



104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

HB5321

Introduced 2/10/2026, by Rep. Katie Stuart

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

105 ILCS 5/24-8.2 new

Amends the Employment of Teachers Article of the School Code. Provides that beginning with continuing education coursework commenced on or after July 1, 2026, a school district, special education cooperative, or other public educational employer may recognize graduate-level continuing education coursework for purposes of salary advancement or lane changes only if the continuing education coursework meets specified requirements. Provides that nothing in the provisions impairs the ability of the parties to a collective bargaining agreement to negotiate salary schedules or compensation structures, as long as any graduate-level continuing education coursework recognized for salary advancement or lane changes complies with those specified requirements. Allows the State Board of Education, in consultation with the Board of Higher Education, to adopt rules as necessary to implement the provisions. Effective July 1, 2026.

LRB104 20507 LNS 33980 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 24-8.2 as follows:

6 (105 ILCS 5/24-8.2 new)

7 Sec. 24-8.2. Continuing education coursework used for
8 salary increases.

9 (a) For purposes of this Section:

10 "Continuing education coursework" means any graduate-level
11 course completed by a licensed educator for the purpose of
12 salary advancement, a salary lane change, or other
13 compensation-related advancement under a collective bargaining
14 agreement, school board policy, or salary schedule.

15 "Graduate-level, degree-eligible credit" means academic
16 credit documented on an official academic transcript by a
17 regionally accredited institution of higher education that may
18 be applied toward a master's degree, education specialist
19 degree, or doctoral degree.

20 "Instructor of record" means an individual assigned
21 responsibility for academic oversight of a course, including
22 instruction, evaluation and feedback of participant work, and
23 the assignment of grades.

1 "Salary lane change" means the receiving of a pay increase
2 on a salary schedule by earning additional academic credits.

3 (b) Beginning with continuing education coursework
4 commenced on or after July 1, 2026, a school district, special
5 education cooperative, or other public educational employer
6 may recognize continuing education coursework for purposes of
7 salary advancement or salary lane changes only if the
8 continuing education coursework meets all of the following
9 requirements:

10 (1) The continuing education coursework is
11 graduate-level, degree-eligible credit offered by a
12 regionally accredited institution of higher education and
13 documented on an official academic transcript.

14 (2) The continuing education coursework results in a
15 letter grade issued by the institution of higher
16 education. Coursework graded solely on a pass or fail,
17 satisfactory or unsatisfactory, or completion basis is not
18 eligible.

19 (3) The continuing education coursework includes an
20 instructor of record who:

21 (A) is a credentialed educator holding a master's
22 degree or higher and is academically qualified to
23 teach the continuing education course, with
24 demonstrated experience in the content area or areas
25 of the continuing education course;

26 (B) provides substantive instructional support to

1 the participating educator throughout the period of
2 continuing education course enrollment; and

3 (C) evaluates participant work and provides
4 individualized, written feedback aligned to continuing
5 education course objectives.

6 (c) Nothing in this Section impairs the ability of the
7 parties to a collective bargaining agreement to negotiate
8 salary schedules or compensation structures, as long as any
9 continuing education coursework recognized for salary
10 advancement or salary lane changes complies with the
11 requirements of this Section.

12 (d) The State Board of Education, in consultation with the
13 Board of Higher Education, may adopt rules as necessary to
14 implement this Section, including standards for documentation,
15 transcript verification, institutional accreditation, and
16 compliance monitoring.

17 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect July 1,
18 2026.