



## **ALLIANCE LEGISLATIVE REPORT (95-54)**

### **COMMITTEES SCHEDULED FOR NEXT WEEK**

The Illinois General Assembly returns to the Capitol next week and both chambers are scheduled to consider bills in committee. This will begin the second year of the legislative session – a year that is supposed to be reserved for budgetary and “emergency” issues only. Certainly the legislative agenda this spring will contain bills that are more than true emergencies, but the workload in the second year of the legislative session is usually reduced by the leadership in the respective chambers. A list of pertinent education-related bills that are scheduled for a committee hearing can be found later in this report.

### **BUDGET FALLING SHORT**

The tale of the Fiscal Year 2008 budget continues. You know the saga: no budget was agreed to by the scheduled legislative adjournment last May; a budget bill (containing an increase for education of over \$600 million) was finally passed in August; after a veto by the Governor, the budget was finally enacted in October; a bill to implement the budget was eventually enacted in January. Now, according to State sources, there is a shortfall in the current budget and many of the appropriations will not be enough to cover the associated costs.

The Illinois Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability, the General Assembly’s financial forecasters, warned in a recent report that state revenues may fall \$600 million or more short of what’s needed to balance this year’s state budget. This means a delay in the State paying its bills for many services, with health and social services vendors topping the list.

The State Board of Education also is affected by the budget shortfall. The General State Aid “Hold Harmless” budget line item will be prorated. Due to insufficient funds in the budget, the 80 school districts that are due to receive hold harmless funds will only receive 88.1% of the amount due to them.

The amount of the School Safety and Educational Improvement Block Grant payment (“ADA Block Grant”) will also change. A provision in the budget implementation bill, as reported in many of last year’s Alliance Legislative Reports, allows non-public schools to access funds from the ADA block grant. The original FY ’08 budget bill contained an increase of \$10.1 million for this line item – thus allowing public school districts to see an increase over last year’s funding level even if private schools received ADA money. However, the Governor cut out all of the \$10.1 million increase leaving the FY ’08 funding level the same as FY ’07. So now when the ISBE divides the ADA block grant monies – including sending funds for the first time to non-public schools – public school districts will receive a lesser amount in the April ADA Block Grant payment than they did in last October’s payment.

### **BILLS SCHEDULED FOR COMMITTEE NEXT WEEK**

**HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS – ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE**  
Wednesday, February 13, 1:00 p.m., Room 118, State Capitol

**HB 4523 (Pritchard, R-Hinckley)** appropriates \$1,400,000 from the General Revenue Fund to the State Board of Education for Standards-Aligned Classrooms.

**SENATE APPROPRIATIONS I COMMITTEE**  
Wednesday, February 13, 4:00 p.m., Room 212, State Capitol

**SB 1874 (Forby, D-Benton)** makes a supplemental appropriation of \$21,000,000 from the General Revenue Fund to the ISBE to be used exclusively for school districts' costs for extraordinary special education services.

HOUSE PERSONNEL AND PENSIONS COMMITTEE

Wednesday, February 13, 4:00 p.m., Room 122B, State Capitol

**HB 4536 (Flider, D-Mt. Zion)** removes the expiration date on the provisions in the pension code allowing retired teachers to return to teaching in subject shortage areas without impairing their retirement status or retirement annuity.

HOUSE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 14, 8:30 a.m., Room 114, State Capitol

**HB 4181 (Fritchey, D-Chicago)** allows a teacher to conduct (instead of requiring a teacher to observe) a brief period of silence at the opening of the school day with the participation of all pupils assembled.

**HB 4186 (Davis, W., D-Hazel Crest)** changes the name of the Silent Reflection and Student Prayer Act to the Student Silent Reflection Act.

**HB 4225 (Eddy, R-Hutsonville)** prohibits the ISBE to certify a school district to be in financial difficulty as a result of the failure of the Comptroller to disburse certain School Code reimbursements for receipt by the school district no later than June 30th of each year.

