

ILLINOIS SENATE BILL 2354 (PUBLIC ACT 102-0551)

HIGH SCHOOL SPEECH AND DEBATE

New State of Illinois law promotes electives,
creates speech and debate opportunities for students,
and fosters communication competency in the 21st Century.

A LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE GUIDE

WRITTEN BY:
Anthony Zoubek

EDITED BY:
Heather Danek • Lauren Morgan

**ADDITIONAL EDITING
AND FACT-CHECKING:**
Richard Johnson
Mike Basich • Brian Cobb
Edward Kim • Vincent Revak



LAST REVISION: May 1, 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE: ADVOCACY UPDATE	4
VOICES SUPPORTING SPEECH: A LETTER FROM THE ILLINOIS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION	5
VOICES SUPPORTING SPEECH: A LETTER FROM THE IHSA	6
VOICES SUPPORTING SPEECH: AN ADMINISTRATOR’S PERSPECTIVE	7
WHAT DOES SB 2354 “DO”?	8
WHAT IS “FORENSIC SPEECH”?	8
ISBE (ISCC) DEFINITIONS	9
SB 2354 IS SPLIT INTO TWO PARTS	10
SB 2354 DOES <u>NOT</u> MAKE SPEECH A REQUIREMENT	10
SB 2354 DOES <u>NOT</u> MANDATE CURRICULAR REVISIONS	11
SB 2354 AND SCHOOL-SPONSORED EXTRACURRICULARS	11
SB 2354 DOES <u>NOT</u> “MOVE” FORENSIC SPEECH TO FINE ARTS	11
FORENSIC SPEECH <u>WILL</u> MEET A GRADUATION REQUIREMENT	12
THE <u>SECOND</u> PART OF SB 2354	13
WHAT DOES THIS CLAUSE IN THE BILL MEAN?	13
WHY WAS THIS CLAUSE WRITTEN INTO THE BILL?	14
“HOW DOES THIS BILL APPLY TO ME?”	15
IN WHAT WAYS MIGHT SB 2354 IMPROVE COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS?	18
“A TALE OF TWO BILLS”	19
SB 2354 AND “THE ILLINOIS REPORT CARD”	20
FORENSIC SPEECH AND THE ILLINOIS TEACHER SHORTAGE	20
CONCLUSION	21
END NOTES	22
APPENDIX A: “SPEECH” STATE-BY-STATE	24
APPENDIX B: NEW GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS	26
APPENDIX C: “FROM SPEECH TO SILENCE—AND BACK AGAIN”	31

PREFACE: ADVOCACY UPDATE



In 2021, the 102nd Illinois General Assembly proposed several hundred education reform bills. Of those specific to curriculum, only six received unanimous bipartisan support. Among them was **SENATE BILL 2354**ⁱ. It was endorsed by the Illinois Education Association and signed by Governor J.B. Pritzker on August 20, 2021. (Although it is now officially called “**PUBLIC ACT (P.A.) 102-0551**,” for purposes of consistency, this booklet will refer to the legislation simply as SB 2354.)

The new law went into effect on January 1, 2022. It became the subject of statewide media coverageⁱⁱ. Several news outlets referred to it as one of last year’s “50 most notable pieces of legislation.” One newspaper wrote that, of the “nearly 300 new laws [that] take effect in Illinois, SB 2354 was one of “the 33 most notable” and “[a] highlight of the legislative session.”

According to the Illinois Communication and Theatre Association Advocacy Committee’s research, most Illinois high schools relegate rigorous communication education to their speech- and debate-oriented electives. (See **Appendix C**.) In Illinois, frequently changing high school graduation requirements limit students’ ability to enroll in elective courses. This, in turn, limits students’ access to rigorous communication coursework. SB 2354 was proposed to ensure that public speaking and debate skills are taught in Illinois high schools, and that elective speech and debate courses do not get “lost in the shuffle.”

This booklet contains a point-by-point breakdown of SB 2354—what it does and what it does not do—by unpacking its language, explaining its implications, and providing historical context as to why the bill was proposed and unanimously supported.



Kathi Griffin, President
Al Llorens, Vice President
Tom Tully, Secretary-Treasurer
Audrey Soglin, Executive Director

100 East Edwards Street
Springfield, IL 62704-1999
IEA Connect Call Center: 844-432-1800
217-544-0706 • 800-252-8076 • Fax: 217-544-7383

The Illinois Education Association is proud to have worked with educators who understand and advocated for the importance of making sure that every student in Illinois can select forensic speech when choosing electives for high school graduation. SB 2354 has added language to the school code that includes forensic speech to the electives, like art, music and foreign language that each high school district needs to offer students to graduate.

The skills that students learn when having forensic speech will support them in whatever career they choose to partake in after graduation. The importance of communicating with others for understanding is essential and is not something that comes natural to everyone. The passage of this law will give our students the opportunity to advance their skillset in communication, have the tools to effectively persuade others on a topic that they are passionate about and listen to others who might have different points of view. Speaking and listening leads to creative solutions and positive results in all careers and everyone's personal life.

As educators we don't only have an obligation to our students, but to our future colleagues as well. If we expect our students to be effective communicators, then teachers need to be prepared to teach those courses. We need to incentivize making these courses a part of teacher prep programs. The more our students are engrossed in this subject now, the better prepared new teachers will be in the future. Our students have the power to make us better teachers.

We encourage you to use *your* forensic speech skills, to make sure that your school district is aware and offers this class to the electives students can choose from; it's the law!

We would like to thank the educators who brought this to our attention and worked diligently to pass this legislation. The passion that you bring to your students every day continues to show them how much you care about their future and their ability to be productive citizens of our great state.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kathi Griffin'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathi Griffin
President, Illinois Education Association



The IHSA governs the equitable participation in interscholastic athletics and activities that enrich the educational experience.

January 26, 2022

The Illinois High School Association governs the equitable participation in interscholastic athletics and **activities that enrich the educational experience**. Because of this, the IHSA supports **Senate Bill 2354 (P.A. 102-0551)**. The new law, which went into effect on January 1, 2022, added “forensic speech (speech and debate)” to a list of electives that students may use to meet high school graduation requirements.

Since 1900, the IHSA has led the development of education-based interscholastic athletic and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. From speech and drama to debate, the IHSA sets directions for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school athletic and performing arts activities. IHSA membership includes over 800 state high schools, and we specifically work with our state’s activities and athletic associations in addition to several other affiliate member associations that administer specific activities. The IHSA also provides a variety of services to individual coaches and directors through professional associations, workshops, training and championships.

The IHSA also is a proud partner with the Illinois Communication and Theatre Association (ICTA). ICTA provides educators with enriching professional development opportunities and other support in the teaching and coaching of communications, speech, debate, and drama. The attached “Speech Bill Handbook” was prepared by the ICTA Advocacy Committee. It delivers an in-depth overview of the new law—what it does and what it does not do—and its impact on classroom and competitive speech and debate programs.

Forensic speech and debate electives offer students the opportunity to learn how to use oral skills effectively. Forensic speech and debate electives also encourage students to participate in interscholastic forensic activities. The new law creates an incentive for schools to establish and maintain forensic speech-debate classes and extracurricular programs. These programs support model arts collaborations with schools, teacher professional development initiatives and arts programs for at-risk youth, in addition to supporting our state’s cultural treasures and the arts, especially in under-served communities.

On behalf of our member state association, the schools and secondary students, coaches, judges and performing arts directors, the IHSA encourages your support of SB 2354, and the arts for generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan M. Knoblauch".

Susan M. Knoblauch
IHSA Assistant Executive Director



*Dr. Lazaro Lopez speaks nationally as an advocate for relevancy in schools, business partnerships, and career pathways. He has been featured in the **U.S. Chamber of Commerce Profiles of Change**, the **Achieving Tomorrow Series** and recognized as the **Illinois High School Principal of the Year** for his efforts to ensure economic mobility in his school community. Appointed to Chair the Illinois Community College Board by the Governor of Illinois, the Workforce Board Task Force for Youth Apprenticeships, and currently serving as the Associate Superintendent for High School District 214 in Arlington Heights, IL.*

Colleagues,

As Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning in High School District 214, an education policy leader in the state, and a former high school speech communications teacher, I was excited to hear that, beginning January 1, 2022, speech courses will meet an Illinois high school graduation requirement for elective credit. Students in our school community are fortunate to take courses in speech at both the freshman and senior level.

Expanding opportunities to learn valuable oral communication skills during high school empowers students with the confidence they need for academic and career success as supported by the National Association of Colleges and Employers Workplace Readiness Competencies. Moreover, this legislation encourages language arts faculty members to pursue advanced study in communication to teach speech in partnership with local community colleges, expanding dual credit and early college opportunities for all students.

As the educational and workplace evolve in the twenty-first century, the demand for competent communicators who can speak and listen effectively, communicate interpersonally and work in teams, both face-to-face and virtually, will only increase. Speech communication courses that focus on developing students' knowledge, skills and motivation in the communication process will help Illinois' students distinguish themselves as valuable members of our evolving workforce.

I encourage you to review this handbook and share it with your administrators as you speak up for Speech in Illinois.

Sincerely,



Lazaro Lopez, Ed.D

WHAT DOES SB 2354 “DO”?

SB 2354 amends a section of the Illinois School Code concerning high school graduation requirements and elective courses.

Prior to SB 2354, the School Code required that all Illinois high school students complete one year of elective coursework chosen from music, art, foreign language, or vocational education. SB 2354 adds “forensic speech (speech and debate)” electives to that list.

This language is consistent with the graduation requirements in 22 other states. (See **Appendix A.**)

WHAT IS “FORENSIC SPEECH (SPEECH AND DEBATE)”?



The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) uses “forensic speech (speech and debate)” to describe elective English Language Arts high school courses that teach “how to use oral skills effectively in formal and informal situations.”

According to ISBEⁱⁱⁱ, these electives are “often linked to an extracurricular program,” such as Illinois High School Association Speech Individual Events or Debate. (Participation in competitive forensics “is encouraged, but not always required.”) As a phrase, “forensic speech (speech and debate)” is ISBE’s way of distinguishing speech and debate electives from any oral communication course or courses that an individual high school or district may require.

