

Support SB 454 H.A. 3 Enhancing Parent Participation in CPS Special Education

In response to concerns raised by CPS parents, teachers and advocates regarding special education, ISBE conducted the state's first-ever Public Inquiry this year. ISBE concluded that specific CPS policies and practices violated the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which protects students' right to a free and appropriate public education. ISBE is now hiring a monitor to ensure that CPS eliminates the barriers to federal and state compliance that the district implemented in 2016.

The inquiry was limited in scope, however, and many issues critical to the education of diverse learners still need redress. SB 454, H.A. 3 provides transparency around the documentation necessary for parents to become fully equal members of their child's IEP team. With the exception of a ban on blocks to IEP team discussion, the improvements are separate and distinct from the remedies outlined in ISBE's correction actions. All are necessary improvements for enhanced accountability, and will live beyond the CPS's monitor's three-year tenure.

What this bill will require:

1. **Notification of data collection requirements:** At least ten calendar days prior to a student's IEP meeting, parents will be told what IEP services require data collection and whether or not this data has been collected for their child.
2. **Draft IEP:** At least five school days prior to a student's IEP meeting, parents will be given a copy of the draft IEP and any relevant evaluations/data collection.
3. **Itemized minutes in IEP:** IEPs for students enrolled in the district shall itemize all paraprofessional support minutes and instructional minutes
4. **Report cards:** The district's quarterly report card for students with an IEP shall include the number of direct service minutes the student received that quarter.
5. **Optional ISBE Hotline:** The State Board of Education shall be authorized to create a telephone hotline to address complaints regarding the district's special education services.
6. **No locks and blocks:** The IEP team will have authority to determine appropriate services and supports during the IEP meeting without being subject to computer software blocks.
7. **Assistive Technology:** At IEP meeting, parent will receive notice of assistive technology consideration requirements.

Why these changes are needed:

1. **Strengthen parent participation in IEP meetings:** The ten-day notice and five-day draft IEP requirements will help parents prepare for the IEP meeting. Knowing what to expect and being able to process large amounts of information about their child in advance of the meeting encourages parents' meaningful participation in the IEP meeting. Providing parents with a draft IEP will give them an opportunity to preview IEP goals, evaluations, and data.
2. **Inform parents about services their children are receiving:** Enhancements to the district report card will help parents to understand the quality and quantity of the special education services that their children are receiving in school. In order to hold CPS accountable, the district needs to be transparent about itemizing paraprofessional and instructional minutes.
3. **Facilitate communication with state monitor:** The hotline to the State Board of Education's monitor will provide students, parents, legal guardians, and CPS employees with easy and protected communication to address Chicago Public Schools' special education service-related issues without concern of retaliation.
4. **IEP teams decision making authority:** Locks and blocks in IEP software, prevent IEP team from developing appropriate IEP for the student.
5. **Assistive Technology Notification:** Parents are often unaware that assistive technology can be considered to help address the student's special education needs.

Senate Bill 454 H.A. 3 Supporters (in progress)

Access Living

Equip for Equality

Children's Law Group, LLC

Chicago Special Education Parent Advisory Committee

Legal Council for Health Justice

Parents 4 Teachers

Potter Bolanos, LLC

Ounce of Prevention

Raise Your Hand

Shriver Center