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(104-15)  
**May 16, 2025**

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## This Week at the Capitol

This week offered a brief respite in legislative activity, falling between the General Assembly's committee deadline and the upcoming third reading deadline. While floor action was limited, several significant developments emerged around state budget negotiations and education policy.

As lawmakers prepare for intense budget negotiations, the Governor's Office of Management and Budget (GOMB) has revised its revenue projections for Fiscal Year 2026. The office now estimates \$54.9 billion in revenue, \$536 million less — or about 1% — from its February forecast. This was already shaping up to be a difficult budget cycle, with rising costs, expiring federal funds, and competing priorities putting pressure on available resources. The updated revenue projections further complicate the fiscal landscape. In a surprising development, the chair of the House Appropriations – General Services Committee was removed from the position for preparing an alternative version of the state budget. The move underscores growing tensions as lawmakers work to finalize spending plans for FY2026.

## House Subject Matter Hearings

### Two-Year High School Foreign Language Mandate – Education Policy Committee

The House held a Subject Matter Hearing in the Education Policy Committee to

discuss the two-year foreign language mandate that will go into effect for the 2028-2029 school year. Numerous education stakeholders at the hearing testified, including IASB. While IASB and other school management organizations agreed that foreign language electives can be an important course for many students, it presents challenges for students and school districts.

The broader concerns expressed during the hearing include 1) reduced opportunities for students to take other meaningful and relevant electives, specifically as it relates to having space in their schedules for college and career readiness courses, including CTE and the fine arts; 2) concerns with the ability to hire sufficient foreign language teachers to fulfill the requirement; 3) the elimination of other meaningful electives and possibly teachers who teach those courses in order to create more foreign language courses; 4) the likelihood of some districts having to eliminate higher level foreign language courses in order to offer more introductory courses to students; and 5) the specific impact on certain student populations (including special education, multilingual, and EL students) and the need for exemptions to the mandate.

IASB did highlight [IASB Position Statement 1.21: Dual Language](#) which supports legislation affirming that the Seal of Biliteracy satisfies the Illinois world language requirement for graduation. IASB will be following up with legislators and working to address the concerns over this foreign language mandate.

## OMA and FOIA Bills – House Executive Committee

This week, the House Executive Committee held a hearing to discuss possible changes to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Open Meetings Act (OMA). A wide range of issues were raised, especially around how new technology is affecting public records requests. The committee discussed a number of bills pertaining to FOIA and OMA which the IASB Governmental Relations team is tracking and will provide updates when language is introduced.

IASB focused on two proposals in the technology group of bills. [HB2578 \(Rep. Daniel Didech\)](#) would let public bodies verify that the FOIA request being made is by a real person, not an AI or robot. The sponsor said the plan is to allow verification after a request is received rather than submit verification up front. The committee also discussed [HB2334 \(Rep. Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz\)](#) which would require a FOIA request be submitted in the body of the email rather than as an attachment. Certain public bodies have been subject to cyber-attacks from opening attachments embedded with a virus.

## The Senate

In the Senate, the Higher Education Committee met to recommend do adopt [SFA4 to HB3522 \(Sen. Christopher Belt\)](#). HB3522 establishes a direct admissions program to automatically admit qualifying students into Illinois public institutions of higher education (excluding the University of Illinois–Urbana Champaign and University of Illinois Chicago). The amendment removed IASB's opposition, as it addressed our student privacy concerns in the legislation. However, the legislation

requires that no later than the end of the 2025-2026 school year, school districts must begin to 1) communicate the program to students and parents/or guardians; and 2) allow students the opportunity to opt-in to the program. The legislation also requires ISAC to provide a consent form to school districts no later than June 30, 2025. Despite IASB's efforts to push back implementation to the 2026-27 school year, the advocates felt the program needed to begin in the upcoming school year. IASB will be sending additional information to school districts as it becomes available.

The Senate Education Appropriations Committee met to discuss [HB1375](#) (**Sen. David Koehler**), which requires the Illinois Board of Higher Education to distribute a stipend of up to \$10,000 per semester for student teachers. While subject to appropriation, the estimate for the new stipend program could cost \$68 million. Testimony was given by student teachers who said it is very difficult for them to pay their bills without being paid as a student teacher. Some public university personnel expressed concerns with the legislation, saying that if the state were to provide inefficient funding for the stipend program, that the universities could be on the hook to pay the stipends for the student teachers.

## Final Two Weeks

The Senate Appropriations committee met to pass five appropriation shell bills out of committee. Shell bills are empty legislation that is later amended to quicken the legislative process. Passing appropriation shell bills out of committee is an indication that lawmakers are beginning to prepare the process to move large appropriation legislation (such as the state budget) before the spring session is scheduled to adjourn at the end of May. The next two weeks will be busy as legislators finalize the budget, the BIMP bill, and other omnibus bills with hopes of adjourning by May 31.

## Senate Bills that Passed House Committees

[SJR33](#) (**Rep. Paul Jacobs**) is a procedural measure to confirm the General Assembly's denial of a school district's waiver request. SJR33 passed the Education Policy Committee 12-0-0.

[HFA1](#) to [SB1672](#) (**Rep. Michelle Mussman**) requires all K-3 school districts to report data on early literacy screeners to ISBE by July 1, 2026. SB1672 passed Education Policy Committee 12-0-0.

# Legislation that Passed Senate Committees

[SR267](#) (**Sen. Laura Murphy**) declares November 10-14, 2025 as School Psychology week in Illinois. SR267 passed the Senate Education Committee 13-0-0.

[HB2521](#) (**Sen. Mary Edly-Allen**) requires all IHSA game officials to submit a fingerprint-based criminal history records check to determine if they have been convicted of an enumerated crime or drug offense. HB2521 passed the Criminal Law Committee 9-0-0.

[HB3081](#) (**Sen. Celina Villanueva**) creates the Out-of-School Time (OST) Advisory Council for the purpose of providing information and advice on funding issues affecting out-of-school time programs. HB3081 passed the Senate Education Committee 13-0-0.

[SCA2](#) to [HB3446](#) (**Sen. Meg Loughran Cappel**) is a gut-and-replace amendment to require that no later than January 1, 2027, the Department of Early Childhood, in collaboration with the Community College Board, the Board of Higher Education, and the Department of Children and Family Services, shall publish on its website, at least once a year, a list of early childhood courses for early childhood teachers and directors. HB3446 passed the Senate Child Welfare Committee 7-0-0.

[SCA1](#) and [SCA2](#) to [HB3851](#) (**Sen. Meg Loughran Cappel**) expands the definition of "cyber-bullying" by clarifying that cyberbullying includes the posting or distribution of unauthorized digital replicas, if the action creates any of the effects stated in the definition of "bullying" within the school code. HB3851 passed the Senate Executive Committee 13-0-0.

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## Legislative Tracking List

The IASB Governmental Relations team tracks all legislation that may impact K-12 public education and makes regular updates to that list. As a reminder, although a bill may be filed, many factors influence whether it makes its way through the legislative process. Some of those factors include whether the bill gets assigned by leadership to a committee, the extent of any opposition, and the priorities of the sponsor.

In an effort to ensure that IASB members can monitor all bills the Governmental Relations team is tracking, legislation has been broken down into ten different topics:

[Boards of Education](#)[Insurance](#)[Open Meetings Act](#)[Personnel](#)[Regional Office  
of Education](#)[School Finance](#)[School Safety  
and Health](#)[State Board  
of Education](#)[Students](#)[Taxation](#)

We will continue to monitor all bills and keep you informed as bills start to move through the legislative process.

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### Lighting the Way to Excellence in School Governance

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