

NCBEA Legislative Update

NCBEA

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Tips to Make Your Legislative Advocacy Communications More Effective

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Think Locally

It's usually best to send letters to the representative from your local Congressional District or the senators from your state. Your vote helps elect them—or not—and that fact alone carries a lot of weight. It also helps personalize your letter. Sending the same "cookie-cutter" message to every member of Congress may grab attention but rarely much consideration.

Keep it Simple

Your letter should address a single topic or issue. Typed, one-page letters are best. Many PACs ([Political Action Committees](#)) recommend a three-paragraph letter structured like this:

1. Say why you are writing and who you are. List your "credentials." (If you want a response, you must include your name and address, even when using email.)
2. Provide more detail. Be factual not emotional. Provide specific rather than general information about how the topic affects you and others. If a certain bill is involved, [cite the correct title or number](#) whenever possible.
3. Close by requesting the action you want taken: a vote for or against a bill, or change in general policy.

The best letters are courteous, to the point, and include specific supporting examples.

Addressing Members of Congress

To Your [Senator](#):

The Honorable (full name)
(Room #) (Name) Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

To Your [Representative](#):

The Honorable (full name)
(Room #) (Name) House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

The above addresses should be used in email messages, as well as those sent through the Postal Service.

Finding Their Addresses

Senate and House of Representatives

[U.S. Senators \(web sites and mailing addresses\)](#)

[Write Your U.S. Representative](#) (A service of the House that will assist you by identifying your Congressperson in the [U.S. House of Representatives](#) and providing contact information.

U.S. Supreme Court

[Contact Information - US Supreme Court](#)

The Justices do not have email addresses, but they do read letters from citizens.

To Conclude

Here are some key things you should always and never do in writing to your elected representatives.

1. Be courteous and respectful without "gushing."
2. Clearly and simply state the purpose of your letter. If it's about a certain bill, [identify it correctly](#). If you need help in finding the number of a bill, use the [Thomas Legislative Information System](#).
3. Say who you are. Anonymous letters go nowhere. Even in email, include your correct name, address, phone number and email address. If you don't include at least your name and address, you will not get a response.
4. State any professional credentials or personal experience you may have, especially those pertaining to the subject of your letter.
5. Keep your letter short—one page is best.
6. Use specific examples or evidence to support your position.
7. State what it is you want done or recommend a course of action.
8. Thank the member for taking the time to read your letter.

Never

1. Use vulgarity, profanity, or threats. The first two are just plain rude and the third one can get you a visit from the Secret Service. Simply stated, don't let your passion get in the way of making your point.
2. Fail to include your name and address, even in email letters.
3. Demand a response.

Identifying Legislation

Cite these [legislation](#) identifiers when writing to members of Congress:

House Bills: "**H.R.**____"

House Resolutions: "**H.RES.**____"

House Joint Resolutions: "**H.J.RES.**____"

Senate Bills: "**S.**____"

Senate Resolutions: "**S.RES.**____"

Senate Joint Resolutions: "**S.J.RES.**____"

(Source: <http://usgovinfo.about.com/od/uscongress/a/letterscongress.htm>)

Illinois

The most significant legislation in the State of Illinois in 2016 was the *Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act* (PWR) that was passed unanimously by the House and Senate in May 2016 and signed into law by Governor Rauner in July. Under the PWR Act, the most significant trend we are going to experience as educators is the transition to competency-based requirements in lieu of “seat-time.” However, before we define the models for implementation, there will be many discussions, pilots, and data to determine the best practices as we move forward. This act embraces the P-20 Council’s goal of 60 percent of Illinoisans having a high-quality postsecondary certificate or degree by the year 2025. The act provides a student-based and competency-based approach to helping Illinois students achieve college and career readiness. It addresses both the remedial education and the workforce readiness skill issues that many of our secondary students face. There are four strategies that the PWR Act implements: Postsecondary and Career Expectations (PaCE) benchmarks from eighth through twelfth grade, competency-based learning systems, college and career pathway endorsements on high school diplomas, and transitional math courses to avoid remedial education in community college.



