



# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

A newsletter from the Illinois State Board of Education



July 2011

## Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Gov. Pat Quinn appointed a new chairman to the Illinois State Board of Education. Gery Chico was announced as the new board chair on June 7.

Chico is a Chicago attorney who has been involved in city government for a number of years, holding a variety of positions including former Mayor Richard M. Daley's chief of staff. Additionally, he served as the president of the Board of the Chicago Public Schools for six years and more recently, chairman of the City Colleges. He must be confirmed by the Senate and his term will run until January 2015. Gery brings to the State Board of Education many experiences and skills that will be beneficial to the Illinois education community. I very much look forward to working with him and learning from him as we move forward, especially given the challenges and opportunities that we face.

The spring session of the 97th General Assembly came to a close on May 31. ISBE staff has prepared a list of all legislation the agency tracked during the past six months. The list is available at [http://www.isbe.net/gov\\_relations/default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/gov_relations/default.htm).

In addition to providing technical assistance to the General Assembly and tracking education legislation, the State Board and Agency pushed seven of its own initiatives, including: a comprehensive rewrite of the educator certification article of the School Code; removal of bilingual education from the Chicago block grant in order to make the distribution of bilingual education better reflect the demographics of the state; a streamlining of the Textbook Loan program; removal of General State Aid Hold Harmless (GSA HH) funding; establishment of a stronger Financial Oversight Panel system for school districts certified by the State Board to be in financial difficulty; an obsolete/duplicative/clean-up bill that removes outdated or obsolete language in the School Code and makes changes to reduce mandates on ISBE and/or districts.

Also in relation to mandates, we wanted to update you on the Instructional Mandates Task Force. The Task Force timely issued its report to the Governor and General

## MISSION

The Illinois State Board of Education will provide leadership, assistance, resources and advocacy so that every student is prepared to succeed in careers and postsecondary education, and share accountability for doing so with districts and schools.

---

**Legislative Liaisons:** For questions or inquiries, contact Nicole Wills ([nwills@isbe.net](mailto:nwills@isbe.net)) or Cynthia Riseman ([criseman@isbe.net](mailto:criseman@isbe.net)) in the Governmental Relations Division at (217) 782-6510 or by fax at (217) 782-3097.

Assembly. The Task Force webpage, including a copy of the report, can be seen at <http://www.isbe.net/IMTF/default.htm>.

The Illinois State Board of Education plans to initiate discussion of its Spring 2012 legislative agenda during the State Board's Sept. 27-28 annual retreat in Bloomington. Please feel free to submit ideas for agency backed legislative proposals to our Government Relations staff: Nicole Wills ([nwills@isbe.net](mailto:nwills@isbe.net)) and Cynthia Riseman ([criseman@isbe.net](mailto:criseman@isbe.net)).

Thank you all for your work on behalf of Illinois students.

Chris

---

## 2011 ISBE Legislative Agenda

ISBE Government Relations staff would like to take this opportunity to thank legislators for their support of the State Board's Spring 2011 agency initiatives, including:

- **Article 21 re-write (SB 1799):** Sen. Steans and Rep. Chapa LaVia; passed both houses.
- **FOP/SFA alignment (SB 2149):** Sen. Sullivan and Rep. Eddy; passed both houses.
- **Bilingual Funding (HB 1831):** Rep. Hernandez and Sen. Garrett; passed both houses.
- **Obsolete/Duplicative Clean-up Bill (HB 3022):** Rep. Chapa LaVia and Sen. Lightford; on the order of concurrence in the House – hopefully it can be run in the fall Veto Session.
- **Obsolete/Duplicative Clean-up Bill (HB 3464):** Rep. Pihos and Sen. Luechtefeld; passed both houses.
- **Textbook Loans (HB 3115):** Rep. Gordon and Sen. Maloney; passed both houses.

- **GSA Hold Harmless (HB 3539):** Rep. Morrison and Sen. Murphy; passed both houses.

