



EXECUTIVE ORDER

NUMBER 1 (2002)

**EXECUTIVE ORDER CREATING  
THE ILLINOIS AGENDA FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION**

**WHEREAS**, in 1998 the top priority of this administration was established as "excellence in education" for all Illinoisans of all ages who need training to keep pace in the skills required in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy, and

**WHEREAS**, the top budget priority for this administration was established as "education and workforce training," with a four-year pledge to earmark at least 51 percent of all new general revenue to these areas, and

**WHEREAS**, since January of 1999, this administration, on behalf of the people of the State of Illinois, has fulfilled its commitment to these top priorities and made significant strides in improving education and workforce development at all levels, including:

- More than \$1.4 billion in new funding for education
- The construction of 12,000 new classrooms
- The hiring of 10,423 new teachers, strengthened efforts to recruit, train and retain good teachers
- A renewed emphasis on high standards for students and regular testing to measure success against those standards
- An expansion of and greater commitment to early childhood education
- The creation of educational incentives for childcare workers
- An expansion of reading instruction, particularly in the lower primary grades.
- The promotion of parental involvement
- An increase in educational "choice" for families
- A strong investment in classroom technology
- The creation of three career academies for high school students to facilitate advanced education in economics and finance, international studies and public policy
- Improved leadership in education and policy coordination under the auspices of a Deputy Governor for Education and Workforce Training and a Joint Education Committee composed of the Governor's Office, the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Board of Higher Education the Illinois Community College Board and the Workforce Investment Board, and

**WHEREAS**, Illinois' system of higher education is rated as the best in the nation by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, and

**WHEREAS**, Illinois received an "A" in *Education Week's* "Quality Counts 2002" survey in recognition of the learning standards and accountability procedures that have been put in place since 1999, and since 1999, on average more than 60 percent of Illinois students tested have met or exceeded Illinois learning standards, and

**WHEREAS**, Illinois students and schools are headed in the right direction toward educational excellence, and it is imperative that the progress in educational excellence made over the last three years by the students of Illinois be maintained and strengthened, and

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**WHEREAS**, the progress of Illinois students in educational excellence would be enhanced in the years to come by maintaining sufficient resources and a strong commitment to the aforementioned policies established since 1999, and

**WHEREAS**, the progress of Illinois students would be further enhanced by also focusing sufficient resources and a strong commitment on:

**1. Stringent learning standards and accountability procedures for students, teachers and schools**

- In January of 2002, President George W. Bush and the Congress of the United States enacted a landmark reform of the federal government's programs affecting elementary and secondary education in Illinois and all other states known as the "No Child Left Behind Act."
- The "No Child Left Behind Act" requires Illinois and all states to, among other things, initiate, by the 2005-2006 school year, the annual testing of elementary students in grades three, four, five, six, seven and eight in reading and mathematics.
- The act requires Illinois schools to show, through the use of annual tests, steady progress in student achievement, based on foundation information collected in the 2001-2002 school year.
- The act requires Illinois to establish, starting in the 2002-2003 school year, greater educational choice options for the parents of students in chronically-failing public schools, including upon-request transfers to other public or charter schools and upon-request supplemental services from public or private sources that would be paid for by the federal government.

**2. Providing a universal access to early childhood education**

- Scientific studies provide strong evidence that quality early education plays a critical role in the healthy development of children, including the positive stimulation of the brain during the early years that creates the foundation for lifelong thinking, attitudes and behavior, as well as greater success in school and work.
- Studies estimate that every \$1 invested in quality preschool results in benefits of \$7.16 for taxpayers. If these benefits are applied to Illinois and if 60 percent of four-year-olds and 50 percent of three-year-olds participate, the estimated savings to taxpayers would total \$3.3 billion during the lifetimes of these children.
- Illinois is among the leaders nationally in early education programs. Since 1999 Illinois has expanded state government support for Prekindergarten, Head Start and child care programs by 53 percent to more than \$533 million in Fiscal Year 2001. Nonetheless, only 36 percent of the total age group population are being served.
- Surveys and community forums consistently show that many parents in Illinois cannot access or afford quality preschool programs in their communities, and a lack of cooperation and existing regulatory barriers result in service gaps and the inefficient use of tax dollars, making it difficult for many working families to find full-day, high-quality services and making it difficult for providers to maintain stable, quality programs.

**3. The enhanced recruitment, training, retention and professional development of teachers and administrators.**

- Between 1999 and 2001, the number of public and private school teachers in Illinois has increased by 10,423.
- Nonetheless, during the next four years, Illinois' 4,200 schools will have to hire approximately 55,000 new teachers and 3,500 new administrators to meet the classroom needs of more than 2 million students in kindergarten through high school.
- The full implementation of universal preschool will require the addition of 5,000 certified early childhood teachers and the need to develop a coherent system for recruitment, training and retention.
- There were 12,600 teaching openings in Illinois during the 2001-2002 school year and approximately 1,600 teaching jobs went unfilled. Of the 13,000 people certified to teach in Illinois in 2000, only 6,600 accepted jobs in teaching.
- The most acute need for teaching is found in school districts that are culturally and economically diverse in cities and rural areas. More than 70 percent of elementary school teachers, 52 percent of middle school teachers and 34 percent of high school teachers do not have college majors in the subjects they are teaching. Only 25 percent of English teachers and 33 percent of math teachers majored or minored in those subjects.
- The rate of attrition among Illinois teachers is 7.3 percent per year.

