

SB3651



104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

SB3651

Introduced 2/5/2026, by Sen. Chris Balkema

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

105 ILCS 5/21B-20

Amends the Educator Licensure Article of the School Code. Provides that an applicant for a Substitute Teaching License who holds a valid paraprofessional educator endorsement on an Educator License with Stipulations and who has been working in the capacity of a paraprofessional in this State for a minimum of 5 school years does not need to hold a bachelor's degree or higher from a regionally accredited institution of higher education or be enrolled in an approved educator preparation program in this State and have earned at least 90 credit hours to be issued a Substitute Teaching License.

LRB104 18544 LNS 31987 b

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 changing Section
5 21B-20 as follows:

6 (105 ILCS 5/21B-20)

7 Sec. 21B-20. Types of licenses. The State Board of
8 Education shall implement a system of educator licensure,
9 whereby individuals employed in school districts who are
10 required to be licensed must have one of the following
11 licenses: (i) a professional educator license; (ii) an
12 educator license with stipulations; (iii) a substitute
13 teaching license; or (iv) until June 30, 2028, a short-term
14 substitute teaching license. References in law regarding
15 individuals certified or certificated or required to be
16 certified or certificated under Article 21 of this Code shall
17 also include individuals licensed or required to be licensed
18 under this Article. The first year of all licenses ends on June
19 30 following one full year of the license being issued.

20 The State Board of Education, in consultation with the
21 State Educator Preparation and Licensure Board, may adopt such
22 rules as may be necessary to govern the requirements for
23 licenses and endorsements under this Section.

1 (1) Professional Educator License. Persons who (i)
2 have successfully completed an approved educator
3 preparation program and are recommended for licensure by
4 the Illinois institution offering the educator preparation
5 program, (ii) have successfully completed the required
6 testing under Section 21B-30 of this Code, (iii) have
7 successfully completed coursework on the psychology of,
8 the identification of, and the methods of instruction for
9 the exceptional child, including, without limitation,
10 children with learning disabilities, (iv) have
11 successfully completed coursework in methods of reading
12 and reading in the content area, and (v) have met all other
13 criteria established by rule of the State Board of
14 Education shall be issued a Professional Educator License.
15 Persons seeking a Professional Educator License with a
16 school support personnel endorsement or chief school
17 business official endorsement are exempt from the
18 requirements in items (iii) and (iv). All Professional
19 Educator Licenses are valid until June 30 immediately
20 following 5 years of the license being issued. The
21 Professional Educator License shall be endorsed with
22 specific areas and grade levels in which the individual is
23 eligible to practice. For an early childhood education
24 endorsement, an individual may satisfy the student
25 teaching requirement of his or her early childhood teacher
26 preparation program through placement in a setting with

1 children from birth through grade 2, and the individual
2 may be paid and receive credit while student teaching. The
3 student teaching experience must meet the requirements of
4 and be approved by the individual's early childhood
5 teacher preparation program. No institution of higher
6 education shall establish or maintain any policy which
7 requires student teaching for preservice teachers to be
8 unpaid.

9 Individuals can receive subsequent endorsements on the
10 Professional Educator License. Subsequent endorsements
11 shall require a minimum of 24 semester hours of coursework
12 in the endorsement area and passage of the applicable
13 content area test, unless otherwise specified by rule.

14 (2) Educator License with Stipulations. An Educator
15 License with Stipulations shall be issued an endorsement
16 that limits the license holder to one particular position
17 or does not require completion of an approved educator
18 program or both.

19 An individual with an Educator License with
20 Stipulations must not be employed by a school district or
21 any other entity to replace any presently employed teacher
22 who otherwise would not be replaced for any reason.

23 An Educator License with Stipulations may be issued
24 with the following endorsements:

25 (A) (Blank).

26 (B) Alternative provisional educator. An

1 alternative provisional educator endorsement on an
2 Educator License with Stipulations may be issued to an
3 applicant who, at the time of applying for the
4 endorsement, has done all of the following:

5 (i) Graduated from a regionally accredited
6 college or university with a minimum of a
7 bachelor's degree.

