

News

from the Illinois Board of Higher Education

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IBHE TO CONSIDER JOINING KEY P-20 NETWORK

American Diploma Project would help close gaps in student skills and knowledge needed for workforce and college success

SPRINGFIELD – In a move aimed at making high school students better prepared for the workforce and college, the Illinois Board of Higher Education will act next week on a proposal for Illinois to join a nationwide network to strengthen high school learning standards and align them with what employers and college faculty expect graduates to know.

The Illinois State Board of Education has already embraced the initiative, known as the American Diploma Project (ADP), and the IBHE sanction – along with the involvement of the Governor’s office and the business community – is needed for Illinois to become the 34th ADP state in the network.

The Board meets at 9 a.m. Tuesday, August 12, at Kendall College in Chicago. Following the Board’s meeting, the Task Force on a Public Agenda for College and Career Success will hold its third meeting at 1 p.m., also at Kendall College.

“We know from the data collected and analyzed for the Public Agenda planning process that there are too many disconnects between high school completion and expectations of colleges and employers,” Carrie J. Hightman, Chairwoman of the Board of Higher Education, said. “Becoming an ADP Network state, where the Governor, state education officials, business executives, and higher education leaders work to bolster the readiness of high school graduates to enter the workforce and college is a major stride forward for Illinois.”

The ADP Network was established in 2005 by Achieve, Inc., a bipartisan nonprofit organization created by the nation’s governors and corporate leaders. Achieve recently analyzed the Illinois learning standards for 8th-12th graders and found significant gaps in alignment with the skills and knowledge that college faculty and employers say are essential for student success.

ADP is designed to ensure that states:

- Align high school standards and assessments with the knowledge and skills required for success after high school.
- Require all graduates to take rigorous high school courses.
- Streamline the assessment system so high school tests can serve as placement tests for college and hiring for the workplace.
- Hold high schools accountable for graduating students ready for college and careers and hold higher education institutions accountable for students' success once enrolled.

Board members are also considering changes to the Board's administrative rules to implement policies regarding review of academic programs approved last fall. The rules changes will streamline the process for getting new academic programs approved for institutions with a solid track record of academic quality, while imposing new levels of oversight for those colleges and universities that offer programs requiring licensure exams for graduates to obtain jobs. The rules also institute a five-year review to determine that a program continues to be educationally sound.

"These changes, along with the academic fee proposal for proprietary and out-of-state institutions that the Board endorsed in June, will enable us to modernize the program approval process and more efficiently meet our statutory obligations and our responsibilities for consumer protection," Chairwoman Hightman said.

Board members also will review a report on the budget outlook for fiscal 2010. The report notes that, overall, state funding for higher education has increased between FY1994 and 2009, accounting for inflation. However, most of the increase has been to the university pension system and student financial aid. In fact, appropriations for universities, community colleges, and institutional grant programs have actually declined in real terms since FY1994.

"This is a trend we want to reverse," Hightman said. "The Board adopted a unique investment budget approach for this fiscal year, which gained the support of the General Assembly. As we move forward with development of the fiscal 2010 budget, we will seek to refine that approach in conjunction with the findings and recommendations of the Public Agenda Task Force. We are confident this strategy will place higher education in the forefront of state funding priorities."

The Public Agenda Task Force will meet the afternoon of August 12 after the IBHE Board meeting to further discuss key educational and workforce goals for the state and ways to measure progress as it moves toward formulating a draft agenda for public discussion later in the fall.