



## 103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### State of Illinois

2023 and 2024

SB2225

Introduced 2/10/2023, by Sen. Suzy Glowiak Hilton

#### SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

105 ILCS 5/11E-140 new

Creates the Classrooms First Commission. Provides for the membership and support of the Commission. Requires the Commission to make recommendations to the Governor, the General Assembly, and the electorate on the number of school districts in this State and where reorganization and realignment of school districts into unit districts would be beneficial. Sets forth what areas the recommendations must focus on, including drafting recommendations to reduce the statewide total number of school districts through the reorganization of school districts into unit districts. Provides that, on or before May 1, 2024, the Commission must vote on its recommendations and file a report with the Governor and the General Assembly. Provides that if the Commission adopts the recommendations by an affirmative vote of at least 13 of its members, then the Commission's specific recommendations for reorganization of school districts into unit districts shall be filed with the appropriate regional superintendent of schools. Sets forth the regional superintendent's and State Superintendent of Education's duties with respect to the recommendations. Repeals these provisions on January 31, 2026. Effective immediately.

LRB103 30694 RJT 57167 b

1 AN ACT concerning education.

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

4 Section 1. This Act may be referred to as the Classrooms  
5 First Act.

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

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

9 Sec. 11E-140. Classrooms First Commission.

10 (a) The Classrooms First Commission is created. The  
11 Commission shall consist of all of the following voting  
12 members:

13 (1) one member appointed by the Governor, who shall  
14 serve as the chairperson;

15 (2) one member appointed by the State Board of  
16 Education;

17 (3) one member appointed by the Speaker of the House  
18 of Representatives;

19 (4) one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the  
20 House of Representatives;

21 (5) one member appointed by the President of the  
22 Senate;

1           (6) one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the  
2           Senate;

3           (7) a representative appointed by the head of the  
4           largest statewide professional teachers' organization, as  
5           measured by the number of members reported in its most  
6           recent federal Form LM-2 Labor Organization Annual Report;

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

12           (9) a representative appointed by the head of an  
13           organization that represents school boards, appointed by  
14           the head of that organization;

15           (10) a representative appointed by the head of a  
16           statewide organization that represents school principals,  
17           appointed by the head of that organization;

18           (11) a parent of a child enrolled in or a teacher or an  
19           administrator employed by a school located in the West  
20           Cook region of the State Board of Education's Statewide  
21           System of Support Fiscal Agents (Region 1-B-B), appointed  
22           by the chairperson of the Commission;

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

1 by the chairperson of the Commission;

2 (13) a parent of a child enrolled in or a teacher or an  
3 administrator employed by a school located in the North  
4 Cook region of the State Board of Education's Statewide  
5 System of Support Fiscal Agents (Region 1-B-D), appointed  
6 by the chairperson of the Commission;

7 (14) a parent of a child enrolled in or a teacher or an  
8 administrator employed by a school located in the  
9 Northeast region of the State Board of Education's  
10 Statewide System of Support Fiscal Agents (Area 1-C),  
11 appointed by the chairperson of the Commission;

12 (15) a parent of a child enrolled in or a teacher or an  
13 administrator employed by a school located in the  
14 Northwest region of the State Board of Education's  
15 Statewide System of Support Fiscal Agents (Area 2),  
16 appointed by the chairperson of the Commission;

17 (16) a parent of a child enrolled in or a teacher or an  
18 administrator employed by a school located in the West  
19 Central region of the State Board of Education's Statewide  
20 System of Support Fiscal Agents (Area 3), appointed by the  
21 chairperson of the Commission;

22 (17) a parent of a child enrolled in or a teacher or an  
23 administrator employed by a school located in the East  
24 Central region of the State Board of Education's Statewide  
25 System of Support Fiscal Agents (Area 4), appointed by the  
26 chairperson of the Commission;

1           (18) a parent of a child enrolled in or a teacher or an  
2           administrator employed by a school located in the  
3           Southwest region of the State Board of Education's  
4           Statewide System of Support Fiscal Agents (Area 5),  
5           appointed by the chairperson of the Commission;

6           (19) a parent of a child enrolled in or a teacher or an  
7           administrator employed by a school located in the  
8           Southeast region of the State Board of Education's  
9           Statewide System of Support Fiscal Agents (Area 6),  
10          appointed by the chairperson of the Commission;

11          (20) a representative appointed by the head of an  
12          association that represents school business officials;

13          (21) a representative appointed by the head of an  
14          association that represents school administrators;

15          (22) a representative appointed by the head of an  
16          association that represents administrators of special  
17          education;

18          (23) a representative appointed by the head of a  
19          statewide parent organization;

20          (24) a representative appointed by the head of an  
21          organization that represents high school districts; and

22          (25) a representative appointed by the head of an  
23          association that represents regional superintendents of  
24          schools.

25          Members shall serve without compensation, but shall be  
26          reimbursed for their reasonable and necessary expenses from

1 funds appropriated for that purpose. Members shall be  
2 reimbursed for their travel expenses from appropriations to  
3 the State Board of Education available for that purpose and  
4 subject to the rules of the appropriate travel control board.  
5 The Commission shall meet at the call of the Chairperson, with  
6 the initial meeting of the Commission being held within 90  
7 days after the effective date of this amendatory Act of the  
8 103rd General Assembly, and shall hold public hearings  
9 throughout this State, including at least one hearing in each  
10 of the nine school district support regions that do not  
11 include Chicago (Region 1-A). The State Board of Education  
12 shall provide assistance and necessary staff support services  
13 to the Commission.

