2015 Legislative Session: Changes in Education Law and Funding

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY – PASSED BOTH HOUSES

Below is a summary of legislation that has passed both houses of the General Assembly. These bills will now move on to the Governor for action.

District Policies and Procedures

- HB 165 (Flowers/Delgado) provides that students may voluntarily engage in individually initiated, non-disruptive prayer at any time during the school day including prayer groups, BIBLE (Basic Instruction Before Leaving Earth) clubs, or “meet at the flagpole prayer” days.
- HB 2781 (Fortner/Connelly) amends the School Code to permit districts to utilize e-learning days during days of inclement weather.
- HB 4025 (Conroy/Cullerton) amends the School Code to add a semester long civics course to the list of graduation requirements.
- SB 100 (Lightford/Davis) makes changes to student discipline policies in school districts.

Task Forces, Advisory Groups, Boards, and Commissions

- HB 3197 (Chapa LaVia/Collins) creates the Attendance Commission within the State Board of Education to study the issue of chronic absenteeism in Illinois and make recommendations for strategies to prevent chronic absenteeism. The Commission is abolished on December 16, 2020.
- SB 1340 (Anderson/Sims) extends the deadline of the School Security and Standards Task Force from January 1, 2015 to July 1, 2016 and extends the deadline of the Reading Instruction Advisory Group from July 31, 2015 to December 15, 2015.
- SB 1679 (Lightford/Dunkin) creates the Virtual Education Review Committee. The Committee is required to review virtual education and course choice including a discussion on virtual course access programs, including the ability of students to enroll in online coursework and access technology to complete courses. The committee is required to report its findings on or before May 31, 2016.

Standards and Assessments

- HB 163 (Flowers/Delgado) prohibits ISBE from having separate performance standards for students based on race or ethnicity.
- HB 2683 (Davis/Delgado) amends multiple articles of the School Code that reference the current state accountability system, including provisions requiring ISBE to place districts on
academic status based on Annual Yearly Progress (AYP). Pursuant to the terms of Illinois’s waiver from provisions of the No Child Left Behind law, these sections would be replaced with new accountability provisions that will include a calculation of achievement, growth and outcomes, along with a calculation of gaps in achievement, growth and outcomes for our subgroups. The new accountability system will allow ISBE to target assistance to districts depending on achievement, growth and outcomes.

- **SB 672** (Lightford/Beiser) adds the subjects of consumer debt, higher education student loans, and identity-theft security to the list of subjects that are required to be included in the financial literacy component of consumer education.
- **SB 1455** (Delgado/Golar) amends the School Code to require that one of the three state assessments administered in high school is an assessment for college admissions.
- **HR 28** (Flowers) urges ISBE to promote the same educational standards for students of all races so they receive equal access to and rights in education.

### Licensure

- **HB 494** (Cassidy/Van Pelt) amends the School Code with regard to the currently imposed lifetime ban on licensure for certain criminal convictions and with regard to the list of criminal convictions that automatically disqualify an individual from holding a teaching license or being employed in public schools or nonpublic ISBE-recognized schools.
- **HB 2657** (Winger/Bertino-Tarrant) amends multiple sections of Article 21B of the School Code to make changes concerning teacher preparation, out-of-state educator and administrator reciprocity, license fees and educator misconduct. These changes have been developed since the changes in PA 97-607 became effective on July 1, 2013.
- **SB 220** (McCann/Davidsmeyer) amends the Personnel Code to exempt licensed employees at the Illinois School for the Deaf and the Illinois School for the Visually Impaired from the provisions of the Personnel Code.
- **SB 706** (Cunningham/Fine) amends three sections of the School Code related to criminal history records information (CHRI) checks for those applying to be student teachers: 105 ILCS 5/2-3.25o (student teachers assigned to nonpublic schools seeking recognition from or recognized by ISBE); 105 ILCS 5/10-21.9 (student teachers assigned to public schools); and 105 ILCS 34-85 (student teachers assigned to Chicago Public Schools). The amendment clarifies the process by which student teachers will submit to CHRI checks and how those checks will be handled.
- **HB 1790** (Cavaletto/McCarter) amends the School Code to exempt individuals that were issued the career and technical educator (CTE) endorsement or the provisional career and
technical educator (PCTE) endorsement on an Educator License with Stipulations (ELS) before January 1, 2015 from taking a test of basic skills upon renewal.

- HB 806 (Golar/Delgado) amends the School Code to allow students in grades 7 or 8 to enroll in a high school course as long as the teacher holds a PEL endorsed for the grade level and content area of the course. Currently these students may only take the course if it is taught by a teacher who teaches in a high school of the school district where the student would attend high school.

