



103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2023 and 2024

HB1640

Introduced 2/1/2023, by Rep. Blaine Wilhour

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

105 ILCS 5/11E-140 new

Creates the Efficient School District Commission. Provides for the membership and support of the Commission. Requires the Commission to make recommendations to the Governor, the General Assembly, and the electorate on the number of school districts in this State and where reorganization and realignment of school districts into unit districts would be beneficial. Sets forth what areas the recommendations must focus on, including drafting recommendations to reduce the statewide total number of school districts through the reorganization of school districts into unit districts. Provides that, on or before May 1, 2025, the Commission must vote on its recommendations and file a report with the Governor and the General Assembly. Provides that if the Commission adopts the recommendations by an affirmative vote of at least 13 of its members, then the Commission's specific recommendations for reorganization of school districts into unit districts shall be filed with the appropriate regional superintendent of schools. Sets forth the regional superintendent's and State Superintendent of Education's duties with respect to the recommendations. Repeals these provisions on January 31, 2026. Effective immediately.

LRB103 05726 RJT 50746 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 1. This Act may be referred to as the Classrooms
5 First Act.

6 Section 5. The School Code is amended by adding Section
7 11E-140 as follows:

8 (105 ILCS 5/11E-140 new)

9 Sec. 11E-140. Efficient School District Commission.

10 (a) The Efficient School District Commission is created.
11 The purpose of the Commission is to provide recommendations to
12 the Governor, the General Assembly, and the electorate
13 regarding the number of school districts in this State and
14 where the reorganization and realignment of school districts
15 into unit districts would be beneficial. The Commission shall
16 consist of all of the following voting members:

17 (1) One member appointed by the Governor, who shall
18 serve as the chairperson.

19 (2) One member appointed by the State Board of
20 Education.

21 (3) One member appointed by the Speaker of the House
22 of Representatives.

1 (4) One member appointed by the Minority Leader of the
2 House of Representatives.

3 (5) One member appointed by the President of the
4 Senate.

5 (6) One member appointed by the Minority Leader of the
6 Senate.

7 (7) A representative appointed by the head of the
8 largest statewide professional teachers' organization, as
9 measured by the number of members reported in its most
10 recent federal Form LM-2 Labor Organization Annual Report.

11 (8) A representative appointed by the head of the
12 second largest statewide professional teachers'
13 organization, as measured by the number of members
14 reported in its most recent federal Form LM-2 Labor
15 Organization Annual Report.

16 (9) A representative appointed by the head of an
17 organization that represents school boards, selected by
18 the State Superintendent of Education.

19 (10) A representative appointed by the head of a
20 statewide organization that represents school principals,
21 selected by the State Superintendent of Education.

22 (11) A parent of a child enrolled in or a teacher or an
23 administrator employed by a school located in the West
24 Cook region of the State Board of Education's Statewide
25 System of Support Fiscal Agents (Region 1-B-B), appointed
26 by the Governor.

1 (12) A parent of a child enrolled in or a teacher or an
2 administrator employed by a school located in the South
3 Cook region of the State Board of Education's Statewide
4 System of Support Fiscal Agents (Region 1-B-C), appointed
5 by the Governor.

6 (13) A parent of a child enrolled in or a teacher or an
7 administrator employed by a school located in the North
8 Cook region of the State Board of Education's Statewide
9 System of Support Fiscal Agents (Region 1-B-D), appointed
10 by the Governor.

11 (14) A parent of a child enrolled in or a teacher or an
12 administrator employed by a school located in the
13 Northeast region of the State Board of Education's
14 Statewide System of Support Fiscal Agents (Area 1-C),
15 appointed by the Governor.

16 (15) A parent of a child enrolled in or a teacher or an
17 administrator employed by a school located in the
18 Northwest region of the State Board of Education's
19 Statewide System of Support Fiscal Agents (Area 2),
20 appointed by the Governor.

21 (16) A parent of a child enrolled in or a teacher or an
22 administrator employed by a school located in the West
23 Central region of the State Board of Education's Statewide
24 System of Support Fiscal Agents (Area 3), appointed by the
25 Governor.

26 (17) A parent of a child enrolled in or a teacher or an

1 administrator employed by a school located in the East
2 Central region of the State Board of Education's Statewide
3 System of Support Fiscal Agents (Area 4), appointed by the
4 Governor.

5 (18) A parent of a child enrolled in or a teacher or an
6 administrator employed by a school located in the
7 Southwest region of the State Board of Education's
8 Statewide System of Support Fiscal Agents (Area 5),
9 appointed by the Governor.

10 (19) A parent of a child enrolled in or a teacher or an
11 administrator employed by a school located in the
12 Southeast region of the State Board of Education's
13 Statewide System of Support Fiscal Agents (Area 6),
14 appointed by the Governor.

15 (20) A representative appointed by the head of an
16 association that represents school business officials,
17 selected by the State Superintendent of Education.

18 (21) A representative appointed by the head of an
19 association that represents school administrators,
20 selected by the State Superintendent of Education.

21 (22) A representative appointed by the head of an
22 association that represents administrators of special
23 education, selected by the State Superintendent of
24 Education.

25 (23) A representative appointed by the head of a
26 statewide parent organization, selected by the State

1 Superintendent of Education.

2 (24) A representative appointed by the head of an
3 organization that represents high school districts,
4 selected by the State Superintendent of Education.

5 (25) A representative appointed by the head of an
6 association that represents regional superintendents of
7 schools, selected by the State Superintendent of
8 Education.

