



## **ALLIANCE LEGISLATIVE REPORT (98-31)**

### **LEGISLATORS GEAR UP FOR A NEW YEAR**

Illinois lawmakers will convene next week to begin the second year of the 98<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. The House of Representatives will meet on Tuesday and Wednesday (January 28 and 29); the Senate will meet on Wednesday and Thursday. The Governor will deliver his State of the State Address on Wednesday at noon.

The second year of the legislative cycle is different than the first year. Generally, the second year is to be dedicated to the budget and “emergency” issues. This is not strictly adhered to obviously, but there are usually fewer bills that are debated on the chamber floors than in the initial year of a legislative cycle. And, of course, the even-numbered years are election years which bring the usual campaign issues to the forefront. 2014 is a gubernatorial election year as well which adds another layer of political overtones to the process.

New bill introductions have been steady for the past two weeks and next week will see hundreds of new bills filed. A list of some of the pertinent education-related bills can be found at the end of this report.

### **UPDATES ON PENDING ISSUES**

#### **EDUCATION FUNDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

This committee, established in the spring in Senate Resolution 431, is charged with conducting a thorough review of the existing distribution methods and expenditures for public school spending. The Committee has met in a number of hearings across the State (go to <http://www.isbe.net/EFAC/default.htm> for details) but cancelled its meeting that was scheduled for Monday in Chicago. Recommendations from the Committee are due next month.

#### **SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASS SIZE RULES**

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) had initiated a new rulemaking that would have eliminated the arbitrary class sizes for special education. These current provisions in the Administrative Rules of the ISBE go much further than federal law or regulations regarding Special Education. By eliminating the arbitrary class sizes, these important decisions regarding serving students would be, rightfully, placed back in the hands of local school officials.

Though a vote was scheduled to be taken on the new rule at the ISBE meeting on Wednesday, the action was removed from the agenda and no vote was taken. Therefore the rule to remove the class size limits is considered “dead” and the current Special Education class size rules remain in force.

#### **SCHOOL SAFETY GRANTS**

The Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) will launch a school safety grant program Monday, January 27, according to IEMA Director Jonathon Monken. The \$25 million grant program for K-12 schools and colleges and universities in Illinois will fund a range of school safety items including the purchase and installation of physical security enhancement equipment, inspection and screening systems, information technology, and/or interoperable communications equipment for buildings where students are primarily taught in academic classes.

The application will be an online process and can be accessed beginning January 27 at <http://www.illinois.gov/ready/Pages/default.aspx>. The application period will run for a period of 45 days.

Additional details are expected from IEMA in the next week.

## CHARTER SCHOOLS

The Charter School Funding Task Force is continuing to meet. The Task Force was created and is comprised of, generally, pro-charter groups. A draft proposal has been laid out for adoption by the Task Force, but Alliance suggestions have not been incorporated into the proposal. The proposal is to change the funding range for Charter Schools from the current range of 75% to 125% of the school district's per pupil expenditure, to 97% to 103%. This would greatly inhibit local control and would eliminate cost saving measures Charter Schools can provide.

Charter Schools will continue to be a major issue in the upcoming legislative session. **Representative Linda Chapa La Via (D-Aurora)** and **Senator Kimberly Lightford (D-Maywood)** have each introduced a bill (**HB 3754 and SB 2627**) to eliminate the State Charter School Commission – designed to be an “independent authorizer” of Charter Schools. Their efforts, along with many other groups that are fighting against the Charter School movement, will be in direct contrast with the efforts of the Mayor of the City of Chicago and at least one of the candidates for Governor.

## NEW BILL INTRODUCTIONS

**HB 3642 (Mitchell, B, R-Decatur)** requires the issuance of general obligation bonds in the amount of \$4,000,000,000 for the purposes of school construction, transportation, and pollution control.

