An Electronic Newsletter for ICNS Member Schools  

September 2013

The Electronic Report for the Illinois Coalition of Non-Public Schools (ICNS) has returned for a new school year. As a member school administrator, you will receive each month an issue of the Electronic Report. The purpose of this Report is to provide brief synopses of developments with the Illinois Coalition of Non-Public Schools, legislative updates, and information of interest to our nonpublic school administrators. As a benefit of membership, the Electronic Report is written and sent to you each month during the school year as a way of working to keep you informed. If you have not yet renewed your membership in ICNS, please consider doing this so you will continue to receive each issue of the Electronic Report.

ADVOCATING FOR NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ICNS is committed to continuing our strong advocacy for Illinois nonpublic schools. But your membership dues are critical to our success. A minimal and reasonable investment to purchase your membership to ICNS is well worth the cost of $75 for 1 year or $125 for 2 years. Click here to find a form to use in renewing your membership. There is also an online membership form.

ICNS LEGISLATIVE GOALS FOR 2013-2014

ICNS works on your behalf by engaging the services of a lobbyist to work with the Illinois Legislature. This year, the legislative goals are:

1. Work to restore state funding to the Textbook Loan, Educational Improvement and School Safety Block Grant and the Parent/Guardian Transportation Reimbursement programs.

2. Pursue and support school choice options such as tax credits and vouchers as opportunities exist.

3. Maintain a smooth and cooperative relationship between the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and nonpublic schools to ensure an effective state recognition program for nonpublic schools.

TEACHER LICENSURE

ISBE attempted to launch a new educator licensure system July 1. Due to technical difficulty, the launch has been delayed. While this is largely a technical change, it will impact everyone with certificates. In short, the state is moving from 60 types of educator certificates and endorsements to just three licenses. Educators will not lose any of their credentials or endorsements in this transition. There is no cost to educators associated with this change.

There will be more information in the coming weeks but you can learn more about this change on ISBE’s Educator Certification page if you choose. When operational, this new Educator License Information System, or ELIS, will be more user friendly especially in comparison to the somewhat cumbersome certificate system of the current day.

Here is the ISBE link:
http://isbe.net/licensure/default.htm

STATE RECOGNITION SITE VISITS

ISBE has been working closely with the Nonpublic School Advisory Committee to plan a "surge" of recognition visits this coming school year. By contracting with retired educators and administrators (from primarily nonpublic schools) ISBE hopes to wipe out or greatly reduce the backlog in school visits.

This potentially means hundreds of visits will occur this school year. A visitation schedule has not yet been made. But, if your school has not been visited since 2006 or beyond, you would do well to begin preparation for a visit this school year.
STATE RECOGNITION AND ISBE

A number of nonpublic schools missed the November 15, 2012, 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.

ICNS was able to work out a deal with ISBE ensuring those schools that missed the deadline were not stripped of state recognition. They were placed on a one year probationary status and as long as all submissions are made on time this year, they will be restored to full recognition.

Please mark your calendars and keep submission of these forms as a priority. The Nonpublic School Application and School Calendar must be submitted to ISBE FIRST or they will discard it. All three forms must be sent in through the IWAS system by November 15, 2013. ISBE says there will be no wiggle room on this deadline.

EDUCATION IN THE NEWS

PRESCHOOL: VINDICATED

New federal data show that children who receive early childcare beyond parents or relatives perform better in reading and math in kindergarten than those cared for only at home, reports Sarah Sparks in Education Week. The report from the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics includes 41 key indicators across seven domains: family and social environment, economic circumstances and health care, physical environment and safety, behavior, education, and health. This year’s report included a special section on kindergartners' reading, math, and science achievement, as well as approaches to learning, using data from the ongoing federal Early Childhood Longitudinal Study of children who started kindergarten in 2010-11. As expected, kindergartners from households with incomes near and below the federal poverty line had lower reading, math, and science scores than children from households with incomes at least 200 percent of the poverty level. The data also show that students with both parents working full-time or one full- and one part-time had higher math and reading scores than those with only one parent working. The gap between children who attended preschool with a non-relative and those who did not, and the gap between children with two versus one working parent, had not entirely closed by the end of the child's kindergarten year.

PUBLIC PERCEPTION ON VOUCHERS

What the public thinks about charters and vouchers - A new survey from PDK/Gallup finds that in a reversal of public opinion, a majority of Americans now oppose using student test scores to evaluate teachers, and more believe that increased testing has hurt rather than helped public schools, report Teresa Watanabe and Marina Villeneuve for The Los Angeles Times. Nearly two-thirds of Americans polled also oppose the public release of student test scores of individual teachers -- a shift from two years ago, when a majority supported it. The poll found that 36 percent of respondents believe increased testing has hurt schools, compared to 28 percent in 2007. Only 22 percent believed testing has helped schools; the rest saw no difference. The survey also found that 58 percent opposed using student test scores in teacher evaluations, a reversal from last year, when 52 percent favored it. Most respondents have never heard of the Common Core. The poll found broad support for charter schools, with a majority of respondents saying charters offer a better education than traditional schools. But 70 percent opposed using public dollars to pay for private school education -- the strongest opposition to vouchers ever recorded in the survey. In the 45th annual poll by PDK/Gallup, a nationally representative sample of 1,001 American adults, including a sub-sample of parents, were interviewed. More

PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO NON-PUBLIC EDUCATION

Publications related to non-public education are available from the U.S. Department of Education. Click here for a list.

