Welcome to the Illinois Coalition of Non-Public Schools monthly Electronic Report. Included are matters related to legislation, ISBE regulations and information of interest to our nonpublic schools. We ask for your continued support as ICNS is the voice of nonpublic education in Illinois.

SEVERE WEATHER

Has your school prepared for the possibility of damaging storms? Have you planned and conducted tornado drills? Do your students know where to go in the event of a dangerous storm? Click here for Severe Weather Preparedness: 2014 Illinois Severe Weather Fact Sheet.

EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION SYSTEM (ECS) IS NOW EDUCATOR LICENSURE INFORMATION SYSTEM (ELIS)

ISBE upgraded the Educator Certification System (ECS) to the new Educator Licensure Information System (ELIS) on July 1, 2013. In the past, Illinois educator certificates sometimes caused confusion for teachers and administrators; it has not always been clear from the certificate which subjects or grade levels the holder is qualified to teach.

To clarify this, Illinois has transitioned from a certificate system to a licensure system, moving from 60 types of educator certificates and endorsements to just three licenses.

The three licenses are:
- Professional Educator License (PEL)
- Educator License with Stipulations (ELS)
- Substitute License.

It is possible for an individual educator to hold multiple licenses, as different certificates held at the time of the exchange were converted to endorsements on different licenses.

The first license after the exchange (July 1, 2013) is valid for the time period remaining on the current certificate; thereafter, each license will have to be renewed and registered at the end of its validity period. Upon renewal and registration, the PEL will be valid for five years. For the ELS, the validity period varies depending on the type of endorsement on the license. Each substitute license is valid for five years.

Educators will not receive paper copies of their licenses, but may print a screen shot of their credentials from ELIS. The subject area and grade levels for which the licensee is qualified to teach or administer will be clearly indicated on the license.

Just like certificates, licenses must be registered for a $50 fee every five years in order to prevent them from lapsing. Educators can pay any registration fees by logging in to ELIS. If a license is not re-registered after six months, it lapses, and the educator will have to pay a $500 penalty fee, or complete nine semester-hours of college coursework in the content area listed on the credential. You may click in to your account at: http://www.isbe.net/ELIS/default.htm

REQUIREMENTS FOR ILLINOIS NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS

If you would like to check a succinct listing of requirements in Illinois for nonpublic schools, the Council for American Private Education (CAPE) has a link that would provide you with this information. http://www.ed.gov/pubs/RegPrivSchl/illinois.html
The Illinois General Assembly has not been in session this week, giving legislators time to finish some final campaigning before the March 18 Primary Election. All members of the House of Representatives and one-third of the members of the Senate are up for election this year. Of course, not all of them will be facing opposition from their own political party in the Primary Election. The legislature returns to the Capitol on March 19.

The following is a list of education bills being tracked by our ICNS lobbyist. As the session moves forward and bills are changed, there will be additions and subtractions to the list.

HB 4262 – Effectively removes the requirement that new school employees undergo a TB test.

HB 4573 & SB 2938 – These are bills appropriating $12.5 million to the Textbook Block Grant.

HB 3724 & SB 3214 – Requires that training on how to administer CPR and how to use an automated external defibrillator be included as a basis for health education curricula and shall be a prerequisite to receiving a diploma.

HB 5621 – This bill requires that as a prerequisite to receiving a high school diploma, each pupil entering the 9th grade in the 2015-16 school year or a subsequent school year must successfully complete 4 (instead of 3) years of mathematics and 3 (instead of 2) years of science.

HB 5892 – This bill provides for the administration of undesignated epinephrine auto-injectors (undesignated = owned by the school) by a pupil, school nurse, and trained personnel. The bill also requires a school to permit the self-administration and self-carry of asthma medication by a pupil with asthma.

SB 2682 – This bill would require the study of the history of organized labor in America and the collective bargaining process to be included in the teaching of the history of the United States.

SB 2710 – This bill will require state recognized nonpublic schools to hold an annual meeting to review the school’s crisis plan.

