



ALLIANCE LEGISLATIVE REPORT (95-55)

GOVERNOR TO DELIVER BUDGET ADDRESS

Governor Rod Blagojevich will deliver his combined State of the State Address/Budget Address next Wednesday (February 20) at noon. Over the past five years, this has been when the Governor has outlined not only his spending priorities, but any new initiatives he plans to pursue. Last year, of course, the Governor unveiled his plan for the controversial Gross Receipts Tax (GRT) on businesses during this address.

Recent reports have indicated that there is a shortfall in the current Fiscal Year 2008 budget (see the last Alliance Legislative Report at www.iasb.com/govrel/alr9554.cfm) and that revenue estimates for FY '09 are dismal. A budget report by State Comptroller Dan Hynes can be found at: <http://www.apps.ioc.state.il.us/ioc-pdf/2007FiscalStateOfState.pdf>. Pensive observers in the Capitol this week are wondering exactly how the Governor will respond to the looming budget crisis in next week's address.

In the State Board of Education's recommendations for the Fiscal Year 2009 education budget, the board is calling for an increase for elementary and secondary education spending of just over \$300 million. This would include an increase in the General State Aid's foundation level of \$125 per pupil, fully funding the mandated categorical grants, and a \$45 million increase for early childhood education. It is commonly assumed that the Governor gave his prior approval for the ISBE's budget recommendation and this could be reflected in next week's address.

BILL ACTION THIS WEEK

HB 4130 (Dugan, D-Bradley), for Fiscal Year 2008, reappropriates \$150,000,000 to the Capital Development Board for school construction grants pursuant to the School Construction Law. The bill was approved by the House Appropriations – Public Safety Committee and was sent to the House floor for consideration.

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; and requires each school board to develop a comprehensive waste reduction plan by July 1, 2010. The bill, opposed in committee only by the Alliance, was approved by the House Environment and Energy Committee with the caveat that the sponsor will work with the Alliance to modify the bill to make it less cumbersome for school districts.

HB 4186 (Davis, W., D-Hazel Crest) changes the name of the Silent Reflection and Student Prayer Act to the Student Silent Reflection Act. The bill failed to receive the requisite number of votes and remains in the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee.

HB 4225 (Eddy, R-Hutsonville) originally prohibited 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. The bill was amended to prohibit a school district from being certified to be in financial difficulty by reason of any of certain circumstances if arising solely as a result of the failure of the county to make a distribution of property tax money due the district at the time such distribution is due or if arising solely as a result of the failure of the Comptroller to disburse reimbursements on time. As amended, the bill was approved by the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee and was sent to the House floor for consideration.

HB 4471 (Dugan) 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. The bill was modified with an Alliance amendment that provides that once a school has obtained a copy of a certified copy of a child's birth certificate, it need not request another such copy for any other year in which the child is enrolled in that school. As amended, the bill was approved by the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee and was sent to the House floor for consideration.

HB 4522 (Pritchard, R-Hinckley) 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. The bill was approved by the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee and was sent to the House floor for consideration.

HB 4523 (Pritchard) appropriates \$1,400,000 from the General Revenue Fund to the State Board of Education for Standards-Aligned Classrooms. The bill was approved by the House Appropriations – Elementary and Secondary Education Committee and was sent to the House floor for consideration.

HB 4536 (Flider, D-Mt. Zion) originally removed 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. The bill was amended to move the “sunset date” back to June 30, 2013. As amended, the bill was approved by the House Personnel and Pensions Committee and was sent to the House floor for consideration.

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. The bill was approved by the Senate Appropriations I Committee and was sent to the Senate floor for consideration.

BILLS SCHEDULED FOR COMMITTEE NEXT WEEK

HOUSE APPROPRIATION – ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 20, 2:30 p.m., Room 118, State Capitol

HB 4443 (Flowers, D-Chicago) appropriates \$1,000,000 from the General Revenue Fund to the ISBE for autism programs.

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 4730 (Soto, D-Chicago) appropriates \$3,000,000 from the General Revenue Fund to the ISBE for payments to school districts for affordable multi-family housing school cost reimbursement under Section 46 of the Local Planning Technical Assistance Act.

