

# News

## from the Illinois Board of Higher Education

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### **HIGHER ED LEADERS HAIL PASSAGE OF STRENGTHENED GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

SPRINGFIELD – Higher education leaders applauded the passage of Senate Bill 575 to strengthen high school graduation requirements, a linchpin of Governor Rod R. Blagojevich’s *Higher Standards/Better Schools* plan.

James L. Kaplan, Chairman of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, called the new standards an important advance in broadening access to college and improving retention and degree-completion.

“The Board congratulates the General Assembly for its foresight in passage of enhanced requirements in English, math, and science,” Kaplan said. “These requirements will improve the readiness of high school graduates for college and for the workforce.”

In a statement signed by the chief executives of the state’s 12 public university campuses, the presidents and chancellors said: “Better-prepared high school graduates will be more successful college freshmen, and successful college freshmen are far more likely to persist through graduation.” The campus leaders said they were united in the belief that the legislation will plant seeds in high school for success in college.

The Board of Higher Education has supported tougher graduation requirements since a 2001 study found that nearly two-thirds of graduating seniors go on immediately to post-secondary education but only about 40 percent of high school graduates had taken a vigorous curriculum designed to prepare them for the academic demands of college.

“The Governor’s *Higher Standards/Better Schools* plan will help place Illinois in the forefront of education reform,” Chairman Kaplan said. “The Board expresses its appreciation to the Governor and General Assembly for their effort to expand opportunities for success in a changing economy that increasingly demands post-secondary credentials for entry into the workforce.”

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