PLEASE NOTE: For purposes of consistency, the shortened term “forensic speech” will be used throughout this booklet in reference to English Language Arts public speaking and debate elective high school courses.



In a section dedicated solely to English Language Arts, ISBE's Illinois Secondary Course Catalog (ISCC) contains these descriptions of "forensic speech" courses and their content—

FORENSIC SPEECH —INCLUSIVE

Courses that "offer students the opportunity to learn how to use oral skills effectively in formal and informal situations. Students learn such skills as logic and reasoning, the organization of thought and supporting materials, and effective presentation of one's voice and body."

"Often linked to an extracurricular program, these courses introduce students to numerous public speaking situations, and they learn the methods, aims, and styles of a variety of events (e.g., formal debate, Lincoln-Douglas debate, expository speaking, radio broadcast, oral interpretation, and dramatic interpretation). Participation in competition is encouraged, but not always required."

FORENSIC SPEECH —DEBATE

"In these courses, students are able to develop such skills as logic and reasoning, research and analysis, organization of thought and supporting materials, argumentative style and skill, and effective presentation of one's voice and body."

"Often linked to an extracurricular program, these courses introduce students to the methods, aims, and styles used in various kinds of debates (formal debate or Lincoln-Douglas). Participation in competition is encouraged, but not always required."

FORENSIC SPEECH —INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

"Topics included depend upon the event(s) being taught, but they usually emphasize effective presentation of one's voice and body, thoughtful understanding and interpretation of literature, logic and reasoning, and the organization of thought and supporting materials."

"Often linked to an extracurricular program, these courses introduce students to one or several individual event categories (e.g., exposition, oral interpretation, dramatic interpretation, and radio broadcast). Participation in competition is encouraged, but not always required."

SB 2354 IS SPLIT INTO TWO PARTS...

The **first** part of the legislation contains the following language:

“As a prerequisite to receiving a high school diploma, [each student must successfully complete one year] chosen from (A) music, (B) art, (C) foreign language, (D) vocational education, or (E) **forensic speech (speech and debate)**.”

As mentioned, SB 2354 adds forensic speech coursework to the Illinois School Code’s list of electives that are requisite to earning a high school diploma.

SB 2354 DOES NOT MAKE SPEECH A REQUIREMENT.

A **different** section of the Illinois School Code, **unaffected** by SB 2354, states:

“As a prerequisite to receiving a high school diploma, each pupil entering the 9th grade must, in addition to other course requirements, successfully complete... four years of language arts.”

The Illinois School Code does not mandate what specific ELA courses meet the four-year requirement. (Those decisions rest solely on individual school districts and local school boards^{iv}.) As mentioned, SB 2354 amends a separate section of the Illinois School Code—one that deals **exclusively** with high school **electives**. As such:

- SB 2354 does **not** mandate that all students “must” take forensic speech;
- SB 2354 does **not** mandate that a forensic speech course be used to meet the state’s four-year English Language Arts requirement; and
- SB 2354 does **not** mandate that speech or debate courses currently required by some schools or districts be “turned into” electives. (Again, those decisions are made at a local level.)

SB 2354 DOES NOT MANDATE CURRICULAR REVISIONS.

SB 2354 does not mandate revisions to existing speech and debate coursework. ISBE does recommend that high school public speaking or debate courses touch upon any number topics and activities (“Lincoln-Douglas debate, expository speaking, radio broadcast, oral interpretation, and dramatic interpretation,” among others). But these are merely suggestions.



According to ISBE, public speaking and debate courses “may include” these activities, “but are not limited to” them. ISBE calls these course description recommendations “non-regulatory guidance.” Thus, if you are currently teaching an elective public speaking or debate course, you are not required to revise or change any of your existing coursework.

SB 2354 DOES NOT “MOVE” FORENSIC SPEECH TO FINE ARTS.

ISBE specifically defines forensic speech as an ELA elective credit. That designation^v has not changed. The new law does not “move” forensic speech from ELA to fine arts.

SB 2354 AND SCHOOL-SPONSORED EXTRACURRICULARS.



SB 2354 does not require schools to sponsor forensics-oriented extracurriculars. The bill does create incentives for schools and districts that offer forensic speech courses and sponsor forensic speech-related extracurriculars. Those incentives will be discussed at length later in this booklet.

FORENSIC SPEECH WILL MEET A GRADUATION REQUIREMENT.

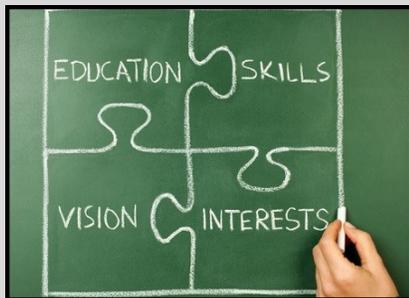
SB 2354 **does** add an opportunity for students to take forensic speech and meet a specified graduation requirement based on her or his curricular needs.

High school electives are a component of students' postgraduate planning^{vi}. Legislators who cosponsored and voted in favor of SB 2354 recognize that, for some students, forensic speech is most applicable to and will best prepare them for, personal, scholastic, and career successes. Here are a few examples:

SCENARIO #1: Community and private colleges offer non-degree, certificate-based programs for students seeking specialized education but not an Associate's Degree or a Bachelor's degree. "Basic Certificate" and "Vocational Certificate" programs^{vii} provide accelerated training for jobs that require the ability to communicate with fellow employees, with clients, and in collaborative team settings.



High school students seeking to enroll in certificate-based programs may benefit from enhancing speech skills that best align with their postgraduate non-degree or certificate-based aspirations.



SCENARIO #2: In 2015, the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced No Child Left Behind. According to ESSA, states must ensure that every child is on an individualized path toward college or career readiness. Many Illinois school districts are approaching this by establishing "career academies," "educational pathways," and "career pathways."

Through these programs, students select from a list of elective courses with specialized foci transferable to specific workforce skills. In some districts, "pathways" may focus on the arts, humanities, liberal arts, business, or law. The intention is that a sequence of specialized courses will allow students to explore fields of interest through electives that directly align with postgraduate plans. With SB 2354, forensic speech is now a School Code-referenced elective option. Forensic speech complements any number of pathway "strands" determined by individual school districts.

In scenarios such as these, it is incumbent upon teachers to advocate for the importance of oral communication in their own high schools and communities. This includes, but is not limited to, those who teach electives in schools with burgeoning "career academies" and "educational or career pathways." Among other contacts, teachers may reach out to their school district's director of postsecondary success, director of curriculum and instruction, director of career and technical education, director of educational pathways, or administrators in similar roles, and advocate for the inclusion of forensic speech and debate in their academy or pathway curricula.

THE SECOND PART OF SB 2354...

As mentioned, SB 2354 consists of two parts. The second part reads as follows:

“A forensic speech course used to satisfy the course requirement under subdivision (1) may not be used to satisfy the course requirement under this subdivision (6).”

WHAT DOES THIS CLAUSE IN THE BILL MEAN?

As previously stated, Illinois mandates that all high school students must enroll in four years of language arts courses. The School Code does not mandate what specific language arts courses should be used to meet that four-year requirement. To maintain local community oversight, specific language arts courses are determined by individual school districts. In a minority of Illinois school districts, public speaking courses are used to meet part of the state’s four-year ELA requirement. The above-referenced clause in SB 2354 ensures that:

- In a school district where public speaking or debate courses are decidedly required to meet the state’s four-year ELA requirement, a student cannot say that a required public speaking or debate course also fulfills the state’s elective course requirement. (In other words, a student cannot take a required public speaking or debate course and then claim that it simultaneously meets an elective requirement.)
- In a school district where public speaking or debate courses exist only as electives, a student cannot take those electives and claim that they also meet the state-mandated four-year ELA requirement. (In layman’s terms, a student cannot “double-dip.”)

In some school districts, students meet the state-mandated four-year ELA requirement by selecting classes from a list of focused ELA electives. In that situation, if speech or debate electives are offered, a student may select forensic speech to meet the state-mandated four-year requirement or the School Code’s revised elective requirement. The course would only meet one requirement or the other, depending on whatever plan of action the student establishes with her or his parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and a guidance counselor. However, forensic speech could not count toward both the four-year ELA requirement and the School Code’s elective requirement at the same time.

WHY WAS THIS CLAUSE WRITTEN INTO THE BILL?

Legislators sought to ensure that no student or school can claim that a required language arts course concurrently “counts” as an elective requirement, or vice-versa. The clause is “legalese,” indicating that, in a school district, any public speaking course already used to meet the required four years of language arts may not, and should not, be applied to this new and different elective prerequisite. **Moreover, the spirit of the language suggests that any school that currently requires ELA public speaking or debate courses should keep their requirements as-such.** (In other words, “leave well-enough alone” in schools where oral communication courses are currently required.)

TO BE CLEAR: At its own discretion, any Illinois school district can change its list of required ELA coursework... at considerable costs to taxpayers. Because of the above-referenced clause, however, an administrator cannot point to SB 2354 specifically as a rationale for those changes. **The bill does not mandate, nor does it “encourage” administrators or school boards to “convert” required communication courses “into” electives, or vice-versa.**

This is one of the reasons SB 2354 earned overwhelming support from teachers unions, including the IEA, the Illinois Association of School Boards, and the Illinois Association of School Administrators.



“HOW DOES THIS BILL APPLY TO ME?”

“I TEACH AN ORAL COMMUNICATION ELA COURSE THAT MY DISTRICT REQUIRES. WHAT WILL THIS BILL DO IN MY CIRCUMSTANCE?”



SB 2354, in and of itself, does not affect your class. It does not mandate revisions to your curriculum. It does not “convert” your required ELA course into an elective ELA course. It does not convert your ELA class into a fine arts class. Your district decided that an oral communication course should be a component of its four-year language arts requirement. SB 2354, in and of itself, does not change that.

“I TEACH AN ORAL COMMUNICATION ELA COURSE THAT MY DISTRICT REQUIRES. I ALSO TEACH SPEECH AND DEBATE ELA ELECTIVES. WHAT WILL THIS BILL DO IN MY CIRCUMSTANCES?”



