



OVER THE BACK FENCE

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"Pursuing Excellence in Small and Rural Schools"

BIMP LEGISLATION

The Governor has until January 4, 2008 to sign the Budget Implementation Legislation and some legislators have doubts about his signature. The Governor has been quoted saying that he is disappointed that education isn't receiving more money.

Both the House and Senate in November came to an agreement on SB783 and passed that legislation which now is known as BIMP. This legislation contains language regarding state income tax, tax assessments, health requirements, education etc. It is very extensive.

Did you know that if the Governor approves the legislation as is, State-recognized non-public schools, for the first time, will receive money through the School Safety and Educational Improvement Block Grant? This money can be used by the non-public schools for secular textbooks and software, criminal history record checks, and health and safety mandates to the extent that the funds are used for purely secular uses. ISBE will use the previous year's average daily attendance to distribute funds to the State-recognized non-public schools.

Also contained in the language is a Severely Overcrowded Grant Program for school districts not considered fast growing. To be eligible for the grant, the administrative office of the district must be located in a city of 85,000 population or more and must have a district-wide low income average of 70% or more as identified on the 2005-2006 Report Card. Funds will be distributed on a proportional basis with no single district receiving more than 75% of the funds. ISBE may adopt rules as needed for the implementation of the grant.

If this legislation is passed, school districts will be required to list on the district's website all contracts over \$25,000.00, and any contract the school board enters into with an exclusive bargaining representative. And, school districts will be required to include a list of contracts over \$25,000.00 with the Statement of Affairs sent to ISBE prior to December 1. The information will include the total number of

contracts awarded, the total value of the contracts awarded and to whom the contracts were given.

A school board entering into collective bargaining agreement after the effective date of this legislation, and the exclusive bargaining representative, if any, may include a performance-based teacher compensation plan in their collective bargaining agreement.

For the school year 2006-2007 and thereafter, the Foundation Level of Support is \$5,734.00 or such greater amount as may be established by law by the General Assembly.

The BIMP legislation also includes incentives for Hard-To-Staff Schools. The money can be used for monetary incentives and bonuses for teachers and school administrators. ISBE will decide which schools are considered hard-to-staff. There is a limit of \$3,000.00 per teacher and \$5,000.00 per certified principal. These incentives can be made in a single payment or in three installments.

Starting with the 2007-2008 school year, reimbursement for special education professionals will be \$9,000.00. Reimbursement for aides will increase to \$3,500.00.

THE KOREAN STUDIES WORKSHOP (KSW)

Secondary social studies educators have until February 22, 2008 to apply for a fully-funded professional development opportunity to visit Korea. In the summer of 2008, up to 100 teachers will be selected to travel to Korea for a 12 day workshop. The workshop will include lectures, tours to cultural and industrial sites, and meetings with Korean educators and students.

Those interested should visit www.iie.org/ksw to access the online application. Promotional brochures are available upon request and questions can be answered by calling 1-800-270-4317.

The workshop is designed to enhance mutual understanding between the people of Korea and the United States by inviting a team of U.S. educators to visit Korea and then share their experiences with fellow Americans upon their return.