For more explanation of the proposals, see [http://isbe.net/gov\\_relations/pdf/leg\\_proposals\\_11.pdf](http://isbe.net/gov_relations/pdf/leg_proposals_11.pdf).

---

## General Assembly Scholarships

Article 30 of the Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/30) provides each member of the General Assembly annually with two four-year scholarships to award to residents of his or her respective legislative district. These four-year scholarships, which effectively serve as waivers of tuition, may be offered to one nominee for the full four years or, instead, offered to 2 or 4 nominees for a 2 year or 1 year tuition waiver at any of the following institutions: Chicago State University; Eastern Illinois University; Governors State University; Illinois State University; Northeastern Illinois University; Northern Illinois University; Southern Illinois University; the

---

**Legislative Liaisons:** For questions or inquiries, contact Nicole Wills ([nwills@isbe.net](mailto:nwills@isbe.net)) or Cynthia Riseman ([criseman@isbe.net](mailto:criseman@isbe.net)) in the Governmental Relations Division at (217) 782-6510 or by fax at (217) 782-3097.

University of Illinois; and Western Illinois University.

Tuition waivers for which no nominations are made prior to the start of the academic term do not immediately lapse. A legislator may nominate a resident of his or her district at any time prior to the expiration of the legislator's current elected term. Notably, however, there is no carryover of tuition waivers from legislative term to legislative term. All tuition waivers for which no nomination has been made prior to the end of an elected term immediately lapse. See 105 ILCS 5/30-9.

If you have questions about this process, please contact Kim Clarke at (217) 782-4648 or [kclarke@isbe.net](mailto:kclarke@isbe.net).

---

## 2011 Legislative Wrap-up

A chart listing all legislation ISBE tracked during the spring legislative session is at [http://www.isbe.net/gov\\_relations/pdf/public\\_act\\_summary\\_11.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/gov_relations/pdf/public_act_summary_11.pdf).

This chart provides the bill number, sponsor and synopsis of the bill and will be updated with public act numbers as the governor acts upon the legislation.

---

## Transportation Funding Update

In May, the Governor's Office of Management and Budget (GOMB) discussed the possibility of placing a reserve on the final FY 11 regular/vocational transportation payment. In discussions with GOMB, staff indicated that it was possible they would

use that funding to capture additional Medicaid funds, but that was only an option.

Ultimately, GOMB chose not place a reserve on the fourth quarter transportation funds. ISBE staff vouchered all fourth quarter mandated categorical vouchers, including transportation, and those vouchers are awaiting processing by the comptroller.

As noted in the Education Budget Vetoes and ISBE Budget Update sections below, though, the Governor has vetoed \$89 million in regular/vocational transportation funding from the FY12 budget.

---

## Education Budget Vetoes

Governor Quinn used his amendatory veto power on the last day of FY11 to further reduce the education portion of the FY 12 budget by about \$100 million. This brings the total reduction to the education budget from FY 11 to FY 12 to \$270 million and \$650 million since FY 2009.

Included in the Governor's veto was an \$11 million reduction in the salary and services lines for the Regional Offices of Education. This reduction has created a lot of questions and uncertainty. Unless and until further action is taken by the General Assembly, the Illinois State Board of Education has no appropriation authority to provide paychecks to Regional Superintendents and Assistant Regional Superintendents. We are working on this issue with both the Regional Offices of Education and the Governor's Office of Management.

---

**Legislative Liaisons:** For questions or inquiries, contact Nicole Wills ([nwills@isbe.net](mailto:nwills@isbe.net)) or Cynthia Riseman ([criseman@isbe.net](mailto:criseman@isbe.net)) in the Governmental Relations Division at (217) 782-6510 or by fax at (217) 782-3097.

In addition to the elimination of the ROE line items, the Governor reduced Regular Transportation by \$89 million or about a 3 percent reduction from FY 11. This translates into a reduction in regular transportation from FY 10 of \$145 million, but it is still \$30 million higher than the FY 12 Governor's March 2011 budget proposal.