8 (ii) Successfully completed the first phase of
9 the Alternative Educator Licensure Program for
10 Teachers, as described in Section 21B-50 of this
11 Code.

12 (iii) Passed a content area test, as required
13 under Section 21B-30 of this Code.

14 The alternative provisional educator endorsement is
15 valid for 2 years of teaching and may be renewed for a
16 third year by an individual meeting the requirements set
17 forth in Section 21B-50 of this Code.

18 (C) Alternative provisional superintendent. An
19 alternative provisional superintendent endorsement on
20 an Educator License with Stipulations entitles the
21 holder to serve only as a superintendent or assistant
22 superintendent in a school district's central office.
23 This endorsement may only be issued to an applicant
24 who, at the time of applying for the endorsement, has
25 done all of the following:

26 (i) Graduated from a regionally accredited

1 college or university with a minimum of a master's
2 degree in a management field other than education.

3 (ii) Been employed for a period of at least 5
4 years in a management level position in a field
5 other than education.

6 (iii) Successfully completed the first phase
7 of an alternative route to superintendent
8 endorsement program, as provided in Section 21B-55
9 of this Code.

10 (iv) Passed a content area test required under
11 Section 21B-30 of this Code.

12 The endorsement is valid for 2 fiscal years in
13 order to complete one full year of serving as a
14 superintendent or assistant superintendent.

15 (D) (Blank).

16 (E) Career and technical educator. A career and
17 technical educator endorsement on an Educator License
18 with Stipulations may be issued to an applicant who
19 has a minimum of 60 semester hours of coursework from a
20 regionally accredited institution of higher education
21 or an accredited trade and technical institution and
22 has a minimum of 2,000 hours of experience outside of
23 education in each area to be taught.

24 The career and technical educator endorsement on
25 an Educator License with Stipulations is valid until
26 June 30 immediately following 5 years of the

1 endorsement being issued and may be renewed.

2 An individual who holds a valid career and
3 technical educator endorsement on an Educator License
4 with Stipulations but does not hold a bachelor's
5 degree may substitute teach in career and technical
6 education classrooms.

7 An individual who holds a valid career and
8 technical educator endorsement on an Educator License
9 with Stipulations is entitled to all of the rights and
10 privileges granted to a holder of a Professional
11 Educator License.

12 (F) (Blank).

13 (G) Transitional bilingual educator. A
14 transitional bilingual educator endorsement on an
15 Educator License with Stipulations may be issued for
16 the purpose of providing instruction in accordance
17 with Article 14C of this Code to an applicant who
18 provides satisfactory evidence that he or she meets
19 all of the following requirements:

20 (i) Possesses adequate speaking, reading, and
21 writing ability in the language other than English
22 in which transitional bilingual education is
23 offered.

24 (ii) Has the ability to successfully
25 communicate in English.

26 (iii) Either possessed, within 5 years

1 previous to his or her applying for a transitional
2 bilingual educator endorsement, a valid and
3 comparable teaching certificate or comparable
4 authorization issued by a foreign country or holds
5 a degree from an institution of higher learning in
6 a foreign country that the State Educator
7 Preparation and Licensure Board determines to be
8 the equivalent of a bachelor's degree from a
9 regionally accredited institution of higher
10 learning in the United States.

11 A transitional bilingual educator endorsement
12 shall be valid for prekindergarten through grade 12,
13 is valid until June 30 immediately following 5 years
14 of the endorsement being issued, and shall not be
15 renewed.

16 Persons holding a transitional bilingual educator
17 endorsement shall not be employed to replace any
18 presently employed teacher who otherwise would not be
19 replaced for any reason.

20 (H) Language endorsement. In an effort to
21 alleviate the shortage of teachers speaking a language
22 other than English in the public schools, an
23 individual who holds an Educator License with
24 Stipulations may also apply for a language
25 endorsement, provided that the applicant provides
26 satisfactory evidence that he or she meets all of the

1 following requirements:

2 (i) Holds a transitional bilingual
3 endorsement.