SB 2354, in and of itself, does not affect your required class. It will, however, make enrollment in your ELA forensic speech electives more appealing to students, parents, and guidance counselors. Your electives are now an official component of the School Code. As a result, students can take them as a state-specified prerequisite to earning a high school diploma.

“MY DISTRICT DOES NOT REQUIRE ORAL COMMUNICATION COURSES, BUT I DO TEACH SPEECH AND DEBATE ELA ELECTIVES. WHAT WILL THIS BILL DO IN MY CIRCUMSTANCES?”



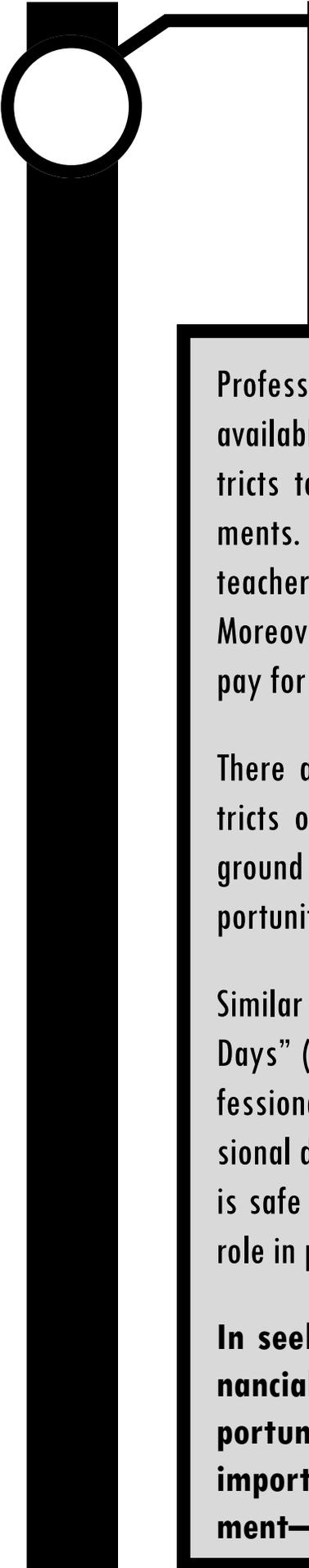
Because of SB 2354, students can take your ELA electives and have them count as required, state-specified elective credit. Your electives are now an official component of the Illinois School Code. As a result, they are as applicable toward earning a diploma as any other course specified by the State. The possibility of **more** students enrolling will increase, and with a new sense of urgency; for many students, that “elective” **will** be a graduation requirement.

“MY DISTRICT DOESN’T HAVE REQUIRED SPEECH OR DEBATE COURSES. MY DISTRICT DOESN’T HAVE SPEECH AND DEBATE ELECTIVES, EITHER. WHAT WILL THIS BILL DO IN MY CIRCUMSTANCES?”



SB 2354 provides an incentive for your district to write and approve forensic speech ELA electives. This will, however, require you and your colleagues to advocate for the creation of those courses. The fact that forensic speech is specified in the School Code can stimulate those discussions with your administrators and within your school district.

Again, this demonstrates why it is compulsory that educators—especially those who teach electives—**advocate for the importance of oral communication at the local level, in their high schools and within their communities.**



**ICTA'S ADVOCACY EFFORTS BEGAN
WITH THE GOAL OF IMPROVING
TEACHER TRAINING.**

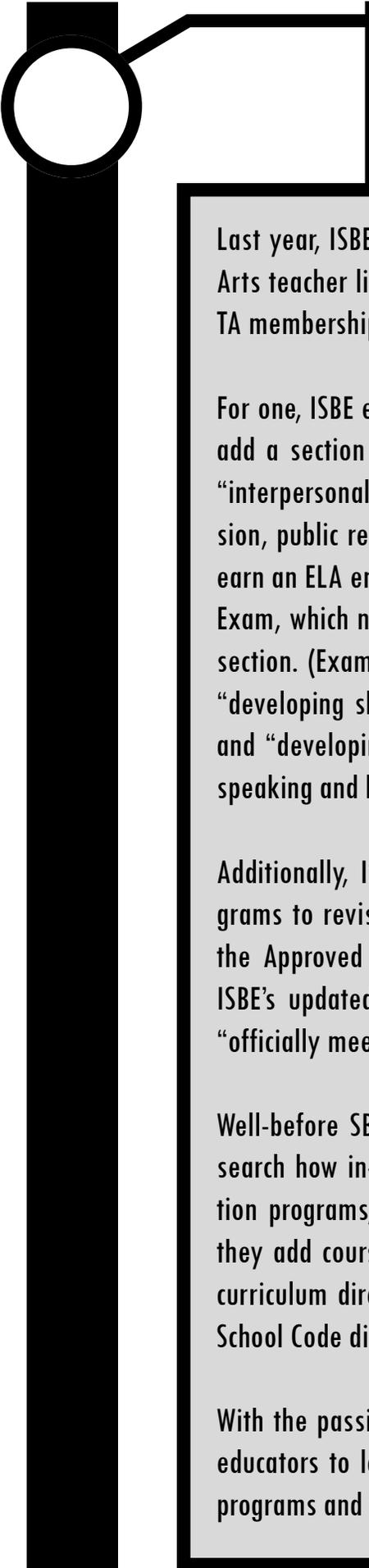
**WHAT IF AN ELA TEACHER WHO DOES NOT HAVE
A COMMUNICATION EDUCATION BACKGROUND
IS ASKED TO TEACH FORENSIC SPEECH?**

Professional development opportunities in communication education are available to teachers. The State of Illinois allocates money to school districts to pay for professional development pertinent to teaching assignments. However, until this legislation, there was little incentive for ELA teachers to frequent communication education professional development. Moreover, before SB 2354, there was little incentive for school districts to pay for communication-specific professional development.

There are free communication education workshops offered in some districts on “Professional Practice Days.” A teacher without a formal background in communication education should be advised to seize on those opportunities.

Similar workshops are available in counties across the state on “Institute Days” (or “Inservice Days”). Seasoned communication educators host professional development workshops statewide. Obviously, ICTA offers professional development through an annual convention and other conferences. (It is safe to say that, as a result of SB 2354, ICTA will play an even greater role in providing teachers with professional development.)

In seeking out professional development and, when necessary, financial assistance to participate in professional development opportunities, it would behoove Illinois educators to advocate for the importance of speech- and debate-specific professional development—especially with the new law in place.



IN WHAT WAYS MIGHT SB 2354 IMPROVE COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS?

Last year, ISBE authorized several (relatively unpublicized) changes to English Language Arts teacher licensure. In July, the Advocacy Committee disseminated a newsletter to ICTA membership, detailing those changes.

For one, ISBE expanded its list of acceptable content area coursework, going so far as to add a section called “Speech^{viii}.” Teacher candidates may now take college classes in “interpersonal communication, oral communication, oral interpretation and group discussion, public relations, public speaking, and speech, voice, and movement techniques” to earn an ELA endorsement. These changes coincide with revisions to the ELA Content Area Exam, which now contains an expanded, more rigorous Speaking, Listening, and Viewing section. (Examinees are asked to “apply knowledge of principles and approaches” for “developing skills for speaking, presenting, and participating in academic discussions” and “developing listening and viewing skills.”) Other subareas of the test now include speaking and listening questions.

Additionally, ISBE has tasked in-state college and university teacher preparation programs to revise their required courses, such that institutions “consider all additions to the Approved Coursework list.” So long as content area coursework is selected from ISBE’s updated list, that college or university’s ELA teacher preparation program will “officially meet Illinois standards.”

Well-before SB 2354 was even proposed, the ICTA Advocacy Committee started to research how in-state colleges and universities planned to modify their teacher preparation programs, such that they would meet ISBE’s new expectations. Specifically, would they add courses from the “Speech” section of ISBE’s Approved Coursework list? Some curriculum directors cited “a lack of incentive” to do so, given that, until SB 2354, the School Code did not cite speech or debate in any capacity.

With the passing of SB 2354, there is a clear incentive. Therefore, it is incumbent upon educators to learn how they can advocate for the improvement of teacher preparation programs and the inclusion of communication education in their curricula.

“A TALE OF TWO BILLS.”

SB 2354 was also sponsored, in part, as a response to a different piece of legislation.

Last March, the Governor signed House Bill 2170. At 218-pages long, this legislation was the subject of much debate. HB 2170 aims to improve access and equity in Illinois schools from prekindergarten through higher education. It contains some of the most extensive education reforms in over a decade.

In August 2021, the ICTA Advocacy Committee disseminated a newsletter highlighting HB 2170 and its changes to high school graduation requirements. To be clear, many reforms in HB 2170 shine a much-needed light on systemic inequities in Illinois public schools. However, some components of the legislation “crowd the curricular field” so to speak, trimming the time allotted in students’ schedules to take wholly self-selected courses. Currently, the average Illinois high school student must earn at least eight one-semester elective credits in order to graduate. However, changes mandated by HB 2170 add several new graduation requirements statewide. In turn, time allotted for electives in the average Illinois high school student’s class schedule may be cut by half... or more. (See **Appendix B.**)

As mentioned in the introduction of this booklet, the ICTA Advocacy Committee’s research found that most Illinois high schools relegate rigorous communication education to their speech— and debate-oriented electives. Thus, limiting students’ access to electives will **further** limit students’ access to communication coursework^{ix}.

Communication skills lay the foundation for scholastic, personal, and career success, and provide skills vital to civic participation in a democracy. In unanimously passing SB 2354, legislators seek to maintain, support, and nurture the growth of our discipline and, more importantly, the growth of Illinois students—our future leaders in business, education and civic affairs^x.

SB 2354 was proposed, in part, to ensure that those benefits of elective communication education courses do not fall by the wayside.

SB 2354 AND “THE ILLINOIS REPORT CARD”

Through forensic speech, students learn how to effectively gather information and present their ideas orally through a creative, succinctly structured oral performance. These skills tie directly into ESSA. As mentioned, ESSA tasks states to ensure that every child is on a path to college or career readiness. ESSA also requires that each state develop and consistently revise its own school accountability system. Under ESSA, states can look beyond test scores and consider holistic indicators of school quality and student success. The Illinois ESSA plan is unique, in that one measurable indicator of a “well-rounded education” includes student enrollment in certain electives—those listed in the School Code. SB 2354 places forensic speech in that section of the School Code. Enrollment in forensic speech electives may soon play a small but important role in how Illinois annually assesses the progress^{xi} of individual schools.