---

### Education Jobs Funds

On Aug. 30, 2010, Illinois received an approved grant award for the new federal Education Jobs (Ed Jobs) Fund program in the amount of \$415,397,841. These funds may be used for compensation and benefit costs to retain, rehire or hire new employees and will be distributed to local education agencies (LEAs) on a reimbursement basis per federal guidance.

As of June 15, 842 of 945 entities eligible have requested \$264,988,542 in Ed Jobs funds. This represents 63.79 percent of the total funds Illinois received. Five hundred seventy-one of the districts have requested their entire allocation as of June 15 and most, but not all districts, have requested at least some funds. While LEAs were encouraged to request funds for eligible costs in the 2010-11 school year, federal guidance allows LEAs to use unexpended funds in the 2011-12 school year. The last date for obligation is Sept. 30, 2012.

---

### School Improvement Grants

In mid-July of this year, the Illinois State Board of Education approved 13 schools to receive \$74.9 million over the next

three fiscal years in federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds. These grants are designed to dramatically improve education in our State's lowest achieving schools. The schools were selected after a rigorous application and review process that included participation from state and national experts, teachers, parents and community members.

For each eligible school approved to receive funds under this grant, the district must implement in those schools one of four intervention models required by the U.S. Department of Education: Turnaround, Restart, Transformation or School Closure

The SIG districts are required to work with one of 16 organizations, called Lead Partners, that have been pre-approved by the Illinois State Board of Education. The state agency will also provide technical assistance during the process and each district will have to re-apply for continued annual funding in FY 2013 and FY 2014.

This marks the second round of districts to apply and receive SIG funds. Last fall, 10 schools (within 5 districts) were approved to receive up to \$52.5 million in SIG funds. For a list of schools awarded funds in FY 11, visit ISBE online at [http://www.isbe.net/sos/pdf/sig\\_1003g\\_funded\\_fy11.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/sos/pdf/sig_1003g_funded_fy11.pdf).

---

### ISBE Budget Update

[http://isbe.net/budget/FY12\\_budget.pdf](http://isbe.net/budget/FY12_budget.pdf)

Agency staff are in the process of reviewing the FY 2012 budget comprised of HB 326 (Davis,W./Kotowski) ISBE federal and other state funds at the FY 12

---

**Legislative Liaisons:** For questions or inquiries, contact Nicole Wills (nwills@isbe.net) or Cynthia Riseman (criseman@isbe.net) in the Governmental Relations Division at (217) 782-6510 or by fax at (217) 782-3097.

ISBE requested amounts and HB 327 (Madigan/Kotowski) \$6.8 billion in GRF to support agency operations and programs.

In total, the reduction for education from FY 11 is about \$170 million with the bulk of that reduction coming from in General State Aid. The General Assembly kept the Foundation Level at \$6,119 but reduced the General State Aid appropriation by \$152 million. Based on the preliminary data, the appropriation in HB 327 would result in prorated GSA payments at approximately 94.8 percent of the claim amount.

Other notable reductions include:

- Early Childhood Block Grant allocations reduced by \$17 million.
- Assessment funds were reduced by over \$2.3 million.
- Teacher and principal mentoring funds were eliminated.
- Advance Placement funding was eliminated.
- Regional Offices of Education are funded at about 11 percent lower than the FY 11 levels after reserves.
- The line item used by ISBE to investigate alleged educator misconduct has been cut in half.

Notably, the Agency's contractual line item has been reduced significantly, which will impact the Agency's ability to maintain the Student Information System, Longitudinal Data System, and many of the reforms that the Agency and legislators have worked to advance.

---

## FY 11 Comptroller Backlog to School Districts

As of July 15, the comptroller has a backlog of \$1.022 billion in ISBE vouchers for FY 2011. There are over 17,000 ISBE vouchers dating back to Feb. 2, 2011, waiting to be processed.