**THEREFORE**, I, George H. Ryan, Governor of the State of Illinois, order:

The establishment of the **Illinois Agenda for Excellence In Education** to promote, encourage and foster long-term improvement in elementary and secondary schools that will lead to consistently high student achievement, exemplary instruction and the well-rounded preparation of future generations.

The components of the Illinois Agenda for Excellence in Education shall be

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1. Creation of "Illinois Preschool" – a program that shall give all Illinois families a choice of quality preschool options for children age three and four.
  - A. Illinois Preschool shall coordinate, improve and expand existing programs so that every community can offer high-quality preschool in a variety of settings that include, but are not limited to, child care centers, family child care homes, schools, Head Start programs and community centers.
  - B. An "Illinois Preschool Council" will develop the implementation framework for universal access to quality preschool that shall be submitted for approval by the Governor and General Assembly by January 1, 2003. The Council shall:
    - Assess all needs and resources for early childhood education in Illinois.
    - Determine what supports are currently available for each type of program, and where gaps in services exist.
    - Develop recommendations to maximize opportunities to blend funding and partnerships across programs to meet program goals.
    - Develop a multi-year state strategic plan for early childhood education and specify action steps to be taken.
    - Encourage local collaboration and flexibility among early childhood education programs, and shall establish quality standards in key areas, such as teacher qualifications, curriculum and parent involvement.

The implementation plan, if funded by the General Assembly, shall begin in Fiscal Year 2004.
2. The T.E.A.C.H. and Great START programs shall be expanded through a cooperative effort of the Joint Education Committee to work with the General Assembly for increased funding commitments beginning with FY 2003.
3. The State Board of Education, in accordance with the federal "No Child Left Behind Act" shall develop and submit to the Governor and General Assembly by January 1, 2003 a detailed plan and implementation strategy for annual student testing in grades three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten and eleven that expands upon existing state testing programs. The testing plan shall be fully operational for the 2005-2006 school year.
4. The State Board of Education shall develop and submit to the Governor and General Assembly by January 1, 2003 a detailed plan and implementation strategy to bring the State of Illinois into compliance with the National Assessment of Educational Progress program, as required of all states in the "No Child Left Behind Act."
5. The State Board of Education shall develop and submit to the Governor and General Assembly by January 1, 2003 a detailed plan and implementation strategy to set stringent accountability standards for all elementary and secondary schools that include closing achievement gaps between disadvantaged students and other student groups, as well as a multifaceted intervention program for schools that do not meet these standards.
6. The Joint Education Committee shall develop and submit to the Governor and General Assembly by January 1, 2003 a detailed plan and implementation strategy for a statewide system of mentoring and induction for all new teachers and administrators that will be initiated in stages over the next five school years, starting with the schools and school districts in Illinois with the most severe teacher retention problems.
7. The Joint Education Committee shall develop and submit to the Governor and General Assembly by January 1, 2003 a detailed plan and implementation strategy to reconfigure the State's current DeBolt Scholarship Program into a new incentive program named the Illinois Teacher Education Assistance Campaign. The ITEACH program shall provide scholarships of up to \$5,000 each year for students studying to become teachers in subject areas that have been designated by the ISBE as an area where there is a shortage of teachers.
8. The Joint Education Committee shall develop and submit to the Governor and General Assembly by January 1, 2003 a detailed plan and implementation strategy that increases accountability for all providers of professional development services for teachers and administrators. All standards in this accountability system shall be based on reliable data concerning program effectiveness and the content knowledge needs of teachers.
9. The Joint Education Committee shall develop and submit to the Governor and General Assembly by January 1, 2003 a detailed plan and implementation strategy that brings administrator certificate renewal in Illinois into line with standards as recognized by the ISBE, the IBHE and the ICCB.
10. The Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Community College Board, the Illinois Student Assistance

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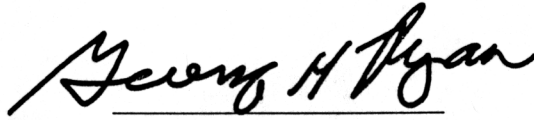
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Commission, the Illinois Workforce Investment Board and all other associated agencies, boards and commissions dealing with education and workforce training within state government shall maintain a strong commitment and sufficient resources to the aforementioned education and workforce policies established by this administration since 1999.

This Executive Order shall be effective immediately.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "George H. Ryan", written over a horizontal line.

GEORGE H. RYAN  
Governor of Illinois

February 26, 2002

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