



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

Hello! Things in Springfield are very busy with the fall Veto Session. I know schools have a lot going on as well, so we will get right into it. Beginning with the big issue of the month:

State Recognition & the Illinois State Board of Recognition (ISBE)

As is well known by now, many schools recently received a letter from ISBE informing them of the need for a school visit for state recognition this school year. This action came about due to our work with ISBE, through the Nonpublic School Advisory Committee, to plan a “surge” of state recognition visits this school year. The plan was to contract retired administrators (from primarily nonpublic schools) for one year in an effort to wipe out or greatly reduce the backlog in school visits, and we were able to secure state funding for the effort.

Unfortunately, ISBE ran behind the summer and fall timelines we worked out with them and also pushed for a plan too large to efficiently carry out. Even more unfortunate, they communicated this plan directly to schools without our knowledge. When that happened in early October, CCI engaged in a focused effort to alter and help redesign ISBE’s initial plan so that work would be focused on the backlog – schools that have not been visited since 2007 – and require less paperwork under relaxed timelines. Although it took some doing, and included a fair bit of confusion, we did eventually reach a deal with ISBE on how to proceed with state recognition visits.

The deal includes (1) removing all schools from the proposed visit list that have had a state recognition visit after 2007. So, even if your school received a letter in early October about a visit this year, if you have been visited after the 2007-08 school year, you will be taken off the list. This reduces the number of schools that will be visited by contractors this year to about 340 (from 500+). It’s still a big number, but more manageable, and these schools do actually represent the backlog. And (2) for those schools still on the visit list, the paperwork they are required to submit has been pared back to just the educational program description and the fire inspection report (submission of which has always been a part of recognition), and the deadline for doing so has been moved back to November 15.

We have sent out information clarifying the situation and ISBE has mailed letters as well. Hopefully, every school knows where it stands in this process. If not, please get a hold of me as soon as possible.

The following timeline and classifications should help you understand your responsibilities for state recognition:

FOR ALL SCHOOLS – IWAS FORMS DUE NOVEMBER 15th:

Nonpublic Registration, Enrollment and Staff Report – This report is available on the IWAS system. Completed reports must be received by ISBE no later than November 15, 2013. Nonpublic schools that have never registered before must submit their data using paper form at:
http://www.isbe.net/research/htmls/np_entity.htm.

Student Health Data for Immunization -- This report is available on the IWAS system. Completed reports must be received by ISBE no later than November 15, 2013.

Nonpublic School Application for State Recognition and School Calendar – This report is available on the IWAS system. Completed reports must be received by ISBE no later than November 15, 2013. As was the case last year, ISBE will include an affirmation checklist in the application that was typically part of the probe document. My office sent guidance to you on how to complete the checklist last year. If you need the guidance again, please let me know.

These forms must be completed and submitted on time in order to extend your school's state recognition status from December 31, 2013 to December 31, 2014. The deadline cannot be missed. *PLEASE REMEMBER that the order in which these forms are done is important! The immunization data and the Nonpublic Registration, Enrollment and Staff Report must be completed and submitted BEFORE the Nonpublic School Application for State Recognition and School Calendar can be submitted on IWAS.*

FOR SCHOOLS THAT HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED OF A STATE RECOGNITION VISIT THIS YEAR (And have not been visited since 2007-08 school year) – ALSO DUE NOVEMBER 15th:

Education Program Description – This is a short narrative describing your school. You may include demographic information, the school's mission, goals, history, governance, standardized test score results, etc. You may also include information about special events or programs. You decide. The intent is to get acquainted with your school prior to our recognition visit.

Local Fire Inspection Report – The report cannot be over one year old.

These two documents are not IWAS submissions. They must be emailed to dgheen@isbe.net by November 15th.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Textbook Funding – CCI and a representative from ICNS will meet with members of the Governor's budget staff in the second week of the fall veto session to discuss this program and our request for funding.

School Choice Coalition – CCI has been invited to participate in regularly scheduled meetings for coordinating action of the newly formed School Choice Illinois. This is a coalition of grassroots leaders, think tanks, business leaders and nonpublic school groups who are coming together to advance school choice in Illinois. Our first meeting is scheduled for next week.

Insurance Mandate for High School Student Athletes – As a reminder, this compromise legislation allows nonpublic high schools to either provide their student athletes catastrophic insurance coverage in the amount of \$3 million in aggregate benefits or five years of coverage, whichever comes first, for injuries that result in medical expenses in excess of \$50,000 **OR** the nonpublic high school can require athletes to have private insurance and be exempt from the coverage mandate.

House Bill 1625 – This legislation (now law) amends the School Safety Drill Act to require that the one annual law enforcement drill already required focuses on a reverse evacuation scenario. It also clarifies that this drill is intended to "address and prepare" school personnel, meaning student participation is not required. A local law enforcement agency is required to contact the school about participating in

the drill. If a mutually agreed upon date cannot be found, the school will conduct the drill without participation of the law enforcement agency. This is not a new drill, just a new focus for an existing drill.

House Bill 3190 – This legislation (now law) amends the School Code and the Communicable Disease Prevention Act and requires that, *beginning July 1, 2014*, upon entering the 6th and 12th grade of any public, private, or parochial school, a student shall present to the school proof of having received an (meningitis) immunization containing meningococcal conjugate vaccine. Please note the effective date of this law is for next school year, not the current school year.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

Illinois Catholic Advocacy Network (I-CAN) – CCI has adopted this new technology to improve our advocacy efforts in Springfield across the board. Our Principal and Legislative Action Person (LAP) email lists are now housed in this database and our action alerts are better designed and MUCH easier to act on. In fact, after receiving an action alert through the I-CAN network, you will now be able to send a pre-drafted email to your state representative and state senator in as little as three clicks and under a minute. It can't be beat!

I-CAN is a grassroots advocacy email network, and the best news is you do not have to be a principal or LAP to sign up for I-CAN. If you care about Catholic schools (or any other issues the Church speaks on), you can sign up today and be an informed and active participant. When signing up for I-CAN you will be asked for both an email address and home address so we can pinpoint your state lawmakers. You will also be allowed to sign up for specific issue areas, so that you can receive alerts on issues you care about and not for those you don't.

Please go to <http://capwiz.com/ilcatholic/mlm/signup/>, and fill out the form. CCI does the rest. Thank you for this important help – it is our only method for influencing public policy debates in Springfield.

Zach Wichmann
Director of Government Relations
Catholic Conference of Illinois