



ALLIANCE LEGISLATIVE REPORT (98-49)

ANOTHER BUDGET APPROVED BY HOUSE

The Illinois House of Representatives approved a Fiscal Year 2015 State budget Tuesday that attempts to strike a balance between the “recommended” budget proposed earlier by **Governor Pat Quinn** and the “doomsday” budget that failed in the House last week. The “recommended” budget included revenues that would have been available by using the current income tax rates for the entire 2015 fiscal year. But without legislation to extend those income tax rates, the rates will fall on January 1 and, correspondingly, bring in less revenue to State coffers. It has become apparent that, in the House, there are not enough votes to approve an extension of the current income tax rates this spring.

House Speaker Michael Madigan pushed through a budget two weeks ago that was reliant on the additional revenues of the tax rate extension. Once it was evident that these new revenues would not be available, he called for a vote on the stripped down budget version, or “doomsday” scenario. This bill only received five “yes” votes on the House floor. That set the stage for yesterday’s “middle of the road” budget proposal contained in **HB 6093** which was approved on a 68-47 House vote.

The Senate has yet to take a vote on any budget proposal; it likely will entertain this latest House version of the budget. A Senate appropriations committee is scheduled to meet at noon today (Wednesday).

Much of this new budget plan consists of “lump sum” appropriations in which the legislature does not parse out funding in specific line items but allows the Governor’s office or State agencies to do so. For elementary and secondary education, the budget is generally flat funded with the same appropriations as in the FY 2014 budget. This holds true for transportation reimbursements, bilingual education, and early childhood education. Some additional funding was dedicated to the General State Aid formula in order to maintain the per pupil foundation level proration of “just under 89%”. The budget fully funds the assessment line item to include funding for the ACT examination.

The scheduled adjournment date is May 31; expect a budget passed and sent to the Governor by then. Beginning June 1, bills require a 3/5 majority vote for approval instead of a simple majority vote to have them effective immediately upon the Governor’s signature. In such a difficult budget year, it is doubtful that House and Senate leaders would allow any controversial item to be voted on given that extra hurdle.

SCHOOL FUNDING BILL APPROVED BY SENATE

The bill that would revamp the current formula of how elementary and secondary education funds are distributed was approved by the Illinois Senate Tuesday. **SB 16 (Manar, D-Bunker Hill)** passed on a vote of 32-19-6 – but not before the sponsor stripped off the amendment that would have provided mandate relief to school districts.

Last week the sponsor added an amendment that would have added great flexibility for school districts regarding curricular mandates. The amendment was approved by the Senate Education Committee. However, on the Senate floor Tuesday, the sponsor withdrew the amendment and the bill proceeded without it. Given the tight timeline, it will be difficult for the measure to receive full House approval in the remaining days of the spring legislative session.

SB 16 replaces the distribution formula with one that collapses most of the current budget items into one larger funding pool and ties most all funding to a school districts relative property wealth. The

intent is to send State funds to those school districts that are in the most need. Pupils are given a series of weights that would increase the per-pupil funding, depending on the student's status.

Though a couple of amendments have been adopted onto the legislation, the synopsis in Alliance Legislative Report 98-41 is still an accurate overview: <http://iasb.com/govrel/alr9841.cfm>

OTHER BILL ACTION THIS WEEK

HB 5397 (Mayfield, D-North Chicago) requires all public schools to use a physical fitness assessment and report fitness information to the ISBE to assess student fitness indicators. The bill:

- Defines “physical fitness assessment” as a “series of assessments to measure aerobic capacity, body composition, muscular strength, muscular endurance, and flexibility”
- Mandates that (beginning in the 2016-17 school year) ISBE “requires all schools to use scientifically-based, health-related physical fitness assessment for grades 3-12 and periodically report fitness information to ISBE”
- Requires schools to “integrate health-related fitness testing into the curriculum as an instructional tool”
- Creates a task force, appointed by the State Superintendent, to make recommendations on validating physical fitness assessment scores, the frequency of the P.E. reports to ISBE, minimum fitness indicators for aerobic capacity, muscular strength, endurance, and flexibility, and other items
- Requires ISBE to use the recommendations of the task force in its rules and regulations on the new P.E. assessments

The bill, opposed by the Alliance, was approved by the Senate and was sent back to the House for concurrence in the Senate amendment.

HB 5546 (Nekritz, D-Northbrook), as amended, provides for limited recall for certain tenured teachers who were in “Group 2” because of receiving a “needs improvement” on the latest teacher evaluation and who have been part of a reduction in force provided the other evaluation used for determining the reduction in force list is a “satisfactory”, “proficient” or “excellent”. The amendment also allows a school district to use, on a district-wide basis and at the school district's sole cost and expense, an alternate survey of learning conditions instrument pre-approved by the State Superintendent, instead of the Five Essentials Survey used by the ISBE. **The bill was approved** by the Senate and was sent to the House of Representatives for further consideration.

SB 2793 (Hutchison, D-Chicago Heights), as amended, requires the ISBE to annually prepare a report on student discipline in all school districts. It requires the ISBE to analyze the data and determine the top quartile of school districts for each of the following metrics: (i) total number of instructional days on which students were excluded because of out-of-school suspensions or expulsions, divided by the total student population; and (ii) racial disproportionality with respect to the use of out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, and school-based arrests and criminal citations. Each of the school districts identified in these quartiles must submit a school improvement plan identifying the strategies the school district will implement to reduce the use of harsh disciplinary practices or racial disproportionality or both if applicable. **The Alliance was the only** education organization to oppose the amendment in committee. The amended bill was sent to the House floor.

This legislative report was 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.

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

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