

Governor Quinn, Magic Johnson Join to Get Illinois At-Risk Students Back on Track

Written by Brooke Anderson

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Launch 'Friends of Magic' to Provide At-Risk Students with Resources to Get Back on Track and Build a Bright Future

CHICAGO – Governor Pat Quinn today joined Earvin “Magic” Johnson to launch the NBA Hall-of-Famer’s new organization, “Friends of Magic.” The movement aims to provide at-risk students with the tools they need to graduate high school and have a successful future. The Governor’s participation in the launch is part of his agenda to prepare every child for success in college, career and beyond.

“It means a lot to have someone like Magic Johnson make this important investment in the students of Illinois,” Governor Quinn said. “We must remember that it is everyone’s responsibility to help students who are struggling by keeping them in school or on the road to recovery. I thank Magic for bringing attention to this cause, especially as someone who knows that – either on the court or in the classroom – you can accomplish great things if you never give up.”

Friends of Magic is a new organization that brings together a network of individuals, foundations and companies whose mission is to provide students who are at risk or have dropped out the resources and assistance they need to not only graduate high school, but the opportunity to build their future through educational resources, internships and real-world experiences.

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“As many as one quarter of our nation’s students are not finishing high school, our goal is to ensure that no student falls through the cracks, and that all students have the opportunity to receive their high school diplomas and be fully prepared for college or the workplace,” Johnson said. “We are pleased to have the opportunity to bring our Bridgescape program to Chicago, and greatly appreciate the support we have received from the community.”

Today’s announcement takes place at the newly established North/South Lawndale Magic Johnson Bridgescape Academy, one of two Chicago-area blended-learning programs that provides students who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out of school with a free alternative path to earn a high school diploma in an environment that fits their schedule, life circumstances and learning needs. Magic Johnson Bridgescape Academies are currently in six states with a total enrollment of 1,675.

Governor Quinn has been leading a strong education agenda to build a brighter future for all Illinois students. The Governor signed landmark education reform laws in 2011 that gained national attention and in August enacted a new law that lowers the compulsory school age for students in Illinois in order to ensure all children have the opportunity to build a solid foundation for academic achievement and to help combat truancy. Research shows that children who start school at an earlier age are more likely to attend college and less likely to drop out of school, be placed in special education or commit crime.

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