

# THE AWESOME IEA Podcast

## Episode 3: Senate Bill 100

K: *Welcome* to the AWESOME IEA Podcast brought to you by the Illinois Education Association.

D: The podcast for curious well-informed association members.

K: I'm one of your hosts, Kelsey Harms, Computer Specialist from the IEA Program Development Department.

D: And I'm Diana Zaleski, one of your Instructional Resource and Professional Development Directors from IEA Teaching and Learning.

K: The goal of this podcast is to educate our members about important new educational policy initiatives in a brief and *hopefully* entertaining format.

D: Today we are going to discuss Senate Bill 100 with our special guest Paul Klenck, IEA Deputy General Counsel. Paul, thanks so much for being with us today.

P: My pleasure Kelsey and Diana and everyone who's listening.

D: So, let's jump right in. Can you tell us a little bit about Senate Bill 100?

P: Well, SB100 really is a shorthand for a bill that was passed in the legislature last term and then signed into law. Signed into law, it's technically called Public Act 99456, and that went into effect at the beginning of last school year. So now we are into the second school year this new law has been into effect. And it's essentially an effort to reform student discipline. And primary goals of reducing the number of out of school suspensions and increasing the opportunity for other responses to student misbehavior and look at various ways to rehabilitate.

K: Paul can you tell me more about why it is important for our members to know about Senate Bill 100?

P: Well, first it's to understand the background of why the legislation was passed. The legislature was looking at some nationwide efforts and studies at student discipline and the concern first about the growing number of out of school suspensions. Nationwide 3.5 million students were sent out of school.

K: That's a huge number.

P: A huge number. And in Illinois nearly 300,000 students in one academic year, resulting in a million lost days of education. And understanding the direct impact that has on education. Students likely repeating grades, failing grades, and getting those students more into the school to prison pipeline. So that was one concern with just the overall growth of out of school suspensions. The second major concern was then the disparity in the discipline. In particular racial groups and also special education. Statistics were showing that nearly 1 in 4 African American high school students were suspended in the course of the school year and nearly 1 in 5 students with disabilities were suspended. And when you put those groups together, nearly 1 in 3 African American male high school students with disabilities were suspended.

So, looking at those racial disparities, unequal treatment of students with disabilities, and harder to gather data on some other groups, but even LGBTQ students, the data indicated that they suffered a

25% to 300% greater incidence of out of school suspensions than straight students were. So, because of those disparities, the legislation looked at creating reforms that would reduce out of school suspensions and would make determinations based on the individual circumstances of the students.

D: How will Senate Bill 100 impact schools?

P: Well, first of all, there was a lot of concern among many of our members that the results of the bill was that it eliminated the ability to suspend students. And then would reduce the ability of teachers and administrators to discipline students at all. And frankly many school boards and school administrators were going overboard and saying that this now prevents us from suspending students and it clearly does not. That is not the purpose of the law, but it has been misapplied in some school districts.

So, this presents an opportunity for our members and our locals to understand the purpose of the law and to get actively involved in making sure the law is meeting its goals, and improving the ability for students, the environment for student education and for teachers and other educators to help maintain better control of classrooms.

K: So, I love hearing that our members are able to get involved, can you help me understand how they can get involved at the local level with this bill?

P: We have produced a program and it's captured in a bi-fold brochure in 8 points that sort of helps locals walk through the ability to analyze the legislation and to understand how it is applied and then to implement it appropriately within their local.

And let me highlight a couple of significant points of that. One is that the legislation mandates a parent teacher advisory council that is to advise the school board every year regarding the school discipline policy. So, the school board must adopt a discipline policy and there must be this parent teacher advisory committee that meets annually.

What we have seen are the fact that there are some districts that are not appointing the parent teacher advisory council, or our locals are not involved with getting teachers and other school staff on that committee and playing an active role and addressing the educators concern.

It's also unfortunate that the legislation is defining this as a parent teacher advisory council because there are certainly other school employees: teacher aids, bus drivers, custodians, who can play a very important role in understanding student discipline and advising the school board on that. So, the first thing I would suggest is that our locals take an active part in making sure our members are on this parent teacher advisory council and that council is providing sound recommendations to the school board.