Source: <http://www.advanceillinois.org/policy-areas/college-career-readiness/postsecondary-workforce-readiness-act/>

The PWR Act will begin implementation as a pilot program with voluntary school districts limited to 12 school districts per year in the first two years of implementation and then 15 school districts per year thereafter.

In addition to the PWR Act, HB1790 established that teachers who received a CTE endorsement before January 1, 2015 need not take a basic skills test to renew their endorsement. SB2912 was signed into legislation on 1/6/2017 streamlining the hiring process for out-of-state applicants by making provision for a “short-term” substitute teaching license for individuals with 60 hours of college credit. This legislation will help to address the teacher shortage currently being experienced in Illinois.

Indiana

The air has changed, the season has changed, and now comes a productive legislative session over the next few months. Below you will find some House Bills (HB) that as an educator, you will want to keep your eye on and follow. A great website for you to bookmark and frequent as you keep an eye on the progress of the reference bills would be:

<http://iga.in.gov/legislative/2017/bills/>.

Senate Bills (SB) to Keep an Eye On:

1. **SB 34** is about background checks for school employees.
2. **SB 35** is about teacher evaluations.
3. **SB 108** is about not counting a student absent to attend “educationally related non-classroom activities.
4. **SB 155** is about teacher licensing.
5. **SB 407** Requires, before April 1, 2018, the Department of Education to develop, and the State Board of Education to approve, a method for measuring individualized student growth throughout the school year using a benchmark assessment to be used to evaluate a certificated employee as part of the school corporation's staff performance evaluation plan. Requires that a school corporation's staff performance evaluation plan must be based upon, in part, student growth during the school year. Provides that a school employer shall submit a copy of the affidavit submitted by the exclusive representative indicating the number of teachers who are members of the exclusive representative to the Indiana education employment relations board (board). Requires the board to post a copy of the affidavit on the board's Internet web site. Requires the board to post on its Internet web site training modules, videos, or other instructional material informing school employees of their rights to select an exclusive representative. Provides that each school year in which school employee participation in a school employee organization currently serving as the exclusive representative of the bargaining unit does not represent a majority of the school employees within the unit, the board shall notify the school employees of the bargaining unit of their right to: (1) representation; and (2) the ability to change their exclusive representative. Urges the legislative council to establish the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) education innovation interim study committee.
6. **SB 498** Teacher compensation. Provides that certain factors may account for not more than 33.33% (instead of 33%) of the calculation used to determine a teacher's increase or increment in salary. Amends the factor concerning additional content area degrees and credit hours in determining a teacher's increase or increment in salary.
7. **SB 503** Teacher evaluations and school performance. Provides that, for a state fiscal year beginning July 1, 2016, and ending June 30, 2017, the amount that a school corporation may receive as part of a performance grant relating to test results shall be calculated using the higher of: (1) the percentage of passing scores on ISTEP program tests for the school for the 2013-2014 school year; or (2) the percentage of passing scores on ISTEP program tests for the school for the 2015-2016 school year. Specifies that if a school's performance grant is calculated using the percentage of passing ISTEP scores from the 2013-2014 school year, the grant amount may not exceed (with certain exceptions) the grant amount that the school received for the state fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014, and ending June 30, 2015. Provides that a school corporation shall distribute all stipends from a performance grant to individual teachers within 20 business days of the date the Department of Education distributes the performance grant to the school corporation. Provides that ISTEP program test scores or a school's category or designation of school improvement for the 2015-2016 school year, based on the ISTEP program test taken in the spring of 2016, may not be used by a school corporation as part of an annual performance evaluation of a certificated employee unless the use of the ISTEP program test scores or a school's category or designation of school improvement would improve the certificated employee's annual performance rating. Provides that a school's or school corporation's category or designation of performance for the 2015-2016 school year may not be lower than the grade assigned to the school or school corporation by the State Board of Education for the 2013-2014 school year. Provides that for purposes of determining whether a choice scholarship school has become newly eligible for consequences based on the school's category or designation of performance for the 2015-2016 school year, the Department of Education may not apply the consequences unless the school is placed in the lowest category or designation for the 2015-2016 school year.
8. **SB 555** Teacher performance grants. Provides that a school corporation's annual performance grant is equal to the sum of: (1) the number of teachers employed by the school corporation who were rated as highly effective in the teacher's annual performance evaluation conducted in the preceding state fiscal year, multiplied by \$750; plus (2) the number of teachers employed by the school corporation who were rated as effective in the teacher's annual performance evaluation conducted in the preceding state fiscal year, multiplied by \$500.