14 (b) The purpose of the Commission is to make  
15 recommendations to the electorate, the Governor, and the  
16 General Assembly on whether the number of school districts in  
17 this State is appropriate and whether reorganization and  
18 realignment of those districts would be beneficial. The  
19 Commission's recommendations must take into consideration the  
20 school needs and conditions of the affected districts and in  
21 the area adjacent to the district, the division of funds and  
22 assets that will result from the action described in the  
23 petition, the best interests of the schools of the area, and  
24 the best interests and the educational welfare of the pupils  
25 residing in the district, and shall focus on all of the  
26 following areas:

1           (1) reducing the money spent on the duplication of  
2           efforts;

3           (2) improving the education of students by having  
4           fewer obstacles between qualified teachers and their  
5           students;

6           (3) lowering the property tax burden;

7           (4) providing recommendations on what the net cost  
8           savings of realignment is to this State;

9           (5) with a view toward reducing unnecessary  
10          administrative costs, improving the education of students  
11          and lowering the property tax burden, drafting specific  
12          recommendations to reduce the statewide total number of  
13          school districts by no less than 25% through the  
14          reorganization of school districts into unit districts as  
15          provided by Section 11E-25. Each recommendation under this  
16          paragraph (5) must include all of the following:

17               (A) a request to submit a proposition at the next  
18               general election for the purpose of voting for or  
19               against the establishment of a combined unit district;

20               (B) a description of the territory comprising the  
21               districts proposed to be dissolved and those to be  
22               consolidated into unit districts, which, for an entire  
23               district, may be a general reference to all of the  
24               territory included within that district; and

25               (C) a specification of the maximum tax rates the  
26               proposed unit district or districts are authorized to

1           levy for various purposes and, if applicable, the  
2           specifications related to the Property Tax Extension  
3           Limitation Law, in accordance with Section 11E-80.

4           The Commission may not make any recommendations under this  
5           subsection that would provide for the consolidation of  
6           individual schools.

7           (c) On or before May 1, 2024, Commission must vote on its  
8           recommendations and file a report with the Governor and the  
9           General Assembly. If the Commission adopts the report by an  
10           affirmative vote of at least 13 of its members, then the  
11           Commission's specific recommendations for reorganization of  
12           school districts into unit districts under paragraph (5) of  
13           subsection (b) shall be filed with the appropriate regional  
14           superintendent of schools in the same form as petitions filed  
15           under Section 11E-35. A copy of the Commission's specific  
16           recommendations shall be provided to the regional  
17           superintendent of schools of each educational service region  
18           situated in the territory described in the specific  
19           recommendation or that part of the territory in which the  
20           greater percentage of equalized assessed valuation is  
21           situated. Petitions submitted by the Commission under this  
22           Section shall be treated as properly filed petitions under  
23           Section 11E-35, but the petitions submitted are not subject to  
24           the requirements under subsection (a) of Section 11E-35.

25           (d) Upon receiving the filed petition as provided in  
26           subsection (c) from the regional superintendent of schools,



1 each school board of the affected school districts shall  
2 publish a copy of the petition on its official Internet  
3 website, if available, with a link to the recommendation shown  
4 prominently on the homepage of the website until the date of  
5 the next upcoming general election.

6 (e) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of Section 11E-50,  
7 within 14 days after the conclusion of the hearing under  
8 Section 11E-45 regarding a petition filed by the Classrooms  
9 First Commission, the regional superintendent shall, upon  
10 determining that the petition is in compliance with all  
11 applicable requirements set forth in the Election Code,  
12 through a written order, approve the petition, or, if the  
13 regional superintendent determines that the amended petition  
14 is not in compliance with the Election Code, the regional  
15 superintendent shall deny the petition.

16 (f) Notwithstanding subsection (b) of Section 11E-50,  
17 within 21 days after the receipt of the regional  
18 superintendent's decision regarding a petition filed by the  
19 Classrooms First Commission under this Section, the State  
20 Superintendent of Education shall, upon determining that the  
21 petition is in compliance with all applicable requirements set  
22 forth in the Election Code, through a written order, approve  
23 the petition, or, if the State Superintendent determines that  
24 the amended petition is not in compliance with the Election  
25 Code, the State Superintendent shall deny the petition.

26 (g) The Classrooms First Commission shall serve as and

1 take on the responsibilities of the designated Committee of  
2 Ten for the purposes of petitions filed under this Section,  
3 except that notwithstanding paragraph (10) of subsection (a)  
4 of Section 11E-35, any amendments to petitions filed by the  
5 Commission and any binding stipulations made to any question  
6 with respect to a petition under this Section shall be made by  
7 at least 13 members of the Commission.

8 (h) Incentive payments required under Section 11E-135  
9 shall be made for the purposes of this Section, subject to  
10 appropriation by the General Assembly. The failure of the  
11 General Assembly to appropriate incentive payment funds under  
12 Section 11E-135 shall not be a bar to reorganization under  
13 this Section.

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

15 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon  
16 becoming law.