Among other contacts, teachers may reach out to their school district’s director of postsecondary success, director of curriculum and instruction, director of career and technical education, director of educational pathways, or administrators in similar roles, and advocate for the inclusion of forensic speech and debate enrollment in their school’s ESSA reporting.

FORENSIC SPEECH AND THE ILLINOIS TEACHER SHORTAGE

Adding forensic speech to the Illinois School Code provides much-needed flexibility to smaller schools and smaller districts, especially given the state’s current teacher shortage. There are some smaller schools and districts that cannot offer an extensive list of fine arts courses due to budgetary or personnel constraints. Changing the School Code enables ELA teachers who are already employed by those schools to receive additional professional development training so that those schools can offer a speech-oriented elective. With the state’s teacher shortage, SB 2354 offers smaller schools some flexibility for maximizing the faculty they already employ. Those teachers may then capitalize on speech-oriented training and professional development that already exist at the local level, at little-to-no-cost.

At this time, those professional development opportunities are underutilized because speech education itself is not currently prioritized. However, with a speech-oriented elective applicable toward a diploma, that will change with SB 2354.

CONCLUSION

Ongoing research demonstrates the extent to which young adults can neither adequately nor clearly communicate in public speaking, civic engagement, and face-to-face situations. SB 2354 provides a pathway by which students can develop and maintain interpersonal relationships, secure employment, establish long-term relational and career success, and effectively participate in a democracy. In short, SB 2354 takes Illinois one step closer toward alleviating this “communication crisis.” The state has provided ELA high school teachers—especially those who teach public speaking and debate—with a unique opportunity to help students development their communication competence.

SB 2354 also places communication educators in a unique position to bring about relevant, beneficial change to our profession. We must advocate for the importance of speech and debate in secondary education and teacher preparation programs. This also makes ICTA an important, impactful resource in the ongoing training of ELA teachers—especially those who may be assigned to teach forensic speech. ICTA members are “experts” at teaching communication skills that are essential to students’ success and growth. SB 2354 affords *all of us* the chance to “cast a wider net” and share expertise with ELA teachers who may not even know about our organization. Certainly, SB 2354 shines a brighter light on our mission.

ICTA can—and should—position itself as a leading provider of learning support, resources, and advocating for our discipline. With the passing of SB 2354, this will ensure that teacher candidates and current educators alike can effectively teach speech and debate skills to the advantage of **all** students.

END NOTES

ⁱ SB 2354 was *also* one of the few bills that did not require amendments in order to receive bipartisan support. Additionally, among the education bills that did pass, the vast majority were House Bills. While a considerable number of education bills were initially proposed in the Senate and sent to the House, few managed to get out of the House Elementary and Secondary Education School Curriculum and Policies Committee. That Democrat-led committee scrutinized every education bill that came over from the Senate. In other words, to make it out of the Senate and get through the House, education legislation had to be thoroughly vetted—and virtually flawless.

In 2020, Illinois legislators proposed a near-identical bill. When the COVID-19 prematurely ended that legislative session, Senate leadership declared that any bills still in committee were “sine die” (adjourned “without another day”). In 2021, legislators proposed SB 2354, carefully revising the old bill’s language.

ⁱⁱ Those media outlets included, but were not limited to, Chicago’s NBC-affiliate (WMAQ), Champaign’s CBS-affiliate (WCIA), Bloomington-Normal’s *The Pantagraph*, Edwardsville’s *The Intelligencer*, Kankakee’s *Daily Journal*, Eureka’s *Woodford County Journal*, and Plano’s AM/FM WSPY News.

ⁱⁱⁱ ISBE uses “Forensic Speech” in its Illinois Secondary Course Catalog (ISCC), a coding system of course descriptions. ISBE created the ISCC to facilitate “the exchange of records as students transfer from one school to another, or to postsecondary education.” ISCC terminology “codes” specific types of classes and course content, clarifying high school students’ transcripts when they transfer schools or apply to colleges and universities. ISBE created the term “Forensic Speech” to avoid confusion with the term “speech pathology.” ISBE also provides several variations (“Forensic Speech-Inclusive,” “Forensic Speech-Debate,” and “Forensic Individual Events”) to further distinguish course-specific content. According to ISBE, deciding upon the term “Forensic Speech” was “based upon the work of the Secondary School Course Classification System: School Codes for the Exchange of Data (SCED) developed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).”

^{iv} Some Illinois school districts require speech- or debate-oriented courses as part of the state-mandated four-year ELA core. However, according to the ICTA Advocacy Committee’s research, the majority do not.

^v In 2019, legislators in both the Illinois House and Senate proposed bills similar to SB 2354. There was SB 1569, which passed with a wide majority in the Senate. But later, it was indefinitely referred to the House Rules Committee. Around the same time, HB 2258 passed unanimously in the House. But shortly after, it was referred indefinitely to the Senate Assignments Committee. Both bills would have amended the School Code by adding the word “speech” to the list of diploma-requisite electives. However, neither bill contained appending clauses. Several legislators raised questions about this, and the general word “speech.” How would students, parents, and guidance counselors interpret it? Would “speech” (left undefined by both bills) cause confusion as an ELA class listed in the School Code alongside fine arts electives? One legislator expressed concerns regarding higher education. How would colleges and universities assess “speech” on applicants’ transcripts? Legislators and IEA lobbyists determined that a *new* bill—written “in the spirit” of SB1569 and HB2258, but with appropriate clauses and ISBE’s concise language—would ease whatever apprehensions stalled the original legislation. Rather than trying to resurrect the old legislation, a new, all-encompassing bill was proposed in late January 2021.

^{vi} In addition to making the Illinois School Code consistent with the graduation requirements of other states, SB 2354 provides an option for students who, along with their guidance counselors and parent(s) or legal guardian(s), believe forensic speech coursework will be most applicable to (and best prepare students for) individualized college or career goals. This will be especially helpful if a student’s college and career choices require competency in interpersonal and small group communication, presentation-making, rhetorical speaking, oral interpretation, and interviewing skills. Overall, SB 2354 adds one more option for students to achieve personal, scholastic, and career successes.

^{vii} For example, some “Basic Certificates” and “Vocational Certificates” offered at various Illinois community colleges include: Advanced Entrepreneurship, Customer Relationship Management, Marketing, Paralegal, Personal Training, Public Safety Communications, Restaurant Operations, Substance Abuse Counseling, Supervisory and Administrative Management, and Tool and Die Making, among many others.

^{viii} ISBE’s revised Approved Coursework list contains the same courses stripped away in the early 2000s, when the Speech endorsement was “folded” into an all-encompassing ELA endorsement. See **Appendix C**.

^{ix} Among other education reforms, HB 2170 also mandates that, by the 2028-2029 school year, Illinois high school students must enroll in two years of a foreign language. When that happens, per SB 2354, students may enroll in a third year if they do not wish to take music, art, vocational education, or forensic speech. See **Appendix B**.

^x Educators and employers alike cite oral communication as key to the success of students and employees. These skills are also critical to the development of social and economic and stability. Moreover, in our globalized society, interpersonal communication skills, and the ability to work in groups and speak in public, are inarguably crucial.

^{xi} Speech—the art of speaking to inform, engage, and entertain an audience through creative, structured oral expression—lends to students’ college and career readiness, adds to a school’s climate, and fosters participation in the performing arts—of note, through statewide competitive speaking- and drama- oriented extracurriculars (including IHSA Speech Individual Events, Contest Play, Group Interpretation, and Debate). These are significant indicators of a school’s learning environment and students’ access to the practical applications of creative expression.

APPENDIX A

“SPEECH” STATE-BY-STATE

COLOR	NUMBER OF STATES	SPECIFIED SPEECH REQUIREMENT	COURSE NAMES / VARIATIONS
Green	6	One “Speech” course is an ELA requirement.	“Speech and Debate,” “Communication,” and “Speaking and Listening”
Blue	3	“Speech” course specified as an option to meet ELA requirements.	“Linguistics,” “Oral Communication,” “Speech Forensics,” “Communication Skills” “Public Speaking,” “Oral Interpretation,” “Debate,” and “Communication Proficiency”
Purple	2	Two “Speech” courses specified as options to meet Fine Arts requirements.	“Speech and Debate” and “Forensics”
Orange	1	“Communication” is a required ELA course, while “Forensics” is one option to meet a Fine Arts requirement.	“Communication” (English requirement) and “Forensics” (Fine Arts option)
Pink	1	“Oral Interpretation” is an option to meet an ELA requirement. “Speech” is an option to meet a Fine Arts requirement.	“Literature and Performance (Oral Interpretation)” (as an English option) and “Speech” (as a Fine Arts option)
Brown	3	“Oral Communication” is an option to meet a graduation requirement separate from ELA or Fine Arts.	“Oral Communication”
Red	6	“Speech” courses may be “adopted at the local level” by school boards tasked to create their own graduation requirements.	“Speech Communication,” “Debate,” “Communication,” “Public Speaking,” “Forensics,” and “Oral Interpretation”

APPENDIX B

CONTEXT: According to the Advocacy Committee’s research, on average, Illinois high schools require that students earn a minimum of 40 one-semester credits in order to graduate. Before SB 2354, most graduation requirements looked like this...

SAMPLE COURSE SELECTION SHEET: 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

FOUR YEARS / EIGHT ONE-SEMESTER CREDITS

- English I (Freshman)
- English II (Sophomore)
- English III (Junior)
- English IV (Senior)

MATHEMATICS

THREE YEARS / SIX ONE-SEMESTER CREDITS

- Algebra I
- Geometry
- Typically an Algebra II course.

SCIENCE

TWO YEARS / FOUR ONE-SEMESTER CREDITS

- Typically one Biology course.
- Typically one Physical Science.

SOCIAL STUDIES

TWO YEARS / FOUR ONE-SEMESTER CREDITS

- Must include two credits of U.S. History.
- Must include one credit of Civics.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

FOUR YEARS / EIGHT ONE-SEMESTER CREDITS

- Must include one credit of Health.
- May include Driver’s Education.