4 (ii) Has demonstrated proficiency in the
5 language for which the endorsement is to be issued
6 by passing the applicable language content test
7 required by the State Board of Education.

8 (iii) Holds a bachelor's degree or higher from
9 a regionally accredited institution of higher
10 education or, for individuals educated in a
11 country other than the United States, holds a
12 degree from an institution of higher learning in a
13 foreign country that the State Educator
14 Preparation and Licensure Board determines to be
15 the equivalent of a bachelor's degree from a
16 regionally accredited institution of higher
17 learning in the United States.

18 (iv) (Blank).

19 A language endorsement on an Educator License with
20 Stipulations is valid for prekindergarten through
21 grade 12 for the same validity period as the
22 individual's transitional bilingual educator
23 endorsement on the Educator License with Stipulations
24 and shall not be renewed.

25 (I) Visiting international educator. A visiting
26 international educator endorsement on an Educator

1 License with Stipulations may be issued to an
2 individual who is being recruited by a particular
3 school district that conducts formal recruitment
4 programs outside of the United States to secure the
5 services of qualified teachers and who meets all of
6 the following requirements:

7 (i) Holds the equivalent of a minimum of a
8 bachelor's degree issued in the United States.

9 (ii) Has been prepared as a teacher at the
10 grade level for which he or she will be employed.

11 (iii) Has adequate content knowledge in the
12 subject to be taught.

13 (iv) Has an adequate command of the English
14 language.

15 A holder of a visiting international educator
16 endorsement on an Educator License with Stipulations
17 shall be permitted to teach in bilingual education
18 programs in the language that was the medium of
19 instruction in his or her teacher preparation program,
20 provided that he or she passes the English Language
21 Proficiency Examination or another test of writing
22 skills in English identified by the State Board of
23 Education, in consultation with the State Educator
24 Preparation and Licensure Board.

25 A visiting international educator endorsement on
26 an Educator License with Stipulations is valid for 5

1 years and shall not be renewed.

2 (J) Paraprofessional educator. A paraprofessional
3 educator endorsement on an Educator License with
4 Stipulations may be issued to an applicant who holds a
5 high school diploma or its recognized equivalent and
6 (i) holds an associate's degree or a minimum of 60
7 semester hours of credit from a regionally accredited
8 institution of higher education; (ii) has passed a
9 paraprofessional competency test under subsection
10 (c-5) of Section 21B-30; or (iii) is at least 18 years
11 of age and will be using the Educator License with
12 Stipulations exclusively for grades prekindergarten
13 through grade 8, until the individual reaches the age
14 of 19 years and otherwise meets the criteria for a
15 paraprofessional educator endorsement pursuant to this
16 subparagraph (J). The paraprofessional educator
17 endorsement is valid until June 30 immediately
18 following 5 years of the endorsement being issued and
19 may be renewed through application and payment of the
20 appropriate fee, as required under Section 21B-40 of
21 this Code. An individual who holds only a
22 paraprofessional educator endorsement is not subject
23 to additional requirements in order to renew the
24 endorsement.

25 (K) Chief school business official. A chief school
26 business official endorsement on an Educator License

1 with Stipulations may be issued to an applicant who
2 qualifies by having a master's degree or higher, 2
3 years of full-time administrative experience in school
4 business management or 2 years of university-approved
5 practical experience, and a minimum of 24 semester
6 hours of graduate credit in a program approved by the
7 State Board of Education for the preparation of school
8 business administrators and by passage of the
9 applicable State tests, including an applicable
10 content area test.

11 The chief school business official endorsement may
12 also be affixed to the Educator License with
13 Stipulations of any holder who qualifies by having a
14 master's degree in business administration, finance,
15 accounting, or public administration and who completes
16 an additional 6 semester hours of internship in school
17 business management from a regionally accredited
18 institution of higher education and passes the
19 applicable State tests, including an applicable
20 content area test. This endorsement shall be required
21 for any individual employed as a chief school business
22 official.

