program at a community college does not
20 qualify the community college or the students in the program
21 for State funding or assistance otherwise designated for
22 universities or university students.

23 (e) Excluding the City Colleges of Chicago, no community
24 college district may establish more than one community college
25 baccalaureate program within 3 years after the effective date
26 of this amendatory Act of the 104th General Assembly. Three

1 years after the effective date of this amendatory Act of the
2 104th General Assembly, a community college district, other
3 than the City Colleges of Chicago, may establish no more than
4 one additional baccalaureate program for a total of 2 programs
5 over the period, subject to the regional limitations in this
6 subsection (e).

7 Excluding the City Colleges of Chicago, each CCB Region
8 may establish no more than one baccalaureate degree in early
9 childhood education, one baccalaureate degree in
10 cybersecurity, and one baccalaureate degree in nursing within
11 3 years after the effective date of this amendatory Act of the
12 104th General Assembly. Three years after the effective date
13 of this amendatory Act of the 104th General Assembly, each CCB
14 Region, other than the City Colleges of Chicago, may establish
15 no more than one additional baccalaureate degree in early
16 childhood education, one additional baccalaureate degree in
17 cybersecurity, and one additional baccalaureate degree in
18 nursing.

19 Excluding the City of Colleges of Chicago, each CCB Region
20 is limited to the following number of community college
21 baccalaureate programs:

22 (1) CCB Region 1, 6 community college baccalaureate
23 programs.

24 (2) CCB Region 2, 7 community college baccalaureate
25 programs.

26 (3) CCB Region 3, 7 community college baccalaureate

1 programs.

2 (4) CCB Region 4, 6 community college baccalaureate
3 programs.

4 (5) CCB Region 5, 6 community college baccalaureate
5 programs.

6 (6) CCB Region 6, 5 community college baccalaureate
7 programs.

8 (7) CCB Region 7, 5 community college baccalaureate
9 programs.

10 (8) CCB Region 8, 4 community college baccalaureate
11 programs.

12 The City Colleges of Chicago may establish no more than 3
13 baccalaureate degree programs within 3 years after the
14 effective date of this amendatory Act of the 104th General
15 Assembly. Three years after of the effective date of this
16 amendatory Act of the 104th General Assembly, the City
17 Colleges of Chicago may establish no more than 2 additional
18 baccalaureate degree programs, for a total of 5 baccalaureate
19 degree programs.

20 The City Colleges of Chicago may establish no more than
21 one baccalaureate degree in early childhood education, one
22 baccalaureate degree in cybersecurity, and one baccalaureate
23 degree in nursing within 3 years after the effective date of
24 this amendatory Act of the 104th General Assembly. Three years
25 after the effective date of this amendatory Act of the 104th
26 General Assembly, the City Colleges of Chicago may offer one

1 additional baccalaureate degree in early childhood education,
2 for a total of 2 early childhood education baccalaureate
3 degrees. However, the City Colleges of Chicago may not
4 establish an early childhood education baccalaureate degree
5 program at Kennedy-King College or Olive-Harvey College.

6 Applied baccalaureate programs that do not meet the
7 duplicative criteria outlined in paragraph (3) of subsection
8 (c) are not subject to the limitations in this subsection (e).

9 A community college district may not offer a baccalaureate
10 degree whose modality is delivered primarily online.

11 The General Assembly may not modify the limitations on
12 community college baccalaureate degree programs that may be
13 approved by the State Board and Board of Higher Education
14 before the completion of the evaluation set forth in
15 subsection (g).

16 (f) A community college district that offers a
17 baccalaureate degree program shall submit an annual report to
18 the State Board, which shall include all of the following:

19 (1) The total number of students pursuing a bachelor's
20 degree in the community college district pursuant to this
21 Section.

22 (2) The total number of bachelor's degrees completed
23 in the community college district.

24 (3) Workforce data showing demand for the
25 baccalaureate degree programs offered in the community
26 college district.

1 (4) The average cost of tuition per credit hour for
2 the bachelor's degrees offered in the community college
3 district.

4 (5) If applicable, the comparable passage rates for
5 statewide and national licensure exams compared to the
6 State average.

7 (g) The State Board and the Board of Higher Education, in
8 conjunction with a third-party evaluator, shall conduct a
9 statewide evaluation of all baccalaureate degree programs
10 established under this Section. The results of the evaluation
11 shall be reported, in writing, on or before 5 years after the
12 effective date of this amendatory Act of the 104th General
13 Assembly to all of the following, in addition to being made
14 publicly available online:

15 (1) The Speaker of the House of Representatives.

16 (2) The Minority Leader of the House of
17 Representatives.

18 (3) The President of the Senate.

19 (4) The Minority Leader of the Senate.

20 (5) The Governor's Office of Management and Budget.

21 The evaluation shall include, but is not limited to, all
22 of the following:

23 (A) All baccalaureate degree programs implemented.

24 (B) Data related to applicants, admissions,
25 enrollment, mode of delivery, demographic characteristics
26 of students, and degree recipients.

1 (C) The extent to which each baccalaureate degree
2 program established under this Section fulfills identified
3 workforce demands that require 4-year baccalaureate
4 degrees.

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

7 (E) The total cost broken down by major expenditure of
8 each baccalaureate degree program and the funding sources
9 used to finance each program.

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

13 (G) Time-to-degree rates and completion rates for each
14 new baccalaureate degree program established under this
15 Section.

16 (H) The extent to which a baccalaureate degree program
17 established under this Section is in compliance with the
18 requirements of this Section.

19 (I) The extent to which the status of any partnership
20 agreements previously or presently maintained with other
21 State institutions of higher learning, including
22 enrollments and reasons for the dissolution of such
23 agreements if they have been dissolved due to the creation
24 of a new baccalaureate degree program.

25 (J) The extent to which the implementation of
26 community college baccalaureate degrees has had an impact

1 on universities.

2 A community college district shall submit the information
3 necessary to conduct the evaluation required under this
4 subsection (g), as determined by the evaluators, to the State
5 Board and the Board of Higher Education.

6 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon
7 becoming law.