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## CCI EDUCATION BULLETIN 9/6/16

With the new school year well underway, despite the dysfunction of the Illinois' legislature, I thought it time for another communication. As you most likely know, the Illinois budget standoff – Governor Rauner's Turnaround Agenda vs. Speaker Madigan's policy outlook – continues with only a six month stopgap budget as respite. Even the stop gap budget is severely out of balance and designed only to get the state through the November elections. Many people are looking toward the lame duck legislative session after the elections as a time when a budget deal may finally be secured. It is worthy of hope.

In the meantime, there are some pertinent legislative actions to report and important deadlines to know. So, without wasting time . . .

### STATE LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

#### Invest in Kids Act

The Catholic Conference of Illinois (CCI) has spent the last 18 months in close coordination with One Chance Illinois in efforts to advance school choice policy proposals. We are Tier 1 partners in the Illinois Kids Campaign. As such, we have aided in drafting the legislation and in lobbying members of the General Assembly and administration.

The Invest in Kids Act has many components, but the priority provisions seek to provide tax credit fueled benefits to public, charter and nonpublic schools. These include:

- A dollar-for-dollar state income tax credit up to 100 percent of an individual or corporation's tax liability if they donate to scholarship granting organizations that provide scholarships to low and middle-income students to attend nonpublic schools.
- A \$100 million cap on the above tax credit.
- An increase in the Education Expense Tax Credit from \$500 to \$1000.

Everyone involved acknowledges the difficult politics of enacting these policy proposals in stand-alone legislation. Accordingly, we are maneuvering to have these ideas considered in the budget negotiations, and more specifically attached to any revenue (tax increase) proposals. We believe there is a strong possibility of securing some benefits in a larger package of fiscal reform; however, we did not anticipate the length and intensity of the continued budget standoff. At this point, there is no hope of moving any such package before the November elections.

#### Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Last December, after many years of trying, the United States Congress finally passed legislation replacing the No Child Left Behind Act. ESSA is the new vehicle through which federal education assistance to the state passes. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops was very involved in the drafting of the new legislation, and several improvements to how private students, teachers and families benefit from the law were attained. Most notably:

- Requiring the proportional share of federal money for services to private school students and staff in Title IA and Title IIA be determined based on the full amount received by the local education agency (LEA = local school district) and before set asides.
- Requiring the state to designate an Ombudsman to monitor and enforce the requirements imposed on LEAs to ensure equitable services to private school students and teachers.
- Requiring the state education agency (SEA = Illinois State Board of Education) to inform private school officials “in a timely manner” the amount of funds that LEAs determine are available for services and benefits to private school students and teachers.
- Requiring LEAs to spend the funds allocated for the benefit of private school children during the same fiscal year in which those funds are received.
- Specifying that the goal of consultation between LEAs and private school officials shall be to reach “agreement on how to provide equitable and effective programs for eligible private school children.”

For a more comprehensive explanation of the favorable changes please go [here](#).

#### Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA)

This new Illinois law is designed to increase accountability and transparency in the use of public funds while also reducing administrative burdens on state agencies and grant recipients. GATA sets up a free process that will hopefully prove uncomplicated.

The Catholic Conference of Illinois distributed a guidance document to Catholic school principals for completing GATA. The law does apply to Catholic and other nonpublic schools who are direct recipients of an award from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) or another government agency, such as any school participating in Preschool for All or the National School Lunch Program. To access the guidance click [here](#).

Receiving services through Title grants from your local school district does not classify a Catholic school as a grantee and does not require participation in GATA.

#### Senate Bill 7 – Concussion Protocols

This legislation requires that schools participating in interscholastic athletics:

- Create a concussion oversight team that will establish “return to play” and “return to learn” protocols for students believed to have suffered a concussion. The IESA and IHSA have produced model protocols that we encourage schools to adopt.
  - The IHSA protocols are [here](#).
  - The IESA protocols are [here](#).

- If a school employs an athletic trainer or nurse, those persons must be on the oversight team.
- A person must be made responsible for implementing and complying with the protocols established by the oversight team. The school's athletic director would be a prime candidate.
- Students cannot participate in an interscholastic athletic activity until the student and the student's parent or guardian have signed a form that acknowledges receiving and reading written information that explains concussion prevention, symptoms, treatment, and oversight and that includes guidelines for safely resuming participation in an athletic activity following a concussion. The form will be provided by the Illinois High School Association.

Senate Bill 7 passed the General Assembly almost unanimously and was signed into law by the Governor on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015. Its provisions were to go into effect last school year; however, **Senate Bill 219**, which delayed the mandate for one school year, passed the Illinois General Assembly and was signed into law last October.

### House Bill 6333

This legislation seeks to require schools to allow parents of students with asthma to submit an “asthma action plan,” detailing day to day care and how to identify and respond to symptoms. The bill also requires each school district, charter school, and nonpublic school to adopt an asthma episode emergency response protocol, provided by the Illinois State Board of Education, before January 1, 2017. CCI opposed this legislation as overly-burdensome and unnecessary as schools already closely interact with families of students with asthma and allow for student self-medication as necessary. In response, the proponents of the bill amended it to meet some of our concerns. The bill no longer requires the distribution of student asthma action plans to school staff nor does it require parents to submit a plan. With these changes, the bill was passed by the General Assembly and the Governor signed the bill into law on August 19<sup>th</sup>.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY**

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

At our urging, ISBE has been able to employ new staff and contract with Illinois Service Center West 40 to help coordinate and conduct school visits. They conducted approximately 140 nonpublic school visits in the 2015-16 school year. The incorporation of new staff led to some disagreement in interpretations of requirements for state recognition – particularly in the case of health records for new school employees – but those issues were resolved, and this new system of incorporating Regional Offices of Education into the school visits promises to bring stability to the visit cycle and enable longer range planning. In fact, a five year visit schedule has been adopted.

CCI was able to work with ISBE in crafting amendments to the administrative rules that drop the requirement for most school employees to undergo TB tests and exempt religious schools from having to prove their not-for-profit status to the state. All in all, the state recognition program for nonpublic schools is running better than at any time in the past decade.

## Deadlines!

Please remember the November 15, 2016, deadline for submitting the (1) Nonpublic Registration, Enrollment and Staff Report, (2) Immunization Data and (3) Nonpublic School Application for State Recognition and School Calendar. These forms must be completed and submitted on time in order to extend your school's state recognition status from December 31, 2016 to December 31, 2017. The deadline cannot be missed. Most of these IWAS systems will open around October 1<sup>st</sup>.

Thank you for your attention to these important matters. As always, if you have any questions, please contact me at [wichmann@ilcatholic.org](mailto:wichmann@ilcatholic.org) or 217-528-9200.