

# C O O N R A P I D S - B A Y A R D

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## Safe Classroom Learning Environments

### Overview of the Law

The state of Iowa recently passed a law that is intended to provide a comprehensive approach to creating a safe learning space for students and teachers.

The law is published as Senate File 2360 and will be referred to as SF 2360. This law applies to local school districts, AEAs, and accredited nonpublic schools and the children these employees serve. The board of a school or AEA may adopt its own policies, but only if they exceed the minimum requirement of Iowa rules.

There are several parts to SF 2360 including:

- developing and distributing evidence-based standards for the response to behavior that presents an imminent threat of bodily injury,
- incentives for school districts to create therapeutic classrooms for students with social-emotional-behavioral health needs,
- requirements for teacher preparation programs that contribute to the education of students with disabilities and students who are gifted and talented,
- school reporting requirements for incidents of violence, assault and referral to a therapeutic classroom, and
- restrictions and parent notification requirements in the event of a classroom clear.

### Restrictions on the Use of Classroom Clears

A key component of this law is about ensuring that educators have a range of classroom management tools that match the intensity of the concern and create a safe learning environment for students and teachers. This law makes clear that while a classroom clear may be necessary in the event of an imminent threat of bodily injury, it is not an appropriate response to less threatening behaviors.

A classroom clear may only be used to prevent or terminate an imminent threat of bodily injury.

### Definitions:

“Classroom clear” - clearing all other students out of the classroom in order to calm a child.

“Imminent threat of bodily injury” - reasonably likely and about to inflict physical pain, illness, or any other impairment of physical condition.

## 4 Important Points for Parents about Classroom Clears

1. **Restricts use of classroom clears.** A classroom clear may only be used to prevent or terminate an imminent threat of bodily injury. Behaviors such as the following do not rise to the level of an imminent threat of bodily injury: serious damage to property, noncompliance, arguing, yelling, refusal, annoying others, blaming, lying, stealing, substance use, transient and unlikely threats (e.g., “I’m going to drive you over with a tractor”; “I wish you would die”).
2. **Bans classroom clears in IEPs/BIPs.** A classroom clear cannot be included in a child’s Individual Education Plan (IEP) and/or behavior intervention plan (BIP). In the event that an IEP/BIP contains a classroom clear, the IEP team must hold an annual review or amendment to remove the classroom clear and consider other more appropriate responses to the behaviors of concern.
3. **Requires notification of parents when there’s a classroom clear.** In the event of a classroom clear, the principal must contact all parents of the children in the class that was cleared. The notification must be within 24 hours of the incident, but preferably by the end of the day.
4. **Requires schools to request to meet with parents when their child was involved in an incident giving rise to a classroom clear.** In the event that your child was involved in the incident giving rise to the classroom clear, the principal must request that you meet with the school. In the event that your child has an IEP, the school must call an IEP meeting to consider revisions of the IEP and/or BIP.

### **Confidentiality and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

In the event the principal must notify you regarding a classroom clear, due to FERPA, the principal must not share the name or identity of any student/s involved in the incident giving rise to the classroom clear.