**HB 3678 (Franks, D-Woodstock)** provides that if in any levy year (1) the tax rate for the sum of all of the funds that are included in a taxing district's aggregate levy exceeds the district's tax rate for those funds in the previous levy year, and (2) the district is not otherwise required to hold a Truth in Taxation hearing, then the corporate authorities of the taxing district must approve, by ordinance or resolution, the total tax rate and hold a public hearing.

**HB 3690 (Pihos, R-Glen Ellyn)** removes language that provides that the Block Grants Article does not apply to the Chicago school district.

**HB 3691 (Pihos)** removes provisions that require the educational services block grant to include Special Education, funding for children requiring special education services, and Summer School.

**HB 3695 (Dunkin, D-Chicago)** and **HB 3699 (Hammond, R-Macomb)** allow one of the three years of mathematics that a pupil must successfully complete as a prerequisite to receiving a high school diploma to be an Advanced Placement computer science course.

**HB 3715 (Wheeler, R-Crystal Lake)** increases the homestead improvement exemption to \$100,000 (now \$75,000).

**HB 3724 (Burke, D-Chicago)** requires training on how to properly administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation and how to use an automated external defibrillator to be included in high school health education classes and a prerequisite to receiving a high school diploma.

**HB 3727 (Sandack, R-Downers Grove)** provides that, if the total equalized assessed value (EAV) of all taxable property in the taxing district for the current levy year is less than the total EAV of all taxable property in the taxing district for the previous levy year, then the extension limitation is 0%.

**HB 3741 (Dunkin)** requires a school district or nonpublic school to maintain a supply of epinephrine auto-injectors.

**HB 3745 (Ford, D-Chicago)** requires alternative schools and charter schools to establish vocational academies for students in grades 10 through 12, in partnership with school districts, community colleges, local employers, and community-based organizations.

**HB 3754 (Chapa La Via)** and **SB 2627 (Lightford)** repeal the law that establishes the State Charter School Commission and returns charter school authorizing and appeal powers to the ISBE.

**HB 3777 (Mussman, D-Schaumburg)** authorizes the ISBE to make grants to special education cooperatives established by school districts for school maintenance projects.

**HB 4191 (Welch, D-Westchester)** requires police officers to inform elementary and high school students of their Miranda rights before the students give a statement or are subjected to questioning. These rights include a choice not to answer questions or make a statement in the presence of a police officer and to have a parent, guardian or attorney present during questioning. Additionally, the bill requires students be informed that any information divulged during questioning “may result in arrest and in the issuing of a summons and may be used in school discipline and in criminal prosecution.”

**HB 4197 (Morrison, R-Palatine)** increases the maximum income limitation under the Senior Citizens Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption from \$55,000 to \$75,000 for certain applicants.

**HB 4207 (Fine, D-Glenview)** prohibits a student from being subjected to bullying through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-school-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district if the bullying substantially interferes with or limits the victim's ability to participate in services, activities, or opportunities offered by a school.

**HB 4209 (Willis, D-Northlake)** increases the maximum income limitation for the Senior Citizens Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption and the Senior Citizens Real Estate Tax Deferral Program to \$60,000 (instead of \$55,000).

**HB 4237 (Chapa LaVia)**, if a local school board’s decision to deny a Charter School application is overturned on appeal by a State authorizing board or the ISBE, the Charter School application is not deemed approved until it is ratified by a school district referendum.

**HB 4260 (Morrison)** allows school boards to adopt a resolution to discontinue any instructional mandate if any State aid payments have been delayed for at least one payment cycle.

**HB 4268 (Ives, R-Wheaton)** requires collective bargaining agreements to be published on the website of the public or educational employer once an agreement is reached between the employer and its employees.

**SB 2647 (Althoff, R-McHenry)** places school districts under local government zoning ordinances.

**SB 2682 (Hastings, D-Matteson)** requires the study of the history of organized labor in America and the collective bargaining process to be included in the teaching of the history of the United States.

*The legislative report is written and edited by the lobbyists of the Illinois Association of School Boards to provide information to the members of the organizations that comprise the Statewide School Management Alliance.*