

The purpose of this document is to provide answers to frequently asked questions concerning Public Act 095-0869, and Internet Safety in Illinois Schools. Numerous calls and emails have been received by the Illinois Learning Technology Centers as well as ISBE from districts seeking guidance and clarification about the law. Conditions set forth in this Public Act, effective January 1, 2009, were to be in place in all Illinois Public Schools for the 2009-2010 academic year. Changes to the Illinois School Code in response to this revised legislation are found in Section 27-13.3.

Frequently asked questions brought to the attention of ISBE regarding the changes include the following.

**Question 1:** Reading the law as it is written, do districts have the option of selecting which grade(s) to include in the required Internet Safety Curriculum?

(105 ILCS 5/27-13.3)

Sec. 27-13.3. Internet safety education curriculum. Part C

The law states:

However, beginning with the 2009-2010 school year, a school district must incorporate into the school curriculum a component on Internet safety to be taught at least once each school year to students in grade 3 or above.

**Response to Question 1:** The intent of the law is to ensure that topics of Internet Safety are incorporated into the school curriculum at least once each academic year and that the related component(s) are taught to all students in grades 3 through grade 12. Legal phrase "or above" implies all students in grades 3 and beyond through grade 12.

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**Question 2:** How many hours of instruction on the components will be required under the law?

(105 ILCS 5/27-13.3)

Sec. 27-13.3. Internet safety education curriculum. Part C

*The age-appropriate unit of instruction may be incorporated into the current courses of study regularly taught in the district's schools, as determined by the school board, and it is recommended that the unit of instruction include the following topics:*

**Response to Question 2:** Districts determine the pedagogy and duration of Internet Safety lessons as appropriate to locally determined needs and resource availability.

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**Question 3:** Are districts required to cover the entire list of Internet Safety topics specified within the text of the law as stated and by a particular grade level?

(105 ILCS 5/27-13.3)

Sec. 27-13.3. Internet safety education curriculum. Part C

- (1) *Safe and responsible use of social networking websites, chat rooms, electronic mail, bulletin boards, instant messaging, and other means of communication on the Internet.*
- (2) *Recognizing, avoiding, and reporting online solicitations of students, their classmates, and their friends by sexual predators.*
- (3) *Risks of transmitting personal information on the Internet.*
- 4) *Recognizing and avoiding unsolicited or deceptive communications received online.*
- (5) *Recognizing and reporting online harassment and cyber-bullying.*
- (6) *Reporting illegal activities and communications on the Internet.*
- (7) *Copyright laws on written materials, photographs, music, and video.*

**Response to Question 3:** The topics listed are recommendations. Districts determine the scope and sequence of Internet Safety lessons as appropriate to locally determined needs and resource availability. This includes the grade level at which specific Internet Safety topics will be introduced or addressed. It is the intent of the law that districts will create a curriculum to educate students about matters of safety and ethical use of the Internet as prefaced in paragraphs A and B of the law. (See the full text of law online at <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=095-0869>.)

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**Question 4:** The law states “[the] school board shall determine the scope and duration of the unit of instruction.” Does the School Board, the district, or the Illinois State Board of Education makes this determination?

(105 ILCS 5/27-13.3)

Sec. 27-13.3. Internet safety education curriculum. Part C

*The school board shall determine the scope and duration of this unit of instruction.*

**Response to Question 4:** The local school board determines the scope and duration of curriculum developed.

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**Question 5:** The law states, (d) Curricula devised in accordance with subsection (c) of this Section may be submitted for review to the Office of the Illinois Attorney General. To which office or division at ISBE are districts required to submit evidence of compliance with Public Act 095-0869?

(105 ILCS 5/27-13.3)

Sec. 27-13.3. Internet safety education curriculum. Part D

(d) Curricula devised in accordance with subsection (c) of this Section may be submitted for review to the Office of the Illinois Attorney General.

**Response to Question 5:** Districts are not required to report compliance measures under the law. This means that it is not necessary to submit Internet Safety curriculum to ISBE or the Office of the Illinois Attorney General.

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**Question 6:** The law states,  
“(e) The State Board of Education shall make available ... on its Internet website.” How do I find this information?

(105 ILCS 5/27-13.3)

Sec. 27-13.3. Internet safety education curriculum. Part E

(e) The State Board of Education shall make available resource materials for educating children regarding child online safety and may take into consideration the curriculum on this subject developed by other states, as well as any other curricular materials suggested by education experts, child psychologists, or technology companies that work on child online safety issues. Materials may include without limitation safe online communications, privacy protection, cyber-bullying, viewing inappropriate material, file sharing, and the importance of open communication with responsible adults. The State Board of Education shall make these resource materials available on its Internet website.

**Response to Question 6:** Internet users will find the ISBE Internet Safety Page online at [http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/html/internet\\_safety.htm](http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/html/internet_safety.htm). The “Internet Resources” link is available on that page or directly at [http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/html/is\\_resources.htm](http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/html/is_resources.htm). Without specific endorsement or recommendation of any singular Internet Safety product or material supplier, ISBE presents a list of popular Internet Safety Web pages, resources and portals from which districts can gather resources to use as they develop a local Internet Safety curriculum. Regional Learning Technology Center (LTC) Directors are available to assist with the development of Internet Safety Curricular components as well. Districts can find more information about Illinois LTCs online at <http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/elearning/html/ltc.htm> or by contacting Kathy Barnhart at [kbarnhar@isbe.net](mailto:kbarnhar@isbe.net) or by phone at 217-557-7323.

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**Question 7:** Districts have been approached by various vendors, warning them of penalties for non-compliance with the law. What are the penalties for non-compliance.

**Response to Question 7:** All Illinois Public School Districts are required by law to adhere to the Illinois School Code.

As noted in responses to previous questions, districts are able to select or create and implement lessons on the topics of Internet Safety as appropriate to locally determined needs and resource availability. ISBE does not endorse or require any specific commercially-produced curricular materials for districts to be in compliance with PA 095-0869.

In particular reference to matters of Internet Safety, districts are reminded of obligations set forth under the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/cipa.html>, enacted by Congress in 2001. Financial penalties can result if a district is found to be out of compliance with CIPA, if receiving state or federal funding for educational technology initiatives including, but not limited to, E-Rate and NCLB Title II Part D (EETT).

ISBE is aware that changes were made to CIPA language in October of 2008 about which the FCC has not yet issued guidance. At this time, districts are expected to adhere to the current federal mandates of CIPA. Changes to current district level Internet Safety Policies will not be required until formal guidance is issued from the FCC.

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**Question 8:** Would a district's participation in the Internet Safety contest sponsored by ISBE, the Governor's Office and the Attorney General's Office satisfy the compliance requirements for PA 095-0869?

**Response to Question 8:** Information regarding the Internet Safety contest is available at [http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/html/internet\\_safety.htm](http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/html/internet_safety.htm). Districts may incorporate instructional activities to support the creation of student entries for the contest to be in compliance with requirements for PA 095-0869.

**END OF QUESTIONS**