House Bills (HB) to Keep an Eye On:

1. **HB 1003** Student assessments. Replaces the ISTEP test program after June 30, 2018, with a new statewide assessment program to be known as Indiana's Learning Evaluation Assessment Readiness Network (ILEARN). Repeals a provision defining the ISTEP program. Makes conforming amendments.
2. **HB 1008** Workforce development. Provides a credit against state tax liability equal to the lesser of \$25,000 or 50% of a training program's expenses for an employer that employs not more than 250 employees and provides a training program that results in: (1) an incumbent employee receiving an industry level certification and an increase of at least 5% in the employee's compensation; or (2) full-time employment with the employer in a high wage, high demand job for a participant who completes the training program. Limits the amount of the tax credit to \$2,500 per employee whenever an employer sends an incumbent employee to an existing training program. Requires the State Board of Education to work in conjunction with the department of workforce development to provide oversight and administration of career and technical education. Repeals provisions establishing the advisory committee on career and technical education. Establishes the eligibility requirements for a workforce ready grant and the amount of the grant. Establishes conditions for the renewal of a workforce ready grant, and provides alternatives to maintenance of satisfactory academic progress that allow a student to qualify for and renew an adult student grant and a workforce ready grant. Establishes the maximum period during which a student may receive an adult study grant and a workforce ready grant. Establishes an annual reporting requirement to the governor and the legislative council by state providers of workforce related programs concerning the results of each of those programs. Provides that, before establishing a new workforce related program, a state provider must present to the state workforce innovation council the details of the proposed program, including: (1) how the program will coordinate with existing workforce related programs; and (2) the funding source or sources of the program. Appropriates \$250,000 to the governor's office to develop a comprehensive workforce development plan. Makes conforming amendments.
3. **HB 1005** Superintendent of public instruction. Abolishes the office of the state superintendent of public instruction on January 10, 2021. Provides that, after January 10, 2021, the governor shall appoint a secretary of education. Repeals a provision that a candidate for the office of state superintendent of public instruction must have resided in Indiana for at least two years. Makes conforming and technical amendments.
4. **HB1007** Education course access program. Allows the Department of Education (department) to authorize course providers to offer course access program courses that provide for the delivery of instruction through any method, including online technologies, in the course access program (program). Requires the department to: (1) oversee the program; (2) approve courses offered in the program; and (3) maintain a course access program catalog. Requires the department to negotiate a tuition fee for each offered course. Requires the school corporation in which an eligible student is enrolled to transfer the tuition fee for a course to the authorized course provider. Allows the State Board of Education to adopt emergency and nonemergency rules.
5. **HB 1081** Teacher salaries.
6. **HB 1114** Teacher salaries.
7. **HB 1384** is about high school graduation and which diplomas count.
8. **HB 1389** Teacher bonuses.
9. **HB 1412** Teacher salaries.
10. **HB 1449** Education course access program. Allows the department of education (department) to authorize course providers to offer course access program courses that provide for the delivery of instruction through any method, including online technologies, in the course access program (program). Requires the department to: (1) oversee the program; (2) approve courses offered in the program; and (3) maintain a course access program catalog. Requires the department to negotiate a tuition fee for each offered course. Requires the school corporation in which an eligible student is enrolled to transfer the tuition fee for a course to the authorized course provider. Allows the State Board of Education to adopt emergency and nonemergency rules.
11. **HB 1463** Education course access program. Allows the Department of Education (department) to authorize course providers to offer course access program courses that provide for the delivery of instruction through any method, including online technologies, in the course access program (program). Requires the department to: (1) oversee the program; (2) approve courses offered in the program; and (3) maintain a course access program catalog. Requires the department to negotiate a tuition fee for each offered course. Requires the school corporation in which an eligible student is enrolled to transfer the

tuition fee for a course to the authorized course provider. Allows the State Board of Education to adopt emergency and nonemergency rules.