STATE-SPECIFIED ELECTIVES

ONE YEAR (TWO CREDITS) SELECTED FROM:

- Art;
- Music;
- Vocational education; or
- World Language.

ADDITIONAL (GENERAL) ELECTIVES

EIGHT ONE-SEMESTER CREDITS

May be a combination of year-long (two-credit) courses and one-semester (one-credit) courses.

EXAMPLES OF “GENERAL ELECTIVES”

BUSINESS EDUCATION: ADVERTISING, ENTREPRENUERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, ET CETERA

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS: CREATIVE WRITING, FORENSIC SPEECH, SCIENCE FICTION, ET CETERA

MATHEMATICS: ACCOUNTING, STATISTICS, ET CETERA

SCIENCE: ASTRONOMY, GEOLOGY, ROBOTICS, ET CETERA

SOCIAL STUDIES: BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE, ECONOMICS, LAW, ET CETERA

HB 2170 CHANGES THE REQUISITE COURSEWORK FOR EARNING A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA. THE BILL INADVERTENTLY “CROWDS THE FIELD,” TRIMMING THE TIME ALLOTTED IN STUDENTS’ SCHEDULES FOR ELECTIVE COURSES.

SCHOOL YEAR	NEW GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
2022-2023	Illinois high school students will be required to take one year of a course that “includes intensive instruction of computer literacy.”
2023-2024	High schools must provide students with “an opportunity [to] take at least one computer science course” containing “the study of computers and algorithms, including their principles, their hardware and software designs, their implementation, and their impact on society.” This course “[cannot] include the everyday use of computers and computer applications, such as keyboarding or accessing the Internet.”
2023-2024	Students who meet or exceed State standards in English Language Arts “shall be automatically enrolled into the next most rigorous level of advanced course in English, social studies, humanities, or related subjects.” Meeting or exceeding State standards in mathematics or science will also result in a student’s automatic enrollment in the “next most rigorous level of advanced courses” in math and science, respectively. This state-mandated “automatic enrollment” in Honors, Advanced Placement, or dual credit is intended to “reach groups of students and families who have been historically underrepresented in [advanced coursework].”
2024-2025	Students will be required to take two years of laboratory science instead of unspecified science courses.
2028-2029	Students will be required to take two years of a foreign language.

Taking into account HB 2170 and SB 2354, in 2022-2023, most Illinois high school graduation requirements may look like this—

SAMPLE COURSE SELECTION SHEET: 2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

FOUR YEARS / EIGHT ONE-SEMESTER CREDITS

- *English I (Freshman)*
- *English II (Sophomore)*
- *English III (Junior)*
- *English IV (Senior)*

MATHEMATICS

THREE YEARS / SIX ONE-SEMESTER CREDITS

- *Algebra I*
- *Geometry*
- *Typically an Algebra II course.*

SCIENCE

TWO YEARS / FOUR ONE-SEMESTER CREDITS

- *Typically one Biology course.*
- *Typically one Physical Science.*

SOCIAL STUDIES

TWO YEARS / FOUR ONE-SEMESTER CREDITS

- *Two credits of U.S. History.*
- *One credit of Civics.*

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

FOUR YEARS / EIGHT ONE-SEMESTER CREDITS

- *Must include one credit of Health.*
- *May include Driver's Education.*

CHANGED (PER HB 2170)

“COMPUTER LITERACY” (HB 2170)
 ONE YEAR / TWO ONE-SEMESTER CREDITS

- May be a **NEW CLASS**; **OR**
- May be a **CURRENT CLASS REVISED** (“intensive computer literacy” focus).

CHANGED (PER SB 2354)

STATE-SPECIFIED ELECTIVES
 ONE YEAR (TWO CREDITS) SELECTED FROM:

- *Art;*
- **FORENSIC SPEECH (SPEECH / DEBATE)**
- *Music;*
- *Vocational Education; or*
- *World Language.*

ROOM FOR **ADDITIONAL** (GENERAL) ELECTIVES
 (**INDIRECTLY NARROWED BY HB 2170**)

SIX ONE-SEMESTER CREDITS

**BY THE 2028-2029 SCHOOL YEAR,
MOST ILLINOIS HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
WILL MORE THAN LIKELY LOOK LIKE THIS...**

SAMPLE COURSE SELECTION SHEET: 2028-2029 SCHOOL YEAR

REQUIRED COURSES (PER HB 2710)

“COMPUTER LITERACY” (2022-2023)

ONE YEAR / TWO ONE-SEMESTER CREDITS
“Intensive computer literacy” focus.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (AS OF 2023-2024)

FOUR YEARS / EIGHT ONE-SEMESTER CREDITS
*“Grade-level” **OR** “autoenrollment” in Honors/AP/Dual Credit.*

MATHEMATICS (AS OF 2023-2024)

THREE YEARS / SIX ONE-SEMESTER CREDITS
*“Grade-level” **OR** “autoenrollment” in Honors/AP/Dual Credit.*

LABORATORY SCIENCE (AS OF 2024-2025)

TWO YEARS / FOUR ONE-SEMESTER CREDITS
*“Grade-level” **OR** “autoenrollment” in Honors/AP/Dual Credit.*

SOCIAL STUDIES (AS OF 2023-2024)

TWO YEARS / FOUR ONE-SEMESTER CREDITS
“Grade-level” U.S. History and Civics. (Students may be “auto-enrolled” in Honors/AP/Dual Credit versions.)

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

FOUR YEARS / EIGHT ONE-SEMESTER CREDITS
*Must include Health.
May include Driver’s Education.*

WORLD LANGUAGE (REQUIRED AS OF 2028-2029)

TWO YEARS / FOUR ONE-SEMESTER CREDITS

STATE-SPECIFIED ELECTIVES (AS OF 2028-2029)

ONE YEAR (TWO CREDITS) SELECTED FROM:

- Art;
- **FORENSIC SPEECH (SPEECH / DEBATE)**
- Music;
- Vocational Education; **OR**
- **A THIRD-YEAR OF WORLD LANGUAGE.**

ROOM FOR **ADDITIONAL** (GENERAL) ELECTIVES
(FURTHER NARROWED BY HB 2170)

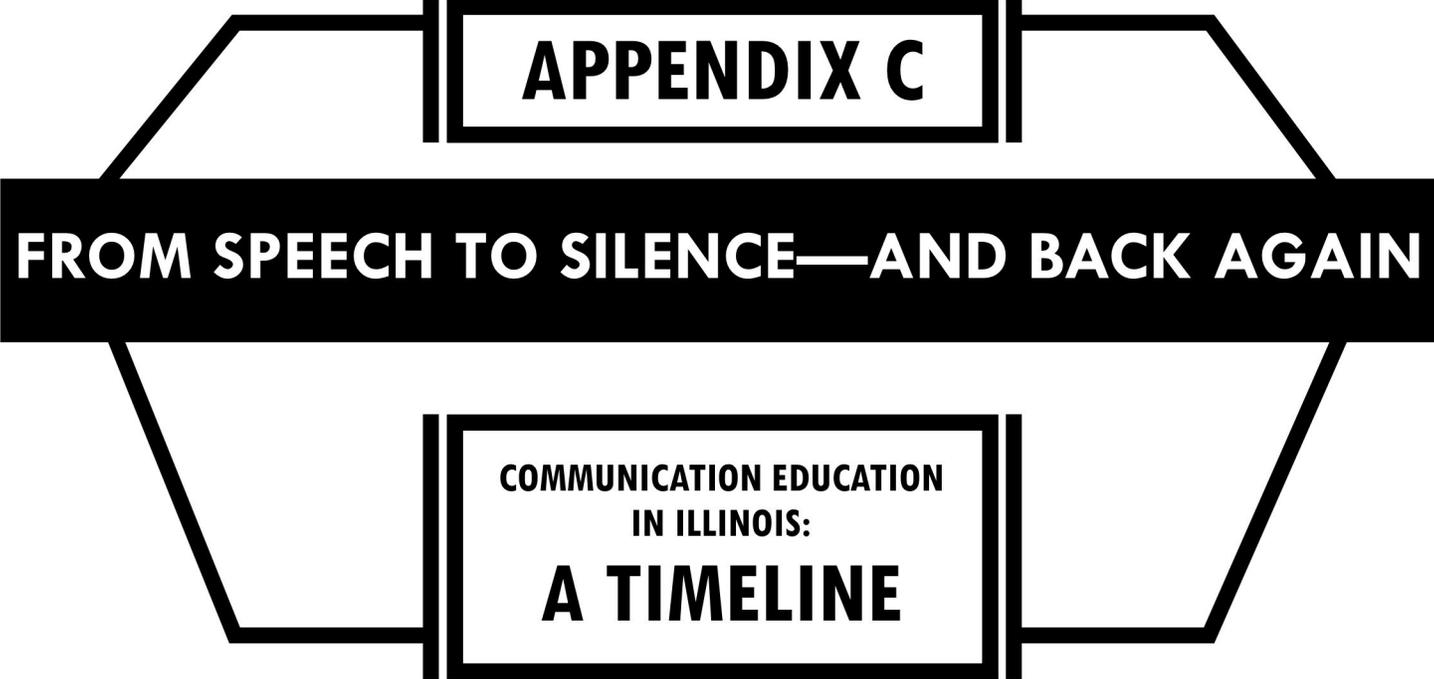
FOUR ONE-SEMESTER CREDITS
IF COMPUTER LITERACY IS COMBINED WITH ANOTHER COURSE.

*May be a combination of year-long (two-credit) courses
and one-semester (one-credit) courses.*

OR

TWO ONE-SEMESTER CREDITS
IF COMPUTER LITERACY IS COMBINED WITH ANOTHER COURSE.

*May be a a year-long (two-credit) course
or two one-semester (one-credit) courses.*



APPENDIX C

FROM SPEECH TO SILENCE—AND BACK AGAIN

**COMMUNICATION EDUCATION
IN ILLINOIS:
A TIMELINE**

1917—1918

For the first time, on a national scale, “Speech” is offered as an elective high school course. One year later, representing the National Council of Teachers of English, in her essay “Public Speaking In The High School,” Oak Park and River Forest Township High School teacher Margaret Hungerford Dixon writes:

“[A] high school can put nothing into its curriculum that is so vital to the student as a public-speaking course. . . . [Of] what good [is] the knowledge of any [subject] if [a student] is unable finally to express himself so that others may understand him?”

