

Governor Quinn Signs Legislation to Help Prevent Violence Among Elementary Students

Written by Laurel White
Friday, 08 July 2011 12:34

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Three Education Bills Will Equip Youth with Anti-Violence Training and Help Students Struggling in Math and Reading

CHICAGO – July 8, 2011. Governor Pat Quinn today signed legislation that will help students across Illinois to learn about how to prevent violence and resolve conflicts peacefully. The Governor also signed bills into law that will help elementary school students who are struggling with math and reading by ensuring that they spend more classroom time on these vital subjects.

“All of our students deserve a quality education, taught in a school that is free of violence,” said Governor Quinn. “Through these new laws, we are working to improve math and reading instruction for our struggling students while taking steps to address violence among our youngest children.”

House Bill 1204, sponsored by Rep. Constance Howard (D-Chicago) and Sen. Emil Jones III (D-Chicago), requires Illinois school districts to educate all students about ways to prevent violence and resolve conflicts peacefully. Older students in grades four through 12 have received this instruction since 1995, but in recent years violence among younger students has increased. The new law, which takes effect immediately, extends this important guidance to students enrolled in kindergarten through third grade, empowering them at an earlier age with a better understanding of how to handle conflicts appropriately.

House Bill 139, sponsored by Rep. La Shawn Ford (D-Chicago) and Sen. Annazette Collins

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(D-Chicago), requires school districts to emphasize reading and math during summer school instruction for students who have fallen two grade levels behind in those subjects for two consecutive school years. Currently, there is no specific requirement in place to ensure that struggling students spend more classroom time on these critical subjects. The new law takes effect Jan. 1, 2012.

"I would like to thank Governor Quinn for signing this bill into law and helping meet the needs of struggling students. Basic skills such as reading and math are necessary tools for a child's successful school career," said Rep. La Shawn Ford. "I hope this law continues to build on Illinois' commitment to reforming education, supporting teachers and continuing to close the educational achievement gaps found in underperforming communities."

House Bill 2397 sponsored by Rep. Rita Mayfield (D-Waukegan) and Sen. Linda Holmes (D-Aurora), requires school boards across Illinois to promote at least 60 minutes of reading instruction in kindergarten through third grade for students who are one or more levels below their grade proficiency. Currently, there is no reading requirement in place. This new law takes effect immediately and will encourage schools across Illinois to provide more robust reading instruction.

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