- HB 2807 (Mitchell/Connelly) amends the School Code, 105 ILCS 5/21B-45, to make a technical correction (correcting the word “certificate” to read “license”). The Bill also amends Section 21B-45 to include as an approved professional development provider any Illinois museum that, as of the effective date of the amendment, has provided professional development and is approved by ISBE.

- HB 3123 (Pritchard/Althoff) revises the list of services that school counselors are permitted to provide in public schools. The bill specifically addresses how school counselors may support and/or serve students with disabilities. The bill specifies that school counselors may implement a student's IEP services, including academic, personal, social, college or career services.

**Student Safety**

- SB 7 (Raoul/Mitchell) which provides criteria for which a student athlete suspected of sustaining a concussion may return to an athletic practice or game.

- HB 1 (Lang/Kotowski) among other changes, amends the School Code to permit the administration of an undesignated dose of Narcan, an opioid antidote (a fast-acting anti-overdose medication).

- SB 9 (Bertino-Tarrant/Kifowit) provides that the Comprehensive Health Education Program shall include information regarding the use of powdered pure caffeine.

- SB 1410 (Mulroe/Gabel) amends the process under which parents may obtain a “religious objection” status for the purpose of excluding their children from vaccines.

- SB 1793 (Hastings/Kifowit) amends the School Code to require ISBE to develop a model suicide awareness and prevention policy, compile, develop and post recommended guidelines and educational materials for training and professional develop and recommended resources and age-appropriate educational materials on youth suicide awareness and prevention. Beginning with the 2015-16 school year, each school board must adopt a youth suicide awareness and prevention policy.
Charter Schools

- HB 1360 (Gabel/Biss) requires charter schools to comply with all (instead of applicable) health and safety requirements applicable to public schools.

**LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY – PENDING LEGISLATION**

Below is a summary of legislation that has not passed both houses of the General Assembly.

**Task Forces, Advisory Groups, Boards, and Commissions**

- SB 1505 (Bertino-Tarrant/Dunkin) amends the School Code to make the State Superintendent subject to Senate confirmation.

- HJR 36 (Chapa LaVia/Delgado) creates the Bilingual Advisory Task Force which is required to evaluate whether the framework for existing bilingual education, including Transitional Bilingual Education programs and the Transitional Program of Instruction, is appropriate for learning today. The Task Force must submit its findings no later than December 15, 2015. HJR 36 has not passed the House (resolutions do are not subject to the same deadlines as substantive bills).

- SB 1506 (Bertino-Tarrant/Bradley) amends the School Code to require 3 of the members of ISBE to represent the educator community. Educator community is defined as a member employed as a district superintendent, principal, school business official or teacher. This is an initiative of Vision 20/20.

**Funding**

- HB 4022 (Welch) and SB 1403 (Barickman) create an evidence-based Professional Judgment Panel consisting of 37 members that is charged with making recommendations for the implementation of an evidence-based adequacy and equity formula for the funding of all school districts beginning with the 2016-17 school year. The panel is required to report on or before December 31, 2015. HB 4022 and SB 1403 have not passed a committee.

- SB 1 (Manar) creates a new model for school funding. SB 1 creates a weighted student formula with approximately 82% of funds going through one funding stream that is equalized to account for district property wealth. SB 1 has not passed a committee.

- SB 1341 (Righter) requires the equalization formula grant within General State Aid (GSA) to be fully funded. This means when appropriations are less than the cost of the claim that shortfalls would be applied to the supplemental low-income grant. SB 1341 has not passed a committee.
Standards and Assessments

- HB 306 (Guzzardi/Delgado) allows parents to opt their children out of mandated State assessments. HB 306 has not passed the House. The Senate held a subject matter hearing regarding this legislation on 5/30.

Student Safety

- SB 52 (Clayborne/Hoffman) expand the definition of a serious safety hazard for students who live less than 1.5 miles from school and encounter vehicular traffic or a rail crossing hazard while walking to their school to include students who are at significant risk of a violent crime.

Charter Schools

- HB 397 (Welch/Holmes) removes any right to appeal the decision of a local school board to deny a charter school proposal or to revoke or not renew the charter of an existing charter school by the Charter School Commission. The Senate held a subject matter hearing regarding this legislation on 5/30.

School Construction and Facilities

- SB 36 (Althoff/Franks) provides that a school district is subject to and its school board must comply with any valid local government zoning ordinance or resolution that applies where the pertinent part of school district is located.

- SB 1561 (Manar/Hays) amends the School Code regarding school construction. The legislation states that for districts that have consolidated or approved a cooperative high school within a prior fiscal year, the grant index used for school construction shall be calculated for each of the districts that form the new school district or cooperative school and whichever grant index is highest shall be used as the grant index for the new district or cooperative high school.