SB 3497 – This bill would require all student teachers to undergo criminal history records checks before beginning in the schools.

HB 4330 – This is Representative Ford’s school choice bill that he has introduced for the past several years.

HB 4670 – Requires ISBE to establish an education savings account for each participating student to be funded through GSA. Students can then use money to attend the school of his or her choice. The ultimate school choice bill.

SB 3449 – This bill is a permanent extension of the temporary income tax increase that is scheduled to expire next year. It makes a number of other tax changes including lifting the cap of the education expense tax credit from $500 to $1000.

HB 5718 & SB 3534 – These bills, are the latest version of the Meek’s voucher bill. The bill lifts the scholarship level to $5200.

SB 3533 –Allows for public school students in underperforming schools to enroll in specific courses from other providers. The providers would be reimbursed through GSA. Eligible providers of these courses would include nonpublic school.

EDUCATION IN THE NEWS

• Redesigned SAT Will Be More 'Focused and Useful' The College Board announced plans Wednesday for the new SAT, with an emphasis on citing evidence to support answers and covering fewer math topics in greater depth. More

• Khan Academy to Provide Free Online SAT Prep - Students will have free online access to custom practice problems, instructional videos, and tailored feedback to help them gear up for the college-admissions exam. More

• Continued growth spurt - According to estimates from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, about 600 new charter schools opened in 2013-14, serving an additional 288,000 students, bringing the total number of charters in the country to about 6,400 serving 2.5 million students.

• Large numbers of low-income children who begin formal schooling with many disadvantages -- poor medical care, homelessness, an uneducated mother, for example -- not only struggle with schoolwork but hurt the achievement of other children in their classrooms, according to a new study. More
CAPE OUTLOOK

Pre-K by conscription or choice? That's how John Coons, professor of law, emeritus, at the University of California at Berkeley, frames a central question in the current debate about early education policy. Will parents be told by the government where to enroll their four-year-olds, or will they have a genuine choice of providers?

The question, writes Coons in a recent essay, dates back at least to Plato, who thought newborns in his ideal city should be stripped from their parents and subjected to the full-time care of specialists. Coons reminds us that when it comes to post-K education in the United States, wealthy families get to select their child's school, but "for the less fortunate family, it is difficult or impossible to avoid their child's conscription for seven hours, five days a week" in a school designated by the government.

Policymakers now have to decide the extent to which the Platonic vision will influence pre-K policy, he writes. Will "lower-income families be subsidized in order to make their own choices among public, private, and religious providers"? Or will "pre-K school be designed as the government strong-arm long familiar to post-K families, especially those forced into public schools in the cities"? The issue is currently playing out in the U.S. Congress.

Also in the March Outlook:
• One State Considers Early Ed Scholarships
• Another State Moves Towards Education Savings Accounts
• Private School Students at White House Film Festival
• Icy Weather Video Goes Viral

Download the March Outlook Here

ILLINOIS ADVOCATES OF EDUCATIONAL CHOICE

The Illinois Advocates of Educational Choice is a not-for-profit organization that promotes laws that will benefit the children in non-public schools and improve education in Illinois. One of their important roles is to host annual meetings with legislators. Their next meeting is on Saturday, March 22 with state legislators in the 4th and 39th Senate Districts. The meeting will be held at Walther Christian Academy (Walther Lutheran High School) in Melrose Park. The meeting will start at 8:45 am and adjourn before 11:00 am. Nonpublic school administrators in the 4th and 39th Senate Districts are invited to attend. For more information, you can click here for the organization’s web page.

CONTACT US

If you have any questions, comments or need information related to our efforts in supporting nonpublic schools, feel free to communicate with us by sending an e-mail to ICNS.

ICNS COMMITS:
• To be the voice of non-public education of Illinois.
• To advocate non-public education.
• To communicate with the leadership of public education.
• To monitor legislation

Illinois Coalition of Non-Public Schools - www.icns.net
Membership information and application - http://www.icns.net/icnsrenewal1314.pdf