HB 5350 (Acevedo, D-Chicago) makes a supplemental appropriation of \$3,000,000 from the General Revenue Fund to the ISBE for the Healthy Kids - Healthy Minds Expanded Vision Program.

HOUSE ELECTIONS AND CAMPAIGN REFORM COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 20, 4:00 p.m., Room 122B, State Capitol

HB 4588 (Flider) permits a Municipal Officers Electoral board, a Township Officers Electoral Board, and an Education Officers Electoral Board to meet where the governing body of the municipality, township, or school or community college district, respectively, holds its regularly scheduled meetings, rather than in the county court house.

HJRCA 29 (Lang, D-Skokie) proposes to amend the Illinois Constitution to change the minimum voting age to 17 (now, 18).

HOUSE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 21, 8:30 a.m., Room 114, State Capitol

HB 4180 (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 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 4437 (Flowers, D-Chicago) requires students who participate in an interscholastic athletic program to undergo an electrocardiogram (EKG) test.

HB 4441 (Flowers) allows children who have attended preschool and will attain the age of 5 years on or before December 31 to attend school.

HB 4442 (Flowers) prohibits a student from being transferred to a school that is on the academic watch list if the student is being transferred from a school within the school district because of a lack of attendance capacity.

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 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 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.

HB 4727 (Reitz, D-Sparta) provides that a pupil who becomes non-resident during a grading period (instead of school term) shall not be charged tuition for the remainder of the grading period in which he or she became a non-resident pupil.

HOUSE STATE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 21, 2:00 p.m., Room D-1, Stratton Office Building

HB 1352 (Dunkin, D-Hazel Crest) allows the Governor to sell or otherwise dispose of the State Lottery with all net proceeds from the sale to be deposited into the Commitment to Education Fund.

HOUSE JUDICIARY – CRIMINAL LAW COMMITTEE

Friday, February 22, 8:30 a.m., Room D-1, Stratton Office Building

HB 4140 (Molaro, D-Chicago) provides that it is unlawful for any coach, parent, teacher, or other person to knowingly allow the use of an aluminum bat during a recreational baseball or softball game in which a person under the age of 13 is a participant.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

*No committee time had been posted at the writing of the report, but the following bills are assigned to this committee:

SB 1939 (Maloney, D-Chicago) allows for a chief school business official endorsement if, among other conditions, the certificate holder has 2 years of university-approved practical experience (as an alternative to requiring 2 years of administrative experience in school business management).

SB 1953 (Demuzio, D-Carlinville) provides that in implementing a response to intervention (RTI) process for a student suspected of having a specific learning disability or other disability that adversely impacts the academic progress of the student, a school district must comply with specified procedures prior to implementing RTI. If a student who is participating in RTI is alleged to have engaged in behavior that is in violation of a code of student conduct, the school district shall be deemed to have knowledge that the student is a student with a disability, pursuant to federal law, and shall follow the procedures set forth in federal law if the school district proposes to take disciplinary action against the student.

SB 1955 (Lightford, D-Maywood) 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.

SB 1956 (Lightford) allows for a maximum of 5 additional charter schools exclusively for truants or dropouts in Chicago if the limit on the number of charter schools that may operate at any one time in the rest of the State has not been reached.

SB 1997 (DeLeo, D-Chicago) prohibits the IHSA from infringing upon or attempting to regulate in any manner the dissemination of news or the use of visual images by the news media of interscholastic athletic, academic, or other form of competition among schools and students within this State.

SR 483 (Martinez, D-Chicago) urges the ISBE to request a one-year extension from the U.S. Department of Education so that the Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE) Test may be administered in 2008, and urges the U.S. Department of Education to grant the extension.

SENATE INSURANCE COMMITTEE

*No committee time had been posted at the writing of the report, but the following bill is assigned to this committee:

SB 2002 (Haime, D-Alton) allows units of local governments and school districts to opt into the State Local Government Health Insurance Pool with an enrollment of less than 100% of the employees if those not enrolled are covered under the Act's plan or another plan as spouses or dependents (now, permits less than 100% enrollment if those not enrolled are covered under the Act's plan or another plan as spouses or dependents and at least 85% of the unit's, district's, or facility's employees are enrolled in coverage under the Act's plan).