12. **HB 1590** Education matters. Provides a \$1,000 state income tax credit for an individual who is a licensed K-12 classroom teacher with respect to state income taxes on the income earned from the individual's employment as a classroom teacher. Replaces the ISTEP test program with an assessment program developed by the State Board of Education (state board) and the Department of Education. Specifies that the assessment program may not include measures or requirements that exceed measures and requirements in the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Changes the definition of a probationary and professional teacher. Expands the definition of an eligible student for purposes of receiving a choice scholarship to include any student who is at least five years of age and less than 22 years of age and has legal settlement in Indiana. Repeals provisions requiring a school corporation to develop and implement an annual teacher performance evaluation plan. Provides that, not later than July 1, 2018, the state board shall establish new categories or designations of school performance. Provides that the new standards of assessing school performance may not: (1) use an "A through F" grading scale; (2) use statewide assessment program test results as the primary means to assess school performance; and (3) include requirements or measures other than requirements or measures authorized under ESSA. Makes conforming and technical amendments.

Iowa

No news to report.

Minnesota

No news to report.

Michigan

1. Months Have Passed, and \$550M Is Still Due to MI Teachers

Gov. Rick Snyder says he will appeal to the Michigan Supreme Court the ordered return of more than \$550 million collected from school employees to fund retiree health care.

"These payments are necessary for the long-term financial stability of the retirement system teachers rely on for health care benefits after their years of hard work come to a close," said Snyder spokeswoman Anna Heaton. "Keeping the money in the system will help their investments continue to grow and benefit Michigan educators for decades to come."

Snyder's appeal is at odds with several court rulings — including two from the Michigan Court of Appeals — that stated the 2010 law used to collect the money from school employees was unconstitutional.

2. **HJR D of 2017** -- Constitutional amendments; state; equal amount of per pupil funding for all local school districts; ensure by certain date. Amends sec. 11, art. IX of the state constitution.
3. **SJR D of 2017** -- Constitutional amendments; state; operation of public school on for-profit basis; prohibit in state constitution. Amends sec. 2, art VIII of the state constitution.
4. **SB 0079 OF 2017**-- Education; teachers; provisions relating to interim teaching certification and to teaching of certain courses by noncertificated, nonendorsed teachers; modify. Amends secs.
5. **HB 4163 of 2017**-- Labor; collective bargaining; calendar and schedule for school year; make prohibited subjects of bargaining.
6. Governor Rick Snyder has proposed **modest school funding increases** in his 2018 budget plan. This is a start, but more is needed to fund progressive new third grade reading requirements and to address chronic education under-funding problems identified in a state report last year.

7. As per the February 17, 2017 issue of the *MEA Voice*, p. 17—“State House Speaker Tom Leonard (R—DeWitt) continues to call pension reforms backed by the billionaire DeVos Family a top priority for the next legislative session, despite serious concerns about the cost of forcing all new school employees into a (401k)-style defined contribution plan.” This item was derailed in December during a lame duck session...thanks to the work of the MEA lobbyists, members and other concerned individuals. Cost to the state on this issue will be several billion dollars.

