



## ALLIANCE LEGISLATIVE REPORT (98-46)

### HOUSE ADVANCES BUDGET

The Illinois House of Representatives today (Thursday) is approving a Fiscal Year 2015 State budget that mirrors **Governor Pat Quinn's** "recommended" budget from earlier this year. The Governor had presented two budgets: a "recommended" budget that included revenues from extending the current income tax rates; and a "not recommended" budget that revealed the severe cuts he would make to the budget if the current income tax rates expire on January 1.

The budget was crafted in dozens of different bills as opposed to the usual practice of having an omnibus State budget presented in one or two appropriations bills. The bills all are passing largely along party lines with Republicans voting "no". The House is just over half-way through approving all of the appropriations bills. The education appropriation was the first bill called.

Though the budget seems to assume that current income tax rates will be extended and the resulting revenues will be available, no legislation has yet passed that extends or makes permanent the income tax rates. The current rate of 5% for individuals will drop to 3.75% on January 1 without the approval of legislation that either extends that expiration date or makes the rate permanent. Republicans have been crying foul about approving the spending without first securing the revenues necessary. **House Speaker Michael Madigan (D-Chicago)** reasons that by approving the spending first, it will put pressure on lawmakers to cast a "yes" vote on the tax rate extension. There is no time set for a vote on the income tax rate extension.

**For the elementary and secondary education budget, contained in HB 6021**, there is a \$132 million increase for General State Aid which will result in a 90% proration of the foundation level. Last year the proration amount was about 89%. Without extension of the current tax rates, some have estimated that the prorated amount could drop to 65% of the foundation level.

Other highlights of the education appropriations include:

- \$54 million increase in Transportation Reimbursement (83% proration)
- \$11 million increase in Special Education reimbursement to meet federal maintenance of effort
- \$17 million increase in Assessments that includes funding the ACT
- \$25 million increase in Early Childhood Education
- \$12 million increase in Bilingual Education

The budget bills will be sent to the Senate for consideration. The fate of the House budget in the second chamber is unclear.

### PENSION REFORM BILL ON HOLD IN THE COURTS

The pension reform bill signed into law in December was set to take effect on June 1. That will not happen as the Circuit Court in Sangamon County issued a temporary restraining order and injunction Thursday, thus stopping the implementation of the law indefinitely. Several lawsuits have been filed questioning the constitutionality of the law which alters pension benefits for current employees who participate in one of the State pension systems. Now the law will not take effect until the courts, ultimately the Illinois Supreme Court, issues a decision on the bill as a whole.

## **ACTION ON “HOT BILLS” THIS WEEK**

**HB 2513 (Phelps, D-Harrisburg)** requires school construction to include storm shelters. **The bill, opposed by the Alliance, was approved** by the Senate Education Committee and was sent to the Senate floor for further consideration.

**HB 3754 (Chapa La Via, D-Aurora)** repeals the law that establishes the State Charter School Commission and returns charter school authorizing and appeal powers to the ISBE. As amended, a 10 member Charter Schools Appeals Board is established within the ISBE to make decisions regarding persons or organizations that are appealing the decision of a local school board regarding a Charter School proposal. **The bill was approved** by the Senate Education Committee and was sent to the Senate floor for further consideration.

**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. It requires schools to integrate health-related fitness testing into the curriculum. **The bill, opposed by the Alliance, was approved** by the Senate Education Committee and was sent to the Senate floor for further consideration.

**HB 5707 (Cassidy, D-Chicago)** requires numerous new procedures and policies regarding bullying. A full description of the legislation can be seen here: <http://www.iasb.com/govrel/alr9842.cfm>. **The bill, which will be amended to address Alliance concerns, was approved** by the Senate Education Committee and was sent to the Senate floor for further consideration.

**SB 2793 (Hutchinson, D-Chicago Heights)**, as amended, requires the ISBE to annually prepare a report on student discipline in all school districts and to post results on its website. The ISBE must analyze the data in the report on an annual basis 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 bill, opposed by the Alliance, was approved** by the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee and was sent to the House floor for further consideration. The sponsor was urged to amend the bill to address Alliance concerns.

## **OTHER LEGISLATIVE ACTION THIS WEEK**

**HB 1711 (Cabello, R-Loves Park)**, as amended, makes changes regarding education service regions in Cook County. **The bill was approved** by the Senate Education Committee and was sent to the Senate floor for further consideration.

**HB 3942 (Walsh, D-Joliet)** makes changes with respect to the debt limitations for Chaney-Monge School District 88. **The bill was approved** by the House of Representatives and was sent to the Senate for further consideration.

**HB 3948 (Golar, D-Chicago)** makes changes to the Grow Your Own Teachers program to create new criteria for applicants to the program. **The bill was approved** by the Senate Education Committee and was sent to the Senate floor for further consideration.

**HB 4527 (Chapa La Via)** requires a charter school to comply with all federal and state laws and rules applicable to public schools that pertain to special education and the instruction of English language learners. **The bill was approved** by the Senate Education Committee and was sent to the Senate floor for further consideration.

**HB 4995 (Mitchell, B., R-Decatur)** makes changes with respect to the debt limitations for Monticello Community Unit School District 25. **The bill was approved** by the Senate Education Committee and was sent to the Senate floor for further consideration.

**HB 5283 (Harms, R-Watseka)** makes changes with respect to the debt limitations for Milford Township High School District 233. **The bill was approved** by the Senate Education Committee and was sent to the Senate floor for further consideration.

**HB 5333 (Davis, M., D-Chicago)**, as amended, requires the ISBE to report on the compliance with the teaching of Black History. **The bill was approved** by the Senate Education Committee and was sent to the Senate floor for further consideration.

**SB 345 (Hastings, D-Matteson)** was the subject of a hearing though no vote was taken. Summit Hill School District 161 testified that county clerks are interpreting **PA 97-933 (HB 4622)** in such a way that schools are not allowed to levy for social security and Medicare in the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) levy. SB 345 would allow school districts to levy for those purposes so long as it does not increase the limiting rate under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL).

**SB 347 (Holmes, D-Aurora)** provides that property tax rates may be calculated beyond three decimal points to the extension to be as close to the levy requested as possible. **The bill was approved** by the House Revenue & Finance Committee and was sent to the House floor for further consideration.

**SB 2972 (Bertino-Tarrant, D-Plainfield)** allows a superintendent endorsement to be affixed to the Professional Educator License who has had at least two years of experience in a general administrative position. **The bill was approved** by the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee and was sent to the House floor for further consideration.

*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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