“[Students] want to express their ideas on the problems they are living with. . . . Therefore it behooves us to provide for them a channel through which such expression shall be guided [and] where ideas may be tested or clarified. If we are hoping for a larger and more real democracy in the future, we must prepare our young people for the larger and more individual responsibilities of such a democracy. . . . to express himself frankly and effectively and to listen to the ideas of others intelligently and tolerantly.”



1940s—1950s

The United States emerges from World War II as a global economic, political, and military superpower. The economic rebound and national Baby Boom cultivate an unprecedented demand for well-educated workforce professionals. Parents worry about whether their children would have the education necessary to succeed in an increasingly competitive economy. At this time, Illinois does not require certification to become a teacher.

By 1955, nearly 80-percent of eligible students are enrolled in secondary schools. For the first time, the median education level of American youth becomes a high school diploma. The total number of Baby Boomers will eventually peak at 78.8 million Americans.

1950s—1960s

Formal teacher certification begins in Illinois. To teach Speech and English classes, teaching candidates must earn a “Rhetoric” certification.

Teacher education becomes increasingly professionalized. State licensing requirements become stricter. Teacher certification candidates are now required to earn advanced degrees; working teachers are required to engage in professional development. In most states, subject matter preparation for English includes grammar, literature, composition, and speech components. Students studying to become secondary education teachers were given specific instruction in their selected field of study as well as in educational pedagogy. For the first time, student teaching (“field experiences”) is mandated.

1960s—1980s

As the economy improves, so does sophistication. The belief is that specialized classes should be taught by specialized teachers. Illinois begins adding different certifications and teaching endorsements. Since taking a Speech class is a graduation requirement at more than half of Illinois high schools, Speech becomes a teaching endorsement. Speech and English receive separate certification paths, as it is recognized that both are unique disciplines with distinct foci.

By the 1980s, Speech or a speech-oriented class is a graduation requirement at more than half of all Illinois high schools.

1995—1996

The Illinois General Assembly (IGA) reaches an agreement on school reforms. Along with improved funding, one provision of the bill dramatically reduces the size of the ISBE from 17 to nine. Regional representation is required, but members and the chairperson are to be appointed by the Governor. This brings the board more directly under the Governor's control.

ISBE adopts "The Illinois Framework for Restructuring the Recruitment, Preparation, Licensure and Continuing Professional Development of Teachers." The framework calls for the adoption of professional standards intended to "define what teachers are expected to know and be able to do."

1997-1999

In July 1997, under State Superintendent of Education **JOSEPH SPAGNOLO**, ISBE approves Illinois Learning Standards (ILS), intended to "clearly define what students should know and be able to do as a result of their public schooling." Standards are created exclusively for English Language Arts (ELA), but not Speech. (ELA standards do include several Speech-oriented "performance descriptors.")

In December, the IGA passes a school funding bill, **HB 452 (P.A. 90-548)**. HB 452 contains a provision establishing a multi-tiered licensure system and defining certificate renewal requirements. However, inasmuch as HB 452 required that ISBE "created a brand new way for Illinois to certify its teachers," the bill "left the details" up in the air.

In 1998, ISBE formally adopts the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (IPTS). ISBE decides that the next step is to have these standards supplemented by content-area standards specific to certification and endorsement areas. (This will set the stage for reducing the number of teaching endorsements available in Illinois.)

In mid-July, Spagnolo submits his resignation to ISBE, effective August 31, 1998: "I have accomplished what I was hired to do, to set the Illinois education system on a course of change and reform . . ." Spagnolo is credited for "creating a new certification system and requirements." ISBE appoints **ROBERT MANDEVILLE** as Interim State Superintendent to begin running the agency September 1. (Previously, Mandeville headed the Illinois Bureau of the Budget under **GOVERNOR JIM THOMPSON** and **GOVERNOR JIM EDGAR**.)

In 1999, a new State Superintendent of Schools, **DR. GLENN MCGEE**, is given an assignment by education leaders in the legislature: Pass a bill on teacher certification. Passing the legislation (**P.A. 91-102**) proves to be a long, laborious task. The bill eventually passes in both chambers with overwhelming support.

Throughout 2000, educators participate in advisory panels to develop content-area standards for teaching specializations. Panel members are encouraged to “streamline” the “dizzying system” of endorsements. Many panel members defend keeping Speech as a teacher endorsement separate from English Language Arts.

ISBE sets its agenda for a Plenary Business Meeting on May 19, 2000, at which a “more coherent” system for endorsements will be discussed. At the time, over half of Illinois high schools still require Speech. However, ISBE specifically states the Speech teacher endorsement “warrant[s] closer examination.” According to the ISBE agenda memo, “objections were voiced about combining speech with English Language Arts.” Concerns “are understandable but the standards for English Language Arts are intended to provide assurance that all such teachers are sufficiently well prepared in speech.”

In June 2000, ISBE announces that it will require high school students to take the ACT along with the new Prairie State Achievement Exam. Neither test assesses speaking and listening skills. That same month, ISBE makes its final recommendations regarding endorsements, including the elimination of the Speech endorsement.

In 2001, Illinois is faced with dwindling state revenue for the first time in 50 years. At the same time, landmark federal legislation, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), is written. By December 2001, Glenn McGee is ousted as state superintendent.

In 2002, NCLB takes effect. It has a sweeping impact on U.S. public school classrooms, specifically what students are taught, the tests they take, the training of their teachers, and the way money is spent on education. The passing of NCLB coincides with the IGA cutting funding and resources to ISBE, including its phone service. As a result, ISBE is overworked. So many certifications require more work than the ISBE has in staff. Certifying the Speech endorsement is scrutinized; if the endorsement is cut, ISBE argues it will be one less endorsement to certify.

On February 1, 2002, ISBE appoints **RESPICIO VAZQUEZ** as new interim state superintendent. In July 2002, ISBE names **ROBERT SCHILLER** as the new State Superintendent of Education, making him the state’s third superintendent since December 2001.

In 2002, ISBE releases its “English Language Arts Performance Descriptors.” Reading fluency, literary analysis, composition writing, and language use are given top priority. The teaching of speech communication in a “regular” English classroom is limited to a single, vague descriptor: “Students should be able to . . . listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations.”

In early 2003, **GOVERNOR ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH** takes office. He orders a reduction in the total number of Illinois Regional Offices of Education from 45 to 22 statewide.

In an August 1, 2003 memo to the Regional Superintendents and Special Education Directors District Superintendents, State Superintendent of Education **ROBERT SCHILLER** writes: “Because of line item budget cuts by the Governor, the Department of Certification and Professional Development has sustained a loss of 20 positions, about 45% of the current staff . . . Because of the staff reductions and the volume of applications for certification and/or endorsements, we have a significant backlog of pending cases . . . [We] have suspended our work on the regular transcript review cases due to our budget cutbacks . . . We strongly encourage you to develop or adapt programs and activities that will help your teachers meet the new Standard Certificate requirements.” Some Illinois high schools “adapt” by eliminating required Speech courses, believing that Standard Certificate requirements for English Language Arts provide teachers with enough content knowledge to teach speech. However, to become a certified English Language Arts teacher in Illinois, ISBE does not require teachers to take a single speech-specific course.

In doing so, three problems arise:

1. ELA teachers felt their current curriculum was already full, and they had no time to include additional material.
2. ELA teachers were often insufficiently trained in speaking and listening instruction.
3. ELA teachers rarely get professional development in oral communication; they typically frequent literature and composition training. Oral communication training is difficult for ELA teachers to access.

In July 2004, Content Area Tests are revised to meet the new standards. The Speech endorsement is officially eliminated.

In September 2004, ISBE appoints **DR. RANDY J. DUNN** to the position of Interim State Superintendent of Education. He succeeds Robert Schiller, who resigned.

Northern Illinois high schools cut Speech class requirement en masse. Central and Southern Illinois high schools slowly follow suit. Again, the general belief is that speaking and listening skills will be adequately addressed in other English classes.

“SETTING THE STAGE” FOR CHANGE

2010—2019

In 2010, Illinois adopts the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts, updating the state’s existing learning standards. Outlined and supported by educators and researchers nationwide, Common Core stress the importance of oral communication skills. ACT College Readiness Standards also identify oral communication skills as central to success in education and the workforce.

Speech is no longer a requirement at the majority of Illinois high schools. Rigorous communication education is relegated to speech— and debate-oriented electives. Simultaneously, frequently changing high school graduation requirements limit students’ access to electives in general. This, in turn, limits students’ access to rigorous communication coursework.

Ongoing studies demonstrate a lack of formal speech education in secondary schools places students at a deficit upon entering college and the workforce. Research also indicates that a “communication crisis” continues to impact Millennials (Americans born between 1982 and 2004). Taking into account (1) the time period in which the Speech endorsement “collapsed,” and (2) when the required Speech class was eliminated, most Millennials born in 1990 or 1991 who attended an Illinois high school likely “slipped through the cracks,” receiving little-to-no formal speech education. (Projections by the U.S. Census Bureau indicate there will be 73 million Millennials by 2019—the largest generation of Americans since the Baby Boom.)

Prior to COVID, major sociopolitical events involve protests by students in school districts where “Forensics” is a specified option to meet a graduation requirement. Margaret Hungerford Dixon’s argument comes full circle: “If we are hoping for a larger and more real democracy in the future, we must prepare our young people for the larger and more individual responsibilities of such a democracy.”

“SETTING THE STAGE” FOR CHANGE

2020—2021

ILTS content area exams undergo comprehensive revisions “to ensure that [they] accurately reflect the minimum content knowledge and basic skills required of the Illinois public school educator.” The revised ELA exam contains an expanded, more rigorous Speaking, Listening, and Viewing section. The study guide for the revised ELA content area exam contains sample questions covering 40 speaking and listening-specific topics and learning objectives, including “oral language activities; whole- and small-group collaboration; promoting civil, democratic discussions; nonverbal and verbal communication; speech delivery; vocal qualities; audience, context, setting, and purpose; speech and presentation assessment strategies; active, critical, and selective listening; and evaluating the stated and implied meanings of spoken messages,” among others.

