

June 9, 2017



ALLIANCE LEGISLATIVE REPORT (100-23)

NO MOVEMENT ON BUDGET THIS WEEK

There was no official action on a State budget this week. The legislature adjourned on May 31 and went home without approving a spending plan for Fiscal Year 2018 and went into what the House Speaker calls “continuous session”. There was no session this week, though the House of Representatives did hold appropriations committee hearings in Chicago to discuss budget items. More House hearings are scheduled for next week as well.

Reportedly, staff from the Governor’s office and from the offices of the four legislative leaders have been meeting on the budget. There was no indication that there has been any breakthrough and, generally, the Governor and the legislative leaders have been sticking to their initial positions (much like the last two years).

In the meantime, the budget adopted last year for public schools still runs through the end of June. If no budget bill is approved this month, there would be no appropriations for K-12 school districts effective July 1. For school board members and administrators who are beginning to make contingency plans in the event that there is no budget in place for public schools, the Alliance has prepared a toolkit that is available [here](#).

GOOD NEWS/BAD NEWS IN THIS LEGISLATIVE SESSION

It was a mixed bag this spring for Alliance members regarding the spring legislative session. The good news, the General Assembly approved a new – much more equitable – school funding distribution formula. The bad news, at this time there is no budget to fund it. And though the legislature has approved SB 1, through a parliamentary maneuver, the bill has not been sent to the Governor.

The bad news, several bills containing new unfunded mandates were approved by both legislative chambers. HB 3215 that will require school districts to provide feminine hygiene products for free in all restrooms; HB 3869 that will require school staff to receive in-service training on implicit racial bias; and SB 1223 that will require school districts to create a new committee and policies on accelerated placement of students, all were approved.

The good news, dozens of bills that would have created new mandates were stopped, including requirements to: post new nutritional information on all food sold in schools; add new instructional programs on Civics Education in junior high school and work ethics instruction in sixth grade; equip all school buses with seat belts. Bills were amended on behalf of the Alliance to lessen proposed requirements for instruction on job training programs (HB 243), an entrepreneur curriculum (HB 3368), and new reporting requirements for DCFS (HB 3615).

More positive results emerged when bills were approved to change the Teachers’ Retirement System (TRS) federal funds rate from the unfunded liability rate to the normal cost rate for school staff paid with federal program dollars (HB 656) and to improve licensure standards for principals (HB 2898), business officials (HB 106), and teachers (HB 3820).

The Alliance’s Digest of Bills Passed publication, which contains all of the bills that affect school districts that were approved this spring, will soon be available.

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