Missouri

The following has/is taking place in the Missouri legislation:

1. **HB 253** -- CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
Creates the Career and Technical Education Certification Program
2. **SB 63** -- Provides that each school district may rely on technical coursework and skills assessments developed for industry-recognized certificates and credentials when establishing career and technical education offerings
3. **SB 44** -- The State Board of Education shall, by rule, establish a procedure whereby a high school student shall be able to complete a CTEC offering provided in this subsection for credit toward graduation. If a student completes one or more of such offerings, it may be indicated on such student's career and technical education certificate. Such offerings shall include, but shall not be limited to: (1) An industry certification; (2) A state-issued professional license that is required for entry into a specific occupation as determined by a state licensing agency in this state; (3) An occupational competency assessment; or (4) A CTEC exam. The council shall annually approve and publish a list of industry certifications, state-issued professional licenses, occupational competency assessments, and CTEC exams that may be earned or taken by students to satisfy the requirements. During the annual review process, the council shall ensure that curriculum and programs of study developed by local districts are compatible with the list of approved CTEC offerings. The council shall also develop an application form which may be submitted by members of the business or industry communities, local school districts, or institutions of higher education for the purposes of including a new industry certification, state-issued professional license, occupational competency assessment, or CTEC exam to the list of CTEC offerings created in this subsection.

Ohio

No news to report.

Wisconsin

In an effort to further reduce school staffing shortages, an emergency rule regarding expanding licensing options in core content area was being proposed by the Wisconsin DPI. Unfortunately, this rule was worded such that Business & Information Technology (CTE) teachers would not be able to expand their licensing to areas such as Computer Science but core teachers would be able to extend their licensing. WEBIT provided an official statement to the Wisconsin DPI regarding this issue. The latest update is that DPI has made changes to this emergency rule. However, we have not seen the new language.

Become a Business Education Advocate

NBEA supports national-, state-, and local-level efforts to ensure that business education is understood and valued by legislators, policymakers, business people, parents, and other critical audiences. NBEA's Legislative Advocacy Committee represents association members through ongoing liaison with Congress, federal officials, congressional committees, state legislatures, and other professional associations. Materials promoting business education are available to assist you in your conversations with these various audiences.

[Facts Every Legislator Should Know About Business Education](#)

[Facts Every Business Should Know About Business Education](#)

[Facts Every Parent Should Know About Business Education](#)

[Facts Every Student Should Know About Business Education](#)

[Facts Every Counselor Should Know About Business Education](#)

[Facts Every Administrator Should Know About Business Education](#)

[NBEA College and Career Readiness Position Paper](#)

[NBEA College and Career Readiness Flyer](#)

[NBEA Business Partnership Flyer](#)

(Source: <https://www.nbea.org/newsite/member/index.html>)

Thank you to the following individuals for making this newsletter possible:

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2016-17 NCBEA Legislative Committee

Colleen Webb—Michigan, Chairperson
Cathy Carruthers--Illinois
Kathy Mountjoy--Illinois
Sue Elwood--Iowa
Rhonda Schmaltz—Iowa



Communicate With Our Elected Officials...It Is Key to Our Success!

Now that the November elections are over, we, as business educators, must communicate some facts about business education to our new elected officials.

- Business Education provides a skilled workforce for your state
- Business Education helps your state keep pace with technology updates
- Business Education promotes and develops school and business partnerships in your state
- Business Education promotes entrepreneurship in your state
- Business Education ensures the economic resilience of your state
- Business Education encourages companies to locate their businesses in your state
- Business Education encourages leadership in your state
- Business Education provides international trade opportunities in your state
- Business Education enhances the economic literacy of your state
- Business Education strengthens the productivity and prosperity of your state

(from <https://www.nbea.org/newsite/member/documents/Legislator>)

Here is example of a welcome letter you could send:

The Honorable _____
Address
Address

Dear Senator/Contressman/Congresswoman/Representative _____

Congratulations on your recent election to the (state name) House of Representatives/Senate. Your willingness to dedicate your time and talents to your constituents is appreciated and admired.

My name is _____, and I am an _____ instructor at _____ in _____, _____. I have had the pleasure of teaching outstanding business and career and technical students for over _____ years.

If I can be of assistance regarding business education and/or career and technical education issues or information, I would be happy to do so. I look forward to working with you during your term of office.

My best wishes to you.

Sincerely

Name
Full contact information