RECENT LEGISLATIVE ACTION

The Governor has recently signed the following bills into law:

SB 1625 requires school districts to hold at least one drill per year in each school that specifically addresses a shooting incident. Local law enforcement must be invited to participate in the drill. The bill is now Public Act 98-0048 effective Date July 1, 2013.
HB 1443 Hazing Reporting - The bill creates in the Criminal Code the violation of “Failure to Report Hazing”. If a school official knowingly fails to report hazing it is a Class B Misdemeanor (if the act caused great bodily harm or death, it is a Class A Misdemeanor). “School Official” is a paid administrator, teacher, counselor, education support personnel, or a paid or volunteer coach.

HB 2245 Child Abuse Reporter Training - The bill provides that upon employment and at least once every five years thereafter, school personnel, required to report child abuse must complete mandated reporter training provided by an individual or agency with expertise in recognizing and reporting child abuse.

HB 3190 Meningococcal Vaccine – The bill requires students entering grades 6th and 12th grade to be immunized for meningococcal conjugate.

SB 1307 beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, lowers the compulsory school age from 7 years to 6 years (on or before September 1).

COUNCIL FOR AMERICAN PRIVATE EDUCATION (CAPE)

The national organization for private education is the Council for American Private Education (CAPE.) Each month, CAPE publishes a newsletter entitled Outlook. Here is a brief summary of the September issue along with a link that will provide you with all of articles.

FEDERAL SURVEYS PROVIDE PICTURE OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Reports released this summer on two federal surveys provide, from an array of angles, a penetrating look at the state of private education in the United States.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in August released selected findings from the 2011-12 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), a nationally representative survey of public and private school principals and teachers.

Among the findings: 64 percent of graduates from all private high schools and 81 percent of graduates from Catholic high schools go on to a four-year college. The same is true for 40 percent of graduates from traditional public schools and 37 percent of graduates from public charter schools.

Read more about SASS as well as the Private School Universe Survey (PSS), a comprehensive count of the number of private schools, students, and teachers in the United States, in the September issue of Outlook.

Also in the September Outlook:

- Two New Polls on What Parents Think of Schools
- Justice Department Sues Louisiana Over Voucher Program
- New Jersey Set to Elect School Choice Senator

MANDATED REPORTERS

Is your staff aware that they are "Mandated Reporters" and are required by law to report incidences of or evidence of child abuse that they observe? Mandated Reporter Training is readily available here.

U.S DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

As part of the U.S. Department of Education’s Equitable Services Implementation Plan to help improve the delivery of federally funded services to students in religious and independent schools, the department’s Office of Non- Public Education has produced a series of in-depth webinars.

Each session features department specialists covering everything school officials need to know to have their students and teachers participate in the highlighted program. All webinars have been recorded and are available for viewing on the department’s Web site.
**SCHOOL SAFETY DRILL ACT**

This past December, ISBE and the State Fire Marshal's Office proposed a new administrative rulemaking requiring state-recognized nonpublic schools to conform with a section of the School Safety Drill Act that we are exempt from in statute. The section in question requires an annual meeting with local first responders to evaluate the school's crisis planning. ICNS objected to the new rule-making due to the process followed. We do not believe administrative rulemaking, particularly rulemaking proposed under the auspices of the cooperative state recognition program, should be the source of new regulation not sanctioned in state statute.

ICNS has now worked with ISBE and State Fire Marshal representatives to discuss options for moving forward on this issue legislatively. All parties have now agreed to new language to be added to the School Safety Drill Act. The required annual meeting with first responders will likely be law by this time next year. Schools are encouraged to arrange such a meeting already this year just to get the process in place.

**SCHOOL SAFETY DRILL ACT PART 2**

A school safety bill was passed in 2005 and we are now well down the road in reporting. Each year schools need to conduct 3 evacuation (fire) drills, 1 bus evacuation drill (which can be curriculum based and done in the classroom without a bus), 1 severe weather drill, and a law enforcement drill in which local law enforcement may participate. Of the 3 evacuation drills, one should be held in conjunction with your local fire department, and they are supposed to contact you by September 1 to set that up. If they haven't contacted you ... contact them. Some nonpublic schools have found that local fire departments have not faithfully followed through on this requirement.

In addition to these drills, the Statute requires a one page annual review report be filed with the Office of the State Fire Marshal. This form may be found at the State Fire Marshall website- [http://www.sfm.illinois.gov/public/AnnualReviewComplianceReportfromPrivateSchools.aspx](http://www.sfm.illinois.gov/public/AnnualReviewComplianceReportfromPrivateSchools.aspx). Compliance Reports completed by private elementary and secondary schools are to be submitted to the OSFM, on or before October 1st of each school year, at Office of the State Fire Marshal, Division of Fire Prevention, 1035 Stevenson Dr., Springfield, IL 62703-4259.

**IHSA REQUIRED INSURANCE**

There is a new law requiring health insurance for student athletes. The new law concerning catastrophic health insurance gives our high schools two options:

1) Purchase Catastrophic Health Insurance in the amount of $3 million or 5 years for all student athletes, or

2) Require all student athletes participating in IHSA sanctioned events to be on an individual or group health insurance plan (i.e. private health insurance).

Unfortunately, the IHSA sent member high schools a memo that stated high schools must purchase the $3 million/5year catastrophic insurance. This is not what the law says. ICNS is working with the IHSA to clarify the law and the options open to our schools.

**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.