Around the same time, ISBE changes its ELA (Senior High) endorsement criteria, considerably expanding its list of acceptable content area coursework to include a section called “Speech.” To earn an ELA (Senior High) endorsement, teacher candidates may take courses in interpersonal communication, oral communication, oral interpretation and group discussion, public relations, public speaking, and “speech, voice and movement techniques.” These additions to the ISBE Approved Coursework list are among the same courses stripped from the list in the early 2000s, when ISBE “folded” its Speech endorsement into an all-encompassing ELA endorsement.

Concurrently, ISBE tasks in-state college and university teacher preparation programs to revise their required courses, such that colleges and universities “consider all additions to the Approved Coursework list.” So long as content area coursework is selected from ISBE’s updated list, that college or university’s program will meet Illinois standards. ELA teacher candidates are not required to take communication courses. However, for the first time in almost two decades, ISBE will “count” communications-specific courses from the defunct Speech endorsement toward the receipt of an ELA teacher license.

In August 2021, the IGA passes **SB 2354 (P.A. 102-0551)**, “setting the stage” for the maintenance and expansion of forensic speech in Illinois high schools.



102ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
State of Illinois
2021 and 2022
SB2354

Introduced 2/26/2021, by Sen. Sue Rezin

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

105 ILCS 5/27-22

from Ch. 122, par. 27-22

Amends the Courses of Study Article of the School Code. Adds forensic speech (speech and debate) to the music, art, foreign language, or vocational education elective that a pupil may choose to satisfy the one year prerequisite that each pupil entering the 9th grade is required to successfully complete to receive a high school diploma. Provides that a forensic speech course used to satisfy the course requirement in language arts may not be used to satisfy a forensic speech course chosen as an elective course.

LRB102 17155 CMG 22587 b

AN ACT concerning education.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The School Code is amended by changing Section 27-22 as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/27-22) (from Ch. 122, par. 27-22)
Sec. 27-22. Required high school courses.

(6) One year chosen from (A) music, (B) art, (C) foreign language, which shall be deemed to include American Sign Language, ~~or~~ (D) vocational education, or (E) forensic speech (speech and debate). A forensic speech course used to satisfy the course requirement under subdivision (1) may not be used to satisfy the course requirement under this subdivision (6).

SOURCES

- Abbott, Jennifer, et al. *Public Speaking and Democratic Participation: Speech, Deliberation, and Analysis in the Civic Realm*. Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Abraham, Renee. Personal interview. 30 Apr. 2020.
- Abraham, Renee. Personal interview. 20 May 2020.
- Abraham, Renee. Personal interview. 12 Apr. 2021.
- Abraham, Renee. Personal interview. 15 Apr. 2021.
- Abraham, Renee. Personal interview. 21 Apr. 2021.
- Abraham, Renee. Personal interview. 3 Sept. 2021.
- Abraham, Renee. Personal interview. 13 Sept. 2021.
- Agrawal, AJ. "Millennials Are Struggling with Face to Face Communication: Here's Why." *Forbes*, 4 May. 2017, forbes.com/sites/ajagrawal/2017/05/04/millennials-are-struggling-with-face-to-face-communication-heres-why/?sh=3c3eb7c426e8. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.
- Annual Report. *Improvements to the Illinois Certification System: An Annual Report*. Illinois State Board of Education, , 1 Jan. 2001. Accessed 17 Feb. 2018.
- Barrins, Patrick. "Welter HS Prerequisites Bill Heads to Illinois House." *WCSJ News*, Nelson E. Media Inc., 1 Apr. 2019, wcsjnews.com/news/local/welter-hs-prerequisites-bill-heads-to-illinois-house/article_bb758ec8-547e-11e9-be38-bf3c813e0979.html. Accessed 2 Apr. 2019.
- "Bills Going Into Effect In 2022." *Illinois Senate Democrats Communications Department*, illinoisenatedemocrats.com/images/2021/bills-taking-effect-2022.pdf. Accessed 10 Jan. 2022.
- Brenner, Laurie. "Requirements to Graduate High School in Kansas." *The Classroom: Empowering Students in Their College Journey*, theclassroom.com/requirements-graduate-high-school-kansas-6624064.html. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.
- Bump, Phillip. "Here Is When Each Generation Begins and Ends, According to Facts." *The Atlantic*, 25 Mar. 2014, theatlantic.com/national/archive/2014/03/here-is-when-each-generation-begins-and-ends-according-to-facts/359589/. Accessed 20 Mar. 2018.
- Chen, Grace. "The Benefits of Professional Certification from Your Local Community College." *Community College Review*, 2 Nov. 2020, communitycollegereview.com/blog/the-benefits-of-professional-certification-from-your-local-community-college. Accessed 1 Dec. 2020.
- "College and Career Pathway Endorsement." *Illinois State Board of Education*, isbe.net/pathwayendorsements. Accessed 9 Sept. 2020.
- "Certificate Programs." *College of DuPage*, cod.edu/academics/programs/career_technical_programs.aspx. Accessed 1 Sept. 2022.
- "Course and Credit Requirements." *Indiana Department of Education*, in.gov/doe/files/core-40-and-honors-diploma-summary-class-2016-updated-june-2018.pdf. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.
- "Curriculum and Instruction." *Georgia Department of Education*, gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/Documents/Fine-Arts/State-Funded-List-of-Subjects-and-Courses-Supported-by-SBOE-Rule-160-4-2-20.pdf. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.
- "Curriculum Support Standards and Courses." *Arkansas Department of Education*, arkansased.gov/public/userfiles/Learning_Services/Curriculum%20Support/Standards%20and%20Courses/English_Language_Arts/Oral_Communication_One_Semester_2016.pdf. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.

- Denney, Sean. Personal interview. 13 Sept. 2019.
- Denney, Sean. Personal interview. 2 Oct. 2019.
- Denney, Sean. Personal interview. 12 Nov. 2019.
- Denney, Sean. Personal interview. 3 March Mar. 2020.
- Denney, Sean. Personal interview. 29 May 2021.
- Dixon, Margaret Hungerford. "Public Speaking in the High School." *The English Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 9 (Nov., 1918), pp. 564-569.
- "The Education Year in Review – 1995-1996." *Illinois Association of School Boards*, iasb.com/review/year9596.cfm. Accessed 17 Feb. 2018.
- "The Education Year in Review – 1996-1997." *Illinois Association of School Boards*, iasb.com/review/year9697.cfm. Accessed 17 Feb. 2018.
- "The Education Year in Review – 1997-1998." *Illinois Association of School Boards*, iasb.com/review/year9798.cfm. Accessed 17 Feb. 2018.
- "The Education Year in Review – 1998-1999." *Illinois Association of School Boards*, iasb.com/review/year9899.cfm. Accessed 17 Feb. 2018.
- "The Education Year in Review – 2000-2001." *Illinois Association of School Boards*, iasb.com/review/year0001.cfm. Accessed 17 Feb. 2018.
- "Educator Licensure Testing." *Illinois State Board of Education*, isbe.net/Pages/Educator-Licensure-Testing.aspx. Accessed 1 Dec. 2020.
- Emerson, Jakob. "New Education Bill Would Raise High School Graduation Requirements Statewide." *KHQA*, 26 Jan. 2021, khqa.com/newsletter-daily/new-education-bill-would-raise-high-school-graduation-requirements-statewide. Accessed 1 Feb. 2021.
- "English Language Arts (207)." *ILTS: Illinois Licensure Testing System*, Pearson Education, Inc., il.nesinc.com/TestView.aspx?f=HTML_FRAG/IL207_TestPage.html. Accessed 1 Jan. 2022.
- "English Language Arts Performance Descriptors Grades 6-12." *Illinois State Board of Education*, 2002, 206.166.105.35/ils/archive/ela/capd.htm. Microsoft Word file. Accessed 17 Feb. 2018.
- Evans, A. L., et al. "Public Speaking in a Democracy." *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 31.4 (2004): 325-329.
- "Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)." *Illinois State Board of Education*, isbe.net/essa. Accessed 11 July 2019.
- "Every Student Succeeds Act." Conference Presentation. NEA Educator Voice Academy Conference, 12-13 July 2019, Fairmont Chicago Millennium Park.
- Fitzpatrick, Maria D., and Sarah E. Turner. "Blurring the Boundary: Changes in the Transition from College Participation to Adulthood." *The Price of Independence: The Economics of Early Adulthood*, edited by Sheldon Danziger and Cecilia Elena Rouse., Russell Sage Foundation, 2007, pp. 107-137.
- Florida, State. § 1003.4282 Florida Statutes. *Online Sunshine*, The Florida Legislature, 2022, leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=1000-1099/1003/Sections/1003.4282.html. Accessed 26 Jan. 2022.
- Fox, Emily. Personal interview. 9 March 2021.
- Fry, Richard. "Millennials Projected to Overtake Baby Boomers as America's Largest Generation." *Pew Research Center*, 1 Mar. 2018, pewresearch.org/millennials-overtake-baby-boomers/. Accessed 20 Mar. 2018.
- Goldin, Claudia Dale, and Lawrence F. Katz. *The Race between Education and Technology*. Harvard University Press, 2008.