23 The chief school business official endorsement on
24 an Educator License with Stipulations is valid until
25 June 30 immediately following 5 years of the
26 endorsement being issued and may be renewed if the

1 license holder completes renewal requirements as
2 required for individuals who hold a Professional
3 Educator License endorsed for chief school business
4 official under Section 21B-45 of this Code and such
5 rules as may be adopted by the State Board of
6 Education.

7 The State Board of Education shall adopt any rules
8 necessary to implement Public Act 100-288.

9 (L) Provisional in-state educator. A provisional
10 in-state educator endorsement on an Educator License
11 with Stipulations may be issued to a candidate who has
12 completed an Illinois-approved educator preparation
13 program at an Illinois institution of higher education
14 and who has not successfully completed an
15 evidence-based assessment of teacher effectiveness but
16 who meets all of the following requirements:

17 (i) Holds at least a bachelor's degree.

18 (ii) Has completed an approved educator
19 preparation program at an Illinois institution.

20 (iii) Has passed an applicable content area
21 test, as required by Section 21B-30 of this Code.

22 (iv) Has attempted an evidence-based
23 assessment of teacher effectiveness and received a
24 minimum score on that assessment, as established
25 by the State Board of Education in consultation
26 with the State Educator Preparation and Licensure

1 Board.

2 A provisional in-state educator endorsement on an
3 Educator License with Stipulations is valid for one
4 full fiscal year after the date of issuance and may not
5 be renewed.

6 (M) (Blank).

7 (N) Specialized services. A specialized services
8 endorsement on an Educator License with Stipulations
9 may be issued as defined and specified by rule.

10 (O) Provisional career and technical educator. A
11 provisional career and technical educator endorsement
12 on an Educator License with Stipulations may be issued
13 to an applicant who has a minimum of 8,000 hours of
14 work experience in the skill for which the applicant
15 is seeking the endorsement. Each employing school
16 board and regional office of education shall provide
17 verification, in writing, to the State Superintendent
18 of Education at the time the application is submitted
19 that no qualified teacher holding a Professional
20 Educator License or an Educator License with
21 Stipulations with a career and technical educator
22 endorsement is available to teach and that actual
23 circumstances require such issuance.

24 A provisional career and technical educator
25 endorsement on an Educator License with Stipulations
26 is valid until June 30 immediately following 5 years

1 of the endorsement being issued and may be renewed.

2 An individual who holds a provisional career and
3 technical educator endorsement on an Educator License
4 with Stipulations may teach as a substitute teacher in
5 career and technical education classrooms.

6 An individual who holds a provisional career and
7 technical educator endorsement on an Educator License
8 with Stipulations is entitled to all of the rights and
9 privileges granted to a holder of a Professional
10 Educator License.

11 (3) Substitute Teaching License. A Substitute Teaching
12 License may be issued to qualified applicants for
13 substitute teaching in all grades of the public schools,
14 prekindergarten through grade 12. Substitute Teaching
15 Licenses are not eligible for endorsements. Applicants for
16 a Substitute Teaching License must hold a bachelor's
17 degree or higher from a regionally accredited institution
18 of higher education or must be enrolled in an approved
19 educator preparation program in this State and have earned
20 at least 90 credit hours, unless the applicant holds a
21 valid paraprofessional educator endorsement on an Educator
22 License with Stipulations and has been working in the
23 capacity of a paraprofessional in this State for a minimum
24 of 5 school years.

25 Substitute Teaching Licenses are valid for 5 years.

26 Substitute Teaching Licenses are valid for substitute

1 teaching in every county of this State. If an individual
2 has had his or her Professional Educator License or
3 Educator License with Stipulations suspended or revoked,
4 then that individual is not eligible to obtain a
5 Substitute Teaching License.