---

## No Child Left Behind Update

On the national level, Secretary Duncan has indicated that if Congress is unable to pass reauthorization for No Child Left Behind, the administration will begin to pursue a policy of flexibility from current accountability standards. State Superintendent Koch has joined other state superintendents urging Congress to undertake reauthorization of NCLB and if they are unable to reform and reauthorize, to allow states to implement new accountability systems that focus on student growth and improved achievement rather than punitive measures that can stifle student progress.

If Congress is unsuccessful at reauthorizing NCLB, Superintendent Koch supports a system of waivers that would provide additional flexibility for states and districts while still maintaining a high standard of accountability and would recommend to our State Board of Education that the state pursue some sort of waiver should reauthorization fail.

---

## ISBE Board Meetings

The State Board will hold its next meeting on Aug. 18. The meeting will take place

by video conference in ISBE offices in Springfield and Chicago.

The annual Board retreat will be held on Sept. 27 and 28 in Bloomington.

A calendar of all the 2011 meeting dates can be found at [http://isbe.net/board/pdf/2011\\_board\\_meetings.pdf](http://isbe.net/board/pdf/2011_board_meetings.pdf).

---

## Preschool Grants Announced

In prior years the Illinois State Board of Education had awarded Preschool for All (PFA) grants through a re-application process, whereby once an entity received funding they would simply re-apply each year to be funded the following year. Some of these programs had not been competitively bid in nearly 20 years and in that time the demographics of the state have changed significantly. As the agency saw the funding for early childhood decrease and the demographics in the state shift, it was in the state's best interest that we competitively bid programs in order to serve those students most at need.

Many providers have asked why ISBE simply did not cut from all programs to match the corresponding reduction on the state level. We instead focused our funding decisions on reader scores and comments from the grant application, demographic data relating to need and enrollment data. The demographic data relating to need included district low income rate, percentage of Hispanic students, percentage of African American students, the number of 3- and 4-year-old children whose families are living at or below 185 percent of the poverty level,

and the number of Head Start funded slots. In addition, satisfactory performance on previous grants, where applicable, was considered.

Of the 554 total applications for funding in 2011-12, 458 entities will receive PFA grants and 96 entities will not receive funding. A list of funded entities is at [http://www.isbe.net/news/2011/pdf/12\\_PFA\\_3-5\\_RFP\\_Recommendations.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/news/2011/pdf/12_PFA_3-5_RFP_Recommendations.pdf).

Entities with reduced or eliminated funding that would like to be considered if additional funding becomes available can send an e-mail indicating the number of children at risk of academic failure that you propose to serve and the cost to serve the children. The e-mail should be sent to [earlychi@isbe.net](mailto:earlychi@isbe.net).

Should entities contact you with concerns, we would also encourage you to encourage those contacting you to request reader comments from the grant review. This will help them with future funding application exercises.

There are other options available to fund a quality preschool program and often when parents, grandparents, other primary caretakers and community members feel they are involved in this decision they are very willing to help in multiple ways. Should you choose to work with your community to explore other options, here are some examples that have worked in other communities:

**Tuition based model held in a school district:** This program would still be housed in a school setting and parents would pay tuition for their child to attend. A DCFS license is not required if the program is housed in the school building. Costs to provide a tuition based model

---

**Legislative Liaisons:** For questions or inquiries, contact Nicole Wills ([nwills@isbe.net](mailto:nwills@isbe.net)) or Cynthia Riseman ([criseman@isbe.net](mailto:criseman@isbe.net)) in the Governmental Relations Division at (217) 782-6510 or by fax at (217) 782-3097.

would include the teacher and the teacher assistant salary and benefits along with funding for supplies, snacks and if there might be field trip expenses. The ratio of two adults to 20 children is still recommended. Local businesses could be approached about setting up a scholarship fund which would be used to allow low income children in the district that are not being served by another program to attend this program. Fund raisers are another option to raise funds locally to provide support for scholarships for your preschool program.

