

# News

## from the Illinois Board of Higher Education

Contact: Don Sevenser, 217.557.7334  
Cell: 217.836.7395  
Kelley Talbot, 217.557.7354  
Cell: 847.372.8582  
[sevenser@ibhe.org](mailto:sevenser@ibhe.org)  
[talbot@ibhe.org](mailto:talbot@ibhe.org)

August 6, 2007

### **IBHE TO HEAR REPORT ON CRUCIAL K-12 LINK WITH HIGHER ED**

SPRINGFIELD – The demands of the new economy and essential skills for college readiness are converging to produce a greater urgency to strengthen ties between P-12 schools and higher education.

That is the message of a presentation scheduled for August 14 before the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) by Michael Cohen, a national expert on student achievement, and representatives of the Holland & Knight law firm, which has developed a partnership with the Office of the Governor and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to foster initiatives for college and work readiness and a P-20 agenda. Cohen is President of Achieve, Inc., which has spearheaded the American Diploma Project aimed at raising academic standards. Elliott Regenstein, former chief education aide to Governor Blagojevich, and Jonathan Furr, both of the Chicago law firm of Holland & Knight, also will address the Board.

The presentation will highlight the Board's regular meeting, scheduled for 9 a.m. on August 14 at the Palmer House Hilton in Chicago.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has forged a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Governor's office and ISBE to develop a policy agenda aimed at improving readiness of high school graduates for the rigors of postsecondary education and the demands of the workplace. The partnership is focused on strategies to:

- Ensure that high school academic standards are aligned with expectations for what students should know when they enter the workforce or a college classroom.
- Measure how successful the system is in producing college and career-ready students.

- Marshal state resources to support efforts in school districts to prepare students for life after high school, including accountability systems for higher education institutions.

According to research by Achieve, 30 percent of first-year students in postsecondary education nationally require some remedial coursework and more than 40 percent of recent high school graduates report significant gaps in their skills both in college and the workplace. College faculty estimate two of five students are academically unprepared and employers report that nearly half of recent graduates lack the skills to advance.

The Board of Higher Education, in conjunction with the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and ISBE, has undertaken several legislative and policy initiatives aimed at better connecting the P-12 system and higher education and working toward a smoother transition from high school to college.

Among those activities are passage of legislation establishing a new P-20 Council, a college and career readiness pilot project through ICCB, and resolutions creating a task force to undertake master planning for higher education and another panel to design strategies for improving school leader preparation programs in Illinois.

# # #