6 A substitute teacher may only teach in the place of a
7 licensed teacher who is under contract with the employing
8 board. If, however, there is no licensed teacher under
9 contract because of an emergency situation, then a
10 district may employ a substitute teacher for no longer
11 than 30 calendar days per each vacant position in the
12 district if the district notifies the appropriate regional
13 office of education within 5 business days after the
14 employment of the substitute teacher in that vacant
15 position. A district may continue to employ that same
16 substitute teacher in that same vacant position for 90
17 calendar days or until the end of the semester, whichever
18 is greater, if, prior to the expiration of the
19 30-calendar-day period then current, the district files a
20 written request with the appropriate regional office of
21 education for a 30-calendar-day extension on the basis
22 that the position remains vacant and the district
23 continues to actively seek qualified candidates and
24 provides documentation that it has provided training
25 specific to the position, including training on meeting
26 the needs of students with disabilities and English

1 learners if applicable. Each extension request shall be
2 granted in writing by the regional office of education. An
3 emergency situation is one in which an unforeseen vacancy
4 has occurred and (i) a teacher is unexpectedly unable to
5 fulfill his or her contractual duties or (ii) teacher
6 capacity needs of the district exceed previous indications
7 or vacancies are unfilled due to a lack of qualified
8 candidates, and the district is actively engaged in
9 advertising to hire a fully licensed teacher for the
10 vacant position.

11 There is no limit on the number of days that a
12 substitute teacher may teach in a single school district,
13 provided that no substitute teacher may teach for longer
14 than 120 days beginning with the 2021-2022 school year
15 through the 2022-2023 school year, otherwise 90 school
16 days for any one licensed teacher under contract in the
17 same school year. A substitute teacher who holds a
18 Professional Educator License or Educator License with
19 Stipulations shall not teach for more than 120 school days
20 for any one licensed teacher under contract in the same
21 school year. The limitations in this paragraph (3) on the
22 number of days a substitute teacher may be employed do not
23 apply to any school district operating under Article 34 of
24 this Code.

25 A school district may not require an individual who
26 holds a valid Professional Educator License or Educator

1 License with Stipulations to seek or hold a Substitute
2 Teaching License to teach as a substitute teacher.

3 (4) Short-Term Substitute Teaching License. Beginning
4 on July 1, 2018 and until June 30, 2028, applicants may
5 apply to the State Board of Education for issuance of a
6 Short-Term Substitute Teaching License. A Short-Term
7 Substitute Teaching License may be issued to a qualified
8 applicant for substitute teaching in all grades of the
9 public schools, prekindergarten through grade 12.
10 Short-Term Substitute Teaching Licenses are not eligible
11 for endorsements. Applicants for a Short-Term Substitute
12 Teaching License must hold an associate's degree or have
13 completed at least 60 credit hours from a regionally
14 accredited institution of higher education.

15 Short-Term Substitute Teaching Licenses are valid for
16 substitute teaching in every county of this State. If an
17 individual has had his or her Professional Educator
18 License or Educator License with Stipulations suspended or
19 revoked, then that individual is not eligible to obtain a
20 Short-Term Substitute Teaching License.

21 The provisions of Sections 10-21.9 and 34-18.5 of this
22 Code apply to short-term substitute teachers.

23 An individual holding a Short-Term Substitute Teaching
24 License may teach no more than 15 consecutive days per
25 licensed teacher who is under contract. For teacher
26 absences lasting 6 or more days per licensed teacher who

1 is under contract, a school district may not hire an
2 individual holding a Short-Term Substitute Teaching
3 License, unless the Governor has declared a disaster due
4 to a public health emergency pursuant to Section 7 of the
5 Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act. An individual
6 holding a Short-Term Substitute Teaching License must
7 complete the training program under Section 10-20.67 or
8 34-18.60 of this Code to be eligible to teach at a public
9 school. Short-Term Substitute Teaching Licenses under this
10 Section are valid for 5 years.

11 (Source: P.A. 103-111, eff. 6-29-23; 103-154, eff. 6-30-23;
12 103-193, eff. 1-1-24; 103-564, eff. 11-17-23; 103-617, eff.
13 7-1-24; 104-128, eff. 1-1-26; 104-316, eff. 8-15-25; revised
14 11-20-25.)