K: That sounds like a great way to get some of our members involved.

P: Another area that I think is key in the legislation, again it's looking for opportunities that the legislation gives our members. And another part of the legislation is that it mandates professional development. Interestingly here it's not just limited to teachers and it defines a very broad range of educators in the school - bus drivers, teachers aids, teachers, administrators, any school liaison officers, and school board members. And so it's an important opportunity for our members to get involved in making sure they are getting the appropriate professional development in understanding student discipline, understanding implicit bias and how that may affect student discipline; and I think even more

importantly to get involved in various practices that they can institute in the class to reduce the need for disciplining students and have an appropriate classroom atmosphere.

K: What resources do we provide on Senate Bill 100 for our members?

P: Well the legislation came at a time that IEA was heavily involved and continues to be in trauma informed practices and helping educators and communities understand adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and implement trauma informed practices. And this new legislation fits hand in glove those efforts. They work very very well together. So on the IEA website are a variety of resources providing information and tools for educators on both trauma informed practices and on SB100. So you will find on there some recorded presentations, some slide shows, and a variety of other resources that educators can implement in the classroom. Both for student discipline and for trauma informed practices and that bifold brochure you can copy and print directly from there and there are slide shows going into more detail about each of those steps.

So in addition to those online resources, IEA continues to sponsor programs throughout the state throughout the year. The first step is helping develop awareness and one of the tools that members have responded to very eagerly are two movies that IEA has purchased rights to and has had screenings throughout the state. One is called *Paper Tigers* and it's a longer movie looking at the incidence at a high school in Walla Walla Washington that had very high incidence of student behavior issues and once the principal Jim Sporleader and other leaders in the community implemented trauma informed practices it greatly reduced the amount of out of school suspensions and greatly improved behavior and student performance. In addition to that movie there is a companion movie called resilience that goes more into the science of ACES and the effect that it has on children and adults; and the variety of ways that professionals across the spectrum from doctors, social workers, teachers, law enforcement, other groups are understanding and implementing trauma informed practices. So we have both of those movies available and any groups of our members that would like to screen that we just ask that you get a group put together to do it. Let us know, we will send you a copy of the movie. We also have a guide and we encourage locals to have panels. We can assist with getting a pediatrician, getting a legislator, getting other people who can participate in these panels and our experience is been they've lead to very fruitful discussions.

So that is a first step in helping increase community awareness and then beyond that is to deepen that awareness. We've sponsored and continue to sponsor one day seminars across the state with a variety of speakers from all different contexts about resilience, trauma informed practices, student discipline. And then districts that are prepared to go deeper we have sponsored and will continue to sponsor throughout the year two and a half day in-depth sessions on how to implement trauma informed practices within the district. And those we encourage that teams from schools attend. So leaders among the teachers and education staff, school board members, administrators, police liaison officers, juvenile justice, other people from the community attend. Those have been very well received and the districts that have been involved have been very successful in implementing these practices.

K: And Paul I also know that we do have an ACES course on our IEA Online Learning Portal that everyone has access to for being a member. So if you are interested in Adverse Childhood Experiences and want to find out what your ACES score is that is also available there.

D: Is there anything else you think our members need to know about this bill?

P: Well I think members have been appropriately cautious in many of these because some districts are not properly implemented the school discipline reform. It's an easy way to improve your district's out of school suspension statistics by simply not suspending students and that is clearly not the intent of the law and how it is not to be implemented. And then may well result in increased frustration by staff if they're seeing there is not a way to address student discipline. So I think it's up to our members to make sure that the law is appropriately enforced, and it's a matter of social justice to see that students are treated fairly, that they are disciplined appropriately, and that the education environment for all of the students and the workplace for all of our members is improved. So they can use this bill as a way to implement and help them with appropriate practices.

K: Great, thanks so much Paul. If you have any questions, comments, or feedback, please check out the contact section on the Podcast page on the IEA Website.

D: We will also post some helpful links in the show notes section on the Podcast Page. The links will include discipline policy guidance as well as a link to the IEA's Trauma-Informed Practices, ACES, and Student Discipline page. This page contains additional presentations and resources that we discussed today.

D: Thanks for joining us!

P: Bye!