



## 104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

SB2977

Introduced 1/27/2026, by Sen. Michael W. Halpin

#### SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

5 ILCS 100/5-45.71 new  
110 ILCS 205/9.47 new

Amends the Board of Higher Education Act. Subject to appropriation, requires the Board of Higher Education to create a school counselor stipend program. Provides that an educator preparation program shall notify the Board of all eligible students and eligible cooperating school counselors who qualify for the stipend program. Sets forth requirements for the disbursement of stipend funds under the program. Provides that an educator preparation program may not prohibit an eligible student from participating in the stipend program or from receiving a stipend from the stipend program. Requires an eligible cooperating school counselor who receives a stipend to complete specific training. Requires the Board to issue a report, in collaboration with the State Board of Education, evaluating the impact of the stipend program. Permits the Board to adopt emergency rules regarding the administration of the stipend program in certain circumstances. Amends the Illinois Administrative Procedure Act to make corresponding changes. Effective immediately.

LRB104 20385 LNS 33843 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 5. The Illinois Administrative Procedure Act is  
5 amended by adding Section 5-45.71 as follows:

6 (5 ILCS 100/5-45.71 new)

7 Sec. 5-45.71. Emergency rulemaking; school counselor  
8 stipend program. To provide for the expeditious and timely  
9 implementation of Section 9.47 of the Board of Higher  
10 Education Act, emergency rules implementing Section 9.47 of  
11 the Board of Higher Education Act may be adopted in accordance  
12 with Section 5-45 by the Board of Higher Education. The  
13 adoption of emergency rules authorized by Section 5-45 and  
14 this Section is deemed to be necessary for the public  
15 interest, safety, and welfare.

16 This Section is repealed one year after the effective date  
17 of this amendatory Act of the 104th General Assembly.

18 Section 10. The Board of Higher Education Act is amended  
19 by adding Section 9.47 as follows:

20 (110 ILCS 205/9.47 new)

21 Sec. 9.47. School counselor stipend program.

1       (a) As used in this Section:

2       "Educator preparation program" means an approved educator  
3 preparation program offered by a recognized school or  
4 institution under Article 21B of the School Code.

5       "Eligible cooperating school counselor" means an  
6 individual who (i) is a school counselor as defined in Section  
7 10-22.24a of the School Code or holds a Professional Educator  
8 License with a school support personnel endorsement in the  
9 area of school counselor under Section 21B-25 of the School  
10 Code and (ii) is matched with an eligible student.

11       "Eligible student" means a student who is enrolled in an  
12 educator preparation program, who is maintaining satisfactory  
13 academic progress, who intends to work as a school counselor  
14 in this State, who is placed in a school counselor internship,  
15 and who is not contracted as the school counselor of record for  
16 the school counseling placement.

17       (b) Subject to appropriation, the Board shall create a  
18 school counselor stipend program to alleviate the financial  
19 burden of becoming a school counselor, to encourage students  
20 to pursue careers as school counselors to alleviate this  
21 State's school counselor shortage, and to encourage school  
22 counselors to be matched with school counselor interns.

23       (c) An educator preparation program shall notify the Board  
24 of all eligible students and eligible cooperating school  
25 counselors who qualify for the stipend program.

26       (d) Under the stipend program and subject to available

1 appropriations, the Board shall disburse to each educator  
2 preparation program funds to distribute to each eligible  
3 student a stipend of \$5,000 per semester for up to 2  
4 consecutive semesters, plus additional funds to pay the direct  
5 costs of operating the stipend program.

6 (e) If there is a surplus appropriated in a fiscal year for  
7 the stipend program, then the Board shall increase the amount  
8 disbursed to each educator preparation program by the same  
9 percentage that the surplus bears to the amount required to  
10 fully fund the total number of eligible students who qualify  
11 for the stipend program that fiscal year. An educator  
12 preparation program shall increase the stipend amount  
13 distributed to each eligible student in proportion to the  
14 surplus.

15 (f) If the amount appropriated in a fiscal year for the  
16 stipend program is insufficient to fully fund stipends for the  
17 total number of eligible students for that fiscal year, then  
18 the Board shall prioritize eligible students based on  
19 demonstrated financial need reported by each educator  
20 preparation program.

21 (g) Funds not distributed in a particular fiscal year by  
22 an educator preparation program under this Section shall be  
23 returned to the Board to be used for the subsequent fiscal  
24 year's stipend program.

25 (h) An educator preparation program may not prohibit an  
26 eligible student from participating in the stipend program or

1 from receiving a stipend from the stipend program.

2 (i) Under the stipend program and subject to available  
3 appropriations, the Board shall disburse funds to the State  
4 Board of Education, who shall disburse funds to each school  
5 district employing an eligible cooperating school counselor to  
6 distribute to each eligible cooperating school counselor a  
7 stipend of up to \$1,000 per semester for up to 2 consecutive  
8 semesters per academic year. The school district shall  
9 distribute stipend funds to an eligible cooperating school  
10 counselor in one payment.

11 (j) An eligible cooperating school counselor who receives  
12 a stipend must complete State-approved, evidence-based  
13 training that covers basic responsibilities of a cooperating  
14 school counselor. The State Board of Education shall develop  
15 training that meets the criteria of this subsection and that  
16 is available to cooperating school counselors.

17 (k) If there is a surplus appropriated in a fiscal year for  
18 the stipend program, then the Board shall increase the amount  
19 disbursed to the State Board of Education to disburse to each  
20 school district by the same percentage that the surplus bears  
21 to the amount required to fully fund the total number of  
22 eligible cooperating school counselors who qualify for the  
23 stipend program that fiscal year. A school district shall  
24 increase the stipend amount distributed to each eligible  
25 cooperating school counselor in proportion to the surplus.

26 (l) If the amount appropriated in a fiscal year for the

1 stipend program is insufficient to fully fund stipends for the  
2 total number of eligible cooperating school counselors for  
3 that fiscal year, then the Board shall reduce the amount  
4 disbursed to the State Board of Education to disburse to each  
5 school district by the same percentage that the deficit bears  
6 to the amount required to fully fund the total number of  
7 eligible cooperating school counselors who qualify for the  
8 stipend program. A school district shall reduce the stipend  
9 amount distributed to each eligible cooperating school  
10 counselor in proportion to the deficit.

11 (m) Nothing in this Section is intended to preclude an  
12 educator preparation program from providing an eligible  
13 cooperating school counselor with additional incentives.

14 (n) An eligible cooperating school counselor participating  
15 in the stipend program may receive professional development  
16 hours for completing cooperating school counselor training.

17 (o) Subject to available appropriations, the Board shall  
18 issue a report evaluating the impact of the stipend program on  
19 educator preparation programs, including enrollment and  
20 completion rates, hiring rates, and retention rates. The Board  
21 shall issue this report in collaboration with the State Board  
22 of Education. The Board shall submit this report to the  
23 General Assembly and Governor on or before June 30 of the  
24 fiscal year following the third consecutive fiscal year during  
25 which the stipend program has received funding of at least  
26 \$2,000,000.

1       (p) The Board shall provide guidance and technical  
2 assistance to educator preparation programs on the  
3 administration of the stipend program.

4       (q) The Board shall adopt rules regarding the  
5 administration of the stipend program, including, but not  
6 limited to, the allocation of funds for the stipend program.

7       (r) If the stipend program is funded prior to the adoption  
8 of rules under subsection (q), emergency rules regarding the  
9 administration of the stipend program may be adopted by the  
10 Board, subject to the provisions of Section 5-45 of the  
11 Illinois Administrative Procedure Act.

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