- “Graduation Guidelines.” *Colorado Department of Education*, cde.state.co.us. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.
- “Graduation Handbook.” *Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*, dese.mo.gov. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.
- “Graduation Requirements.” *Iowa Department of Education*, educateiowa.gov. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.
- “Graduation Requirements.” *Louisiana Department of Education*, louisianabelieves.com. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.
- “Graduation Requirements.” *North Dakota Department of Education*, nd.gov. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.
- “Graduation Requirements.” *South Dakota Department of Education*, doe.sd.gov. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.
- “Graduation Information.” *Texas Education Agency*, tea.texas.gov. Accessed 22 Aug. 2019.
- “Graduation Requirements.” *Utah Department of Education*, schools.utah.gov. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.
- Hancock, Peter. “Gov. Pritzker Signs 40+ Bills into Law.” *The Daily Journal*, 28 Aug. 2021, daily-journal.com/news/illinois/gov-pritzker-signs-40-bills-into-law. Accessed 9 Sept. 2021.
- Hancock, Peter. “Illinois Lawmakers Passed Education, Economic Equity Bills. What Will They Do?” *Peoria Journal Star*, Journal Star, 18 Jan. 2021, pjstar.com/story/news/2021/01/18/illinois-lawmakers-ok-education-economic-equity-bills-what-do-they-do/4197010001/.
- “High Schoolers Interact with Extremist Groups in Tolerance-Building Course.” *K-12 Dive*, Industry Dive, February 1, 2019, k12dive.com/news/high-schoolers-interact-with-extremist-groups-in-tolerance-building-course/547312/. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.
- “High School Graduation.” *Arizona Department of Education*, 29 June 2017, azed.gov/adeinfo/hsgrad/. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.
- “High School Graduation Resources.” *Oklahoma State Department of Education*, sde.ok.gov/achieving-classroom-excellence-resources. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.
- Homes, Susan. “ESSA Implementation in Illinois.” *IPA Connect*, Illinois Principals Association, 6-5-2018, http://connect.ilprincipals.org/blogs/susan-homes/2018/06/05/essa-implementation-in-illinois. Accessed 9 Sept. 2019.
- “IASB Legislative Report 102-21.” *Illinois Association of School Boards*, iasb.com/advocacy/legislative-reports/iasb-legislative-alert/iasb-legislative-report-102-21/. Accessed 25 Jan. 2022.
- “Idaho High School Graduation Requirements.” *Next Steps Idaho*, Idaho State Board of Education, nextsteps.idaho.gov/resources/idaho-high-school-graduation-requirements. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.
- Illinois, State, Elementary and Secondary Education: School Curriculum and Policies Committee. *Hearing* 12 May 2021. 102nd General Assembly, Spring Session.
- Illinois, State, HB 2170. *Illinois General Assembly*, 8 March 2021, www.ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?DocNum=2170&GAID=15&DocTypeID=HB&LegID=117893&SessionID=108. Accessed 26 Jan. 2022.
- Illinois, State, Senate Education Committee. *Hearing*, 20 April 2021. 102nd General Assembly, Spring Session.
- Illinois, State, SB 2354, *Illinois General Assembly*, 20 Aug. 2021, https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?DocNum=2354&GAID=16&DocTypeID=SB&SessionID=110&GA=102. Accessed 26 Jan. 2022.
- “Illinois Professional Teaching Standards.” *Physics Teacher Education Program*, Illinois State University, www.phy.ilstu.edu/pte/209content/ipts.html. Accessed 17 Feb. 2018.
- “Illinois State Course System (ISCS).” *Illinois State Board of Education*, isbe.net/Pages/Illinois-State-Course-System.aspx. Accessed 25 Jan. 2022.
- Improvements to the Illinois Certification System: An Annual Report*. Illinois State Board of Education, 1 Jan. 2001.
- Jennings, Douglas. Personal interview. 14 Feb. 2018.

Jennings, Douglas. Personal interview. 16 April 2018.

"Legislative Highlights for the Week of May 14." *Illinois Federation of Teachers*, ift-aft.org/amp/legislative-highlights-for-the-week-of-may-14. Accessed 2 Jan. 2022.

"Legislative Wins." *IEA 2021 Legislative Session Wrap Up*, Illinois Education Association, 26 December 2021.

"McCombie 2021 Capitol Report." *Tony McCombie*, repmccombie.com, 7 Dec. 2021, repmccombie.com/2021/12/07/mccombie-2021-capitol-report. Accessed 15 Jan. 2022.

Moore, Brenden. "New Year, New Laws." *Woodford County Journal*, 6 Jan. 2022, pantagraph.com/community/wcj/news/new-year-new-laws/article_56262824-6f2f-11ec-918c-cbcbb0488cce.html. Accessed 6 Jan. 2022.

NBC Chicago. "Hundreds of New Laws Now in Effect for Illinois in 2022. Here Are 50 to Know About." *WMAQ*, 1 Jan. 2022, nbcchicago.com/news/local/chicago-politics/hundreds-of-new-laws-now-in-effect-for-illinois-in-2022-here-are-50-to-know-about/2719038/. Accessed 2 Jan. 2022.

"New Year, New Laws Taking Effect." *ISDC*, Illinois Senate Democratic Caucus, 14 Dec. 2021, illinoissenatedemocrats.com/caucus-news/3337-new-year-new-laws-taking-effect. Accessed 26 Jan. 2022.

"New State Laws Go into Effect." *WSPY NEWS*, WSPYnews.com, wspynews.com/news/local/new-state-laws-go-into-effect/article_26035186-6f06-11ec-a870-67aa33a234d4.html. Accessed 15 Jan. 2022.

O'Regan, Michelle. Personal interview. 2 Mar. 2020.

O'Regan, Michelle. Personal interview. 5 Mar. 2020.

O'Regan, Michelle. Personal interview. 6 Mar. 2020.

Palmer, Erik. "Why Schools Need to Do a Better Job of Teaching Speaking Skills." *Education Week*, 11 Feb. 2016.

"Plenary Business Meeting, May 19, 2000." *Illinois State Board of Education*, 2000. Accessed 17 Feb. 2018.

Price, Shepard. "Around 300 New Laws Went into Effect in the New Year. Here Are Some Highlights." *Alton Telegraph*, 4 Jan. 2022, thetelegraph.com/news/article/Around-300-new-laws-went-into-effect-in-the-new-16746674.php. Accessed 5 Jan. 2022.

Price, Shepard. "Around 300 New Laws Went into Effect in the New Year. Here Are Some Highlights." *The Edwardsville Intelligencer*, 4 Jan. 2022, theintelligencer.com/news/article/Around-300-new-laws-went-into-effect-in-the-new-16746716.php. Accessed 10 Jan. 2019.

"Public Policy: Graduation Requirements." *CAPSS*, capss.org/public-policy-2018/ct-high-school-graduation-requirements/brief-3-flexible-and-multiple-pathways. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.

"Quick Reference: Courses That Can Be Taught." *Michigan Department of Education*, michigan.gov/documents/mde/courses_taught_by_endorsement_523203_7.pdf. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.

Rashid, Brian. "Two Reasons Millennial Leaders Struggle with Communication and How to Help Them." *Forbes*, 4 May 2017, forbes.com/sites/brianrashid/2017/05/04/two-reasons-millennials-leaders-struggle-with-communication-and-how-to-help-them/?sh=39dd2bdec671. Accessed 9 Sept. 2018.

Ravitch, Diane. *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001.

Rezin, Sue. Personal interview. 8 Jan. 2020.

Ritz, Justin. "Speech Curriculum Could Be Coming Back to Illinois Schools." *WCSJ News*, Nelson E Media Inc., 1 Feb. 2020, wcsjnews.com/news/local/speech-curriculum-could-be-coming-back-to-illinois-schools. Accessed 5 Feb. 2020.

Rosen, L.D., Carrier, L.M. & Cheever, N. A. *Rewired: Understanding the iGeneration and the Way They Learn*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

"Round Up: Nearly 300 Illinois Laws Take Effect January 1." *WCIA*, 27 Dec. 2021, wcia.com/news/roundup-nearly-300-illinois-laws-take-effect-january-1/amp/. Accessed 2 Jan. 2022.

- Schiller, Robert. *Memo to the Regional Superintendents and Special Education Directors District Superintendents, ISBE, 1 Aug. 2003.* [http://206.166.105.35/board/archivemessages/2003/message\(2\)8-1-03.htm](http://206.166.105.35/board/archivemessages/2003/message(2)8-1-03.htm). Accessed 17 Feb. 2018.
- "The State Title II Report." *Illinois State Board of Education*, October 2001. 206.166.105.35/nclb/csa/appendices/schrtc card.pdf. Accessed 17 February 2018.
- "Subsequent Teaching Endorsements." *Illinois State Board of Education*, www.isbe.net/Pages/Subsequent-Teaching-Endorsements.aspx. Accessed 12 Dec. 2020.
- "Superintendent's Archived Messages." *Illinois State Board of Education*, 2003. 206.166.105.35/board/archivemessages/2003/archivemessage.htm. Accessed 17 February 2018.
- "Title 14 Education: Delaware Administrative Code." *Delaware Department of Education*, regulations.delaware.gov/AdminCode/title14/500/505.pdf. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.
- Troncoso, Raymon. "Pritzker Signs Black Caucus-Backed Education Equity Bill into Law." *The News-Gazette*, www.thenews-gazette.com, 8 Mar. 2021, www.news-gazette.com/coronavirus/pritzker-signs-black-caucus-backed-education-equity-bill-into-law/article_1884f903-4833-5957-868f-7f96e0d808ba.html.
- Turner, Lizzie. "What You Need to Know about an Arts Indicator for Illinois Schools." *State Matters*, Medium, 30 Jan. 2019, medium.com/state-matters/what-you-need-to-know-about-an-arts-indicator-for-illinois-schools-40ca3f0b9795. Accessed 11 July 2019.
- Twenge, Jean M., and Madeleine Maby. *I-Gen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy, and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood, and What That Means for the Rest of Us*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017.
- "Tests." *Illinois Licensure Testing System*, Pearson, www.il.nesinc.com/PageView.aspx?f=GEN_Tests.html. Accessed 1 Nov. 2021.
- "Vocational Certificates." *Elgin Community College*, elgin.edu/academics/degrees-certificates/career-and-technical-education-certificate-programs/vocational-specialist. Accessed 1 Sept. 2021.
- Westbury, Ian. "State-Based Curriculum-Making: the Illinois Learning Standards." *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, vol. 48, no. 6, 22 Nov. 2016, pp. 783-802.
- "What the No Child Left Behind Law Means for Your Child." *Great Schools*, 21 Mar. 2012, greatschools.org/gk/articles/no-child-left-behind/. Accessed 17 Feb. 2018.
- "WVHS Graduation Requirements." *West Virginia Department of Education*, apps.sos.wv.gov/adlaw/csr/readfile.aspx?DocId=52997&Format=PDF. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.