

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 adding Section 3-15.12a as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/3-15.12a new)

Sec. 3-15.12a. Alternate route to high school diploma for adult learners.

(a) The purpose of this amendatory Act of the 100th General Assembly is to provide eligible applicants that have been or are unable to establish agreements with a secondary or unit school district in the area in which the applicant is located with a process for attaining the authority to award high school diplomas to adult learners.

(a-5) In this Section:

"Adult learner" means a person ineligible for reenrollment under subsection (b) of Section 26-2 of this Code and 34 CFR 300.102.

"Board" means the Illinois Community College Board.

"Eligible applicant" means a community college established and operating under the authority of the Public Community College Act; a non-profit entity in partnership with a regional superintendent of schools; the chief administrator of an

intermediate service center that has the authority, under rules adopted by the State Board of Education, to issue a high school diploma; or a school district organized under Article 34 of this Code. In order to be an eligible applicant, an entity under this definition, other than a school district organized under Article 34 of this Code, must provide evidence or other documentation that it is or has been unable to establish an agreement with a secondary or unit school district in which the eligible applicant is located to provide a program in which students who successfully complete the program can receive a high school diploma from their school district of residence.

"Executive Director" means the Executive Director of the Illinois Community College Board.

"High school diploma program for adult learners" means a program approved to operate under this Section that provides a program of alterative study to adult learners leading to the issuance of a high school diploma.

(b) An eligible applicant is authorized to design a high school diploma program for adult learners, to be approved by the Board prior to implementation. A non-profit eligible applicant shall operate this program only within the jurisdictional authority of the regional superintendent of schools, the chief administrator of an intermediate service center, or a school district organized Article 34 of this Code with whom the non-profit eligible applicant has entered into a partnership. An approved program shall include, without

limitation, all of the following:

(1) An administrative structure, program activities, program staff, a budget, and a specific curriculum that is consistent with Illinois Learning Standards, as well as Illinois content standards for adults, but may be different from a regular school program in terms of location, length of school day, program sequence, multidisciplinary courses, pace, instructional activities, or any combination of these.

(2) Issuance of a high school diploma only if an adult learner meets all minimum requirements under this Code and its implementing rules for receipt of a high school diploma.

(3) Specific academic, behavioral, and emotional support services to be offered to adult learners enrolled in the program.

(4) Career and technical education courses that lead to industry certifications in high growth and in-demand industry sectors or dual credit courses from a regionally accredited post-secondary educational institution consistent with the Dual Credit Quality Act. The program may include partnering with a community college district to provide career and technical education courses that lead to industry certifications.

(5) Specific program outcomes and goals and metrics to be used by the program to determine success.

(6) The requirement that all instructional staff must hold an educator license valid for the high school grades issued under Article 21B of this Code.

(7) Any other requirements adopted by rule by the Board.

(c) Eligible applicants shall apply for approval of a high school diploma program for adult learners to the Board on forms prescribed by the Board.

(1) Initial approval shall be for a period not to exceed 2 school years.

(2) Renewal of approval shall be for a period not to exceed 4 school years and shall be contingent upon at least specific documented outcomes of student progression, graduation rates, and earning of industry-recognized credentials.

(3) Program approval may be given only if the Executive Director determines that the eligible applicant has provided assurance through evidence of other documentation that it will meet the requirements of subsection (b) of this Section and any rules adopted by the Board. The Board shall make public any evaluation criteria it uses in making a determination of program approval or denial.

(4) Notwithstanding anything in this Code to the contrary, a non-profit eligible applicant shall provide the following to the Board:

(A) documentation that the non-profit entity will

fulfill the requirements of subsection (b) of this Section;

(B) evidence that the non-profit entity has the capacity to fulfill the requirements of this Section;

(C) a description of the coordination and oversight that the eligible entity will provide in the administration of the program by the non-profit entity;

(D) evidence that the non-profit entity has a history of providing services to adults 18 years of age or older whose educational and training opportunities have been limited by educational disadvantages, disabilities, and challenges.

(5) If an eligible applicant that has been approved fails to meet any of the requirements of subsection (b) of this Section and any rules adopted by the Board, the Executive Director shall immediately initiate a process to revoke the eligible applicant's approval to provide the program, pursuant to rules adopted by the Board.

(d) The Board may adopt any rules necessary to implement this Section.

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