**HB 4226 (Eddy)** allows the ISBE calculation for State reimbursement for transportation costs to include the number of pupils enrolled in early education programs.

**HB 4307 (Eddy)** increases from \$10,000 to \$25,000 the threshold at which a school district must use the competitive bidding process. For those exceptions (i.e. corporations possessing a high degree of professional skill where ability and fitness play an important part, contracts for food services, contracts for repair, maintenance, remodeling, renovation, or construction), it increases the amount to \$50,000 rather than \$20,000. For electricity contracts over \$25,000, the school board must make the award to the lowest responsible bidder or procure electricity through a request for proposals.

**HB 4309 (Reis, R-Willow Hill)** provides that if a school district closes a school building that poses a hazardous threat to the health and safety of pupils prior to providing the minimum hours of instruction required for a full day of attendance, then that day may be counted as a full day of attendance.

**HB 4457 (Eddy)** allows school districts to accept and open sealed bids at a public bid opening conducted by an electronic process for communicating, accepting, and opening competitive bids.

**HB 4471 (Dugan, D-Bradley)** requires school districts, for every child enrolled in the school, to notify in writing the person enrolling the child that he or she must provide "a copy of a certified copy" (instead of a certified copy) of the child's birth certificate.

**HB 4522 (Pritchard)** statutorily requires the last two school district State aid payments to be made in June (instead of July) so the funds are received in the proper fiscal year. Currently, the Governor each year must decide if he wishes to accelerate those payments to be made in June.

**HB 4537 (Flider)** requires the ISBE to promote and implement an annual campaign about disability history and awareness. It requires school districts to provide in each grade instruction on disability history, people with disabilities, and the disability rights movement.

**HB 4538 (Flider)** appropriates \$2,000,000 from the General Revenue Fund to the ISBE for the purposes of the Community Service Education Act, including grants for community service education.

**HB 4642 (Jakobsson, D-Urbana)** requires the ISBE to compile information on (i) how to educate teachers and other providers about the unique needs of gifted and twice-exceptional children, (ii) how to train teachers in research-based methods for identifying and teaching gifted and twice-exceptional children, and (iii) research-based guidelines for unique programming for twice-exceptional children.

HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 14, 8:30 a.m., Room D-1, Stratton Office Building

**HB 4314 (Feigenholtz, D-Chicago)** requires the Illinois Department of Public Health or a local public health department to give notice to a principal of the school in which a child is enrolled when a school aged child has acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) or AIDS-related complex (ARC) or has been shown to have been exposed to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or any other identified causative agent of AIDS.

**HB 4456 (Harris, D-Chicago)** creates the Commission on Children and Youth Act. The Governor will appoint, among the members of the commission, at least one representative “from the field of education”. The State Superintendent of Schools would also be a part of the commission.

HOUSE STATE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 14, 1:00 p.m., Room 114, State Capitol

**HB 4270 (Black, R-Danville)**, in responding to a request for inspection and copying of public records under the Freedom of Information Act, requires that a public body provide them in any form or format requested, if they are readily reproducible in that form or format. The public body must make reasonable efforts to maintain its records in forms or formats that are reproducible and requires that a public body shall make a reasonable effort to search for records in electronic format, unless that effort would significantly interfere with the operations of the public body's automated information system.

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS – PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 14, 3:00 p.m., Room C-1, Stratton Office Building

**HB 4130 (Dugan)**, for Fiscal Year 2008, reappropriates \$150,000,000 to the Capital Development Board for school construction grants pursuant to the School Construction Law.

HOUSE ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 14, 3:00 p.m., Room 118, State Capitol

**HB 4159 (Bassi, R-Palatine)** requires school districts to periodically review their procurement procedures and specifications related to the purchase of products or supplies that are recyclable. It requires public schools to give preference to products and supplies containing the highest amount of recycled material and sets forth benchmarks for public school recycling programs through the year 2020. The bill requires each school board to develop a comprehensive waste reduction plan by July 1, 2010 covering a period of 15 years that addresses the management of solid waste.