

Classrooms First legislation passes House committee

Written by Kara Beach
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SPRINGFIELD – March 13, 2013. After hearing testimony from Lt. Governor Sheila Simon on Wednesday morning, the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee unanimously passed Classrooms First Commission legislation that will make it easier for school districts to voluntarily consolidate. House Bill 2267, sponsored by Rep. Jehan Gordon-Booth (D-Peoria), now moves to the full House for consideration.

Simon, the state's point person on education reform, served as the chairperson of the bipartisan Classrooms First Commission, which examined ways school districts could reduce duplicative spending and improve educational offerings. Based on the Commission's findings, legislation approved by committee would allow non-contiguous school districts to consolidate, small schools to dissolve voluntarily without referenda and high school districts to tie consolidation dates to capital funding.

"We want Illinois to lead the nation in education performance, not bureaucracy," said Simon. "This legislation will make it easier for school districts to put their students first by dedicating resources to expanding classroom opportunities, and I would like to thank Rep. Gordon-Booth for her continued work to move this bill through the House."

The Classrooms First Commission was comprised of P-20 stakeholders including teachers, administrators and parents and it held public hearings across the state on school district consolidation last year. You can learn more about the commission's recommendations [here](#).

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