



Catholic Conference
of Illinois

65 E. Wacker Place
Suite 1620
Chicago, IL 60601
Ph. 312-368-1066
Fx. 312-368-1090

108 E. Cook St.
Springfield, IL 62704
Ph. 217-528-9200
Fx. 217-528-7214

www.ilcatholic.org
Diocese of Belleville
Archdiocese of Chicago
Diocese of Joliet
Diocese of Peoria
Diocese of Rockford
Diocese of Springfield-in-IL

Support Textbook Block Grant Funding: House Bill 2321 & Senate Bill 2152

The Textbook Loan Block Grant (formerly known as the Textbook Loan Program) has been in operation since 1975. Its purpose is to provide secular textbooks, learning materials and instructional computer software to public and nonpublic school students grades K-12.

Students cannot learn or succeed without effective and up-to-date learning materials, and this program has helped ensure accurate and up-to-date textbooks and other instructional materials are present in ALL schools for over thirty years. Unfortunately, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) zeroed out funding for this program during the first year of lump sum appropriations.

Their decision was a profound mistake for many reasons:

- According to ISBE's own published analysis, the Textbook Block Grant impacts 2.1 million students and 164,000 educators.
- In Fiscal Year 2009, the program provided 849,214 instructional items to pupils in grades 7 through 12. The program operates on a two-year cycle: provided materials to grades K through 6 one year, 7 through 12 the next.
- The policy of this State is to ensure that Illinois' students have instructional materials that have current information and are in good working condition; and ISBE's strategic goals cite service to "all students" and "all schools." The Illinois Block Grant meets these goals: serving students in public and nonpublic schools.
- The Illinois Textbook Block Grant is for many school districts and nonpublic schools the sole source of funding for instructional materials and serves as a safeguard against increases in property taxes and tuition and fee increases.
- There may not be any grant programs in ISBE's budget that have had as far-reaching an impact for as long a time. Providing good textbooks and instructional materials to children is a fundamental responsibility of the state!

We ask that you help correct ISBE's mistake and support renewed funding for new textbooks for all Illinois' students. If enacted, these bills would provide the only specifically directed source of funding for textbooks in the state's budget.