

ALLIANCE LEGISLATIVE REPORT (94-65)



GOVERNOR UNVEILS EDUCATION PLAN

Governor Rod Blagojevich Tuesday unveiled his new education reform plan at a press conference at a public school in Chicago. The Governor proposes to invest over \$6 billion in education in the next four years, with \$1 billion in the first year to be spent on the following:

- \$250 million to increase the foundation level (an estimated \$250 per pupil);
- \$200 million for increased special education funding (including increasing the current \$8,000 special education personnel reimbursement amount);
- \$60 million in pre-school expansion to help fund his Pre-school For All Kids Program;
- \$200 million in targeted programs for under-performing students (see details below);
- \$40 million for text book replacement (require school districts to replace text books on a six-year cycle with funds going first to schools that need books the most); and
- \$200 million for other reforms (see details below).

In addition, the Governor proposes \$1.5 billion for school construction. Approximately \$50 million would be included in the first year budget for school construction debt service.

The funding source for this education investment would come from the sale or lease of the Illinois Lottery, consolidation of services, and reducing administrative costs. Specifically mentioned were the ideas of “consolidating procurement, health insurance, and construction”. These proposals were discussed two years ago in the legislature as a part of what became SB 3000, the massive changes in the State Board of Education agency.

The proposal would also require school districts to publish – on the property tax bill – their spending on administrative costs for the district.

STATE TAKEOVER OF FAILING SCHOOLS

The Governor stated that “we’re going to use some of the increase in state resources to target specific areas in our school system that have historically underperformed, but these resources will not just be given away. We’re going to target these resources toward services that we know will make a difference for struggling kids. We will take over school districts that refuse to embrace reforms and make changes”. A State management team would first come to the district to provide help, but if such help is rejected or if student performance does not increase, the State will take over the district.

PROGRAMS FOR UNDERPERFORMING STUDENTS

The Governor has proposed the following programs for underperforming students:

- Mandatory after-school tutoring; and
- Extending the school year for up to one month.

OTHER REFORMS

The Governor proposed funding several new education reforms:

- Providing funding for school districts to provide full-day kindergarten;
- Providing funding for parents to attend educational programs at the school to become more involved in their children’s education;

- Providing additional funding for school libraries;
- Providing additional funding for school technology;
- Providing additional funding to update the curriculum for Career and Technical Education; and
- Providing additional funding for colleges and universities to produce teachers to teach in shortage areas.

“STRONG TEACHERS AND ADMINSTRATORS”

The Governor also proposed several ideas relating to producing “strong teachers and administrators”, including:

- Calling for Illinois to be the national leader in providing merit pay for teachers to reward them for having students achieve academic improvement; and
- Calling for “better and stricter mentoring for school district superintendents, aligning them with requirements for teachers and principals”.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

This outline of the Governor’s proposal is somewhat sketchy. However, further details of the various provisions were unavailable at this time. To view his entire power point presentation, please go to: www.illinois.gov.

The proposal as it now stands consists of merely a power point presentation and a press release. Legislation would have to be introduced and approved by the General Assembly to enact this plan. The legislature is not scheduled to convene again until November.

Alliance Legislative Reports:
Bill Text/Status: Illinois General Assembly

www.iasb.com
www.ilga.gov