9 Members shall serve without compensation, but shall be
10 reimbursed for their reasonable and necessary expenses from
11 funds appropriated for that purpose. Members shall be
12 reimbursed for their travel expenses from appropriations to
13 the State Board of Education made available for that purpose
14 and subject to the rules of the appropriate travel control
15 board.

16 The Commission shall meet at the call of the chairperson,
17 with the initial meeting to occur within 90 days after the
18 effective date of this amendatory Act of the 103rd General
19 Assembly. The Commission shall hold public hearings throughout
20 the State with at least one public hearing in each of the 9
21 regions of the State Board of Education's Statewide System of
22 Support Fiscal Agents that do not include the Chicago region
23 (Region 1-A).

24 The State Board shall provide administrative assistance
25 and necessary staff support services to the Commission.

26 (b) The Efficient School District Commission's

1 recommendations must take into consideration the school needs
2 and conditions in the affected districts and the surrounding
3 area, the division of funds and assets that will result from
4 the action described in the petition, the best interests of
5 the schools in the area, and the best interests and the
6 educational welfare of pupils residing in the area and must
7 focus on all of the following areas:

8 (1) Reducing the money spent on the duplication of
9 efforts.

10 (2) Improving the education of students by having
11 fewer obstacles between qualified teachers and their
12 students.

13 (3) Lowering the property tax burden.

14 (4) Providing recommendations on what the net cost
15 savings of realignment is to this State.

16 (5) With a view toward reducing unnecessary
17 administrative costs, improving the education of students,
18 and lowering the property tax burden, drafting specific
19 recommendations to reduce the statewide total number of
20 school districts through the reorganization of school
21 districts into unit districts under Section 11E-25. Each
22 recommendation under this paragraph (5) must include all
23 of the following:

24 (A) A request to submit a proposition at the next
25 general election for the purpose of voting for or
26 against the establishment of a combined unit district.

1 (B) A description of the territory comprising the
2 districts proposed to be dissolved and those to be
3 created into unit districts, which, for an entire
4 district, may be a general reference to all of the
5 territory included within that district.

6 (C) A specification of the maximum tax rates the
7 proposed unit district or districts are authorized to
8 levy for various purposes and, if applicable, the
9 specifications related to the Property Tax Extension
10 Limitation Law, in accordance with Section 11E-80.

11 The Commission may not make any recommendations under this
12 subsection that would provide for the consolidation of
13 individual schools or that would result in the consolidation
14 of current unit districts.

15 (c) On or before May 1, 2025, the Efficient School
16 District Commission must vote on its recommendations and file
17 a report with the Governor and the General Assembly. If the
18 Commission adopts the report recommendations by an affirmative
19 vote of at least 13 of its members, then the Commission's
20 specific recommendations for reorganization of school
21 districts into unit districts under paragraph (5) of
22 subsection (b) shall be filed with the appropriate regional
23 superintendent of schools in the same form as petitions filed
24 under Section 11E-35. A copy of the Commission's specific
25 recommendations shall be provided to the regional
26 superintendent of schools of each educational service region

1 situated in the territory described in the specific
2 recommendation or that part of the territory in which the
3 greater percentage of equalized assessed valuation is
4 situated. Petitions submitted by the Commission under this
5 Section are not subject to the requirements under subsection
6 (a) of Section 11E-35.

7 (d) Upon receiving the filed petition as provided in
8 subsection (c) from the regional superintendent of schools,
9 each school board of the affected school districts shall
10 publish a copy of the petition on its official Internet
11 website, if available, with a link to the recommendation shown
12 prominently on the homepage of the website until the date of
13 the next upcoming general election.

14 (e) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of Section 11E-50,
15 within 14 days after the conclusion of the hearing under
16 Section 11E-45 regarding a petition filed by the Efficient
17 School District Commission, the regional superintendent shall,
18 upon determining that the petition is in compliance with all
19 applicable requirements set forth in the Election Code,
20 through a written order, approve the petition, or, if the
21 regional superintendent determines that the amended petition
22 is not in compliance with the Election Code, the regional
23 superintendent shall deny the petition.

24 (f) Notwithstanding subsection (b) of Section 11E-50,
25 within 21 days after the receipt of the regional
26 superintendent's decision regarding a petition filed by the

1 Efficient School District Commission under this Section, the
2 State Superintendent of Education shall, upon determining that
3 the petition is in compliance with all applicable requirements
4 set forth in the Election Code, through a written order,
5 approve the petition, or, if the State Superintendent
6 determines that the amended petition is not in compliance with
7 the Election Code, the State Superintendent shall deny the
8 petition.

9 (g) The Efficient School District Commission shall serve
10 as and take on the responsibilities of the designated
11 Committee of Ten for the purposes of petitions filed under
12 this Section, except that notwithstanding paragraph (10) of
13 subsection (a) of Section 11E-35, any amendments to petitions
14 filed by the Commission and any binding stipulations made to
15 any question with respect to a petition under this Section
16 shall be made by at least 13 members of the Commission.

17 (h) Incentive payments required under Section 11E-135
18 shall be made for the purposes of this Section, subject to
19 appropriation by the General Assembly. The failure of the
20 General Assembly to appropriate incentive payment funds under
21 Section 11E-135 shall not be a bar to reorganization under
22 this Section.

23 (i) This Section is repealed on January 31, 2026.

24 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon
25 becoming law.