**Tuition based model held in a childcare centers:** This program would be housed in a center based setting and would be in collaboration with the school district. If the program is housed outside of the school building it is necessary to ensure the building is properly licensed by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). This model would charge tuition that would pay for the teacher and teacher assistant salaries and benefits, supplies, snacks and field trips. These teachers would be employees of the school that would be placed in a building other than the school building. Working together with the childcare center to set this tuition will ensure that programs are using all funding streams available to provide the families with a high quality affordable program.

**Partnering with local childcare programs:** These programs are already in your communities and would love to work with the schools to ensure that the programs they provide meet the needs of the children that will be attending the local schools. Setting up collaboration meetings to discuss ways to work together

is a great way to begin this partnership. Teachers in childcare setting are very dedicated and like all educators want to see the children in their care be successful as they enter into a formal school setting. Teachers in childcare settings are required to attend at least 15 hours a year of continuing education. The Illinois Resource Center provides high quality training at no cost, on subjects such as Early Learning Standards, Curriculum, Classroom Control and many more topics. StarNet is another wonderful resource that provides free training and technical assistance. Sharing this information with these programs is a great way to assist in building quality programs in your community.

As you know all too well, the economic times we face require difficult decisions to be made. Our agency certainly wishes we had the same level of funds to distribute, but unfortunately our early childhood funding has been reduced by more than \$23 million since FY 2008. These reductions in funding, coupled with increased program costs are having real impacts across the state on our capacity to serve the same number of children in high quality programs. Please know that the decision to not fund certain districts was not a reflection on the entity, but a reflection on the fiscal crisis our state is facing.

---

## Student Advisory Committee Physical Education Report

On June 16, the ISBE Student Advisory Council presented a report on physical education. A copy of the presentation is

available by contacting ISBE Board Services at [jladage@isbe.net](mailto:jladage@isbe.net).

The Student Advisory Council (SAC) was originally formed in 1975 to bring student concerns to the attention of ISBE. Members of the Student Advisory Council are diverse, representing different parts of the state, types of school settings and ethnic backgrounds. As SAC members, the students may review and critique ISBE's existing or proposed programs, policies and regulations, as well as inform students of SAC activities.

Application materials and a list of the members of SAC can be accessed at <http://www.isbe.net/sac/>.

---

## Going Green

In an effort to be more environmentally conscious, ISBE will be sending out communications, including budget updates and letters from the state superintendent, via e-mail instead of through the mail. This effort will both reduce administrative time within the agency and provide cost savings for printing and mailing. In the future, the e-mail address used for this message will be the one used for all ISBE communications from the state superintendent, Board and Governmental Relations staff. If you have an alternative e-mail address to which you would like this information sent, or if you change e-mail addresses, please contact Nicole Wills ([nwills@isbe.net](mailto:nwills@isbe.net)) or Cynthia Riseman ([criseman@isbe.net](mailto:criseman@isbe.net)) in our Governmental Relations Division so that your information can be updated and so that you can receive this information in a timely manner.

---

## Legislative Liaisons and GA Scholarship Questions

For all constituent or bill inquiries, contact Nicole Wills ([nwills@isbe.net](mailto:nwills@isbe.net)) or Cynthia Riseman ([criseman@isbe.net](mailto:criseman@isbe.net)) in the Governmental Relations Division at (217) 782-6510 or by fax at (217) 782-3097.

If you have any questions or paperwork concerning General Assembly scholarships, those should be directed to Kim Clarke at [kclarke@isbe.net](mailto:kclarke@isbe.net) or (217) 782-4648.

---

**Legislative Liaisons:** For questions or inquiries, contact Nicole Wills ([nwills@isbe.net](mailto:nwills@isbe.net)) or Cynthia Riseman ([criseman@isbe.net](mailto:criseman@isbe.net)) in the Governmental Relations Division at (217) 782-6510 or by fax at (217) 782-3097.