



# OVER THE BACK FENCE

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*Please duplicate and send to members in your district.*

*"Pursuing Excellence in Small and Rural Schools"*

## REAP CONTACT IN WASHINGTON

If you have questions about your REAP Grant, you can contact Mr. Eric Schulz. He is the Illinois contact at the U.S. Department of Education. His office phone number is 202 260-7349. Eric's e-mail address is: [Eric.Schulz@ed.gov]. He is originally from Alton, Illinois.

## AIRSS MEMBERSHIP DUES

Several school districts and ROE's have already returned their membership dues. We appreciate your support.

If your district was one of the 271 schools who received REAP funds (small school and low-income) this year we urge you to spend \$150.00 to join the Association of Illinois Rural and Small Schools. We are the only association who represents rural and small schools and supports maintaining the Regional Offices of Education.

We have several districts who do not receive REAP funds but are members because they believe our lobbying efforts help all school districts at the state and federal level. *We firmly believe that our efforts helped influence the governor in making the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> state aid payments to school districts this June.*

Our lobbying efforts at the federal level helped to influence congress to keep Medicaid payments coming to schools and to maintain level funding for REAP. Our NREA Coalition testified before congress about the importance of adequate funding for education and the influence that NCLB and Title Programs have on small and rural schools. We have temporarily stopped several proposed changes in federal programs that will negatively affect small and rural school districts in all states.

*Your membership is essential for our success.* As our membership grows, our influence on legislators and state officials becomes more significant. You can help to shape the future of education for small and rural schools in Illinois by joining AIRSS.

## REAP SMALL SCHOOL FORMULA

If you would like to calculate your REAP grant amount, here is the formula to use:

- Your ADA minus 50
- Multiply this number by \$100
- Add \$20,000.00
- This amount is capped at \$60,000.00
- From the above amount subtract the sum of allocations received by the district during the prior year under Title II-A; Title II-D; Title IV-A and Title V-A.
- This amount could be increased or reduced by the feds depending upon the number of schools and final federal allocations.

## HOW MANY BILLS BECOME LAW?

Since January 1, more than 1,150 bills have been introduced in the Illinois Senate and another 2,100 in the House. However, the General Assembly works on a two-year cycle, beginning in odd-numbered years. A bill filed in 2007 can still be considered this year. Not every bill even gets a committee hearing, let alone a vote in either chamber. The following numbers are through April 7, 2008.

YEARS	HOUSE	SENATE	LAWS
2007-08	6,329	3,028	711
2005-06	5,869	3,204	1,113
2003-04	7,359	3,395	1,102
2001-02	6,320	2,436	836
1999-2000	4,769	1,979	954
1997-98	3,911	1,952	819

Source: State Journal-Register of Springfield, Illinois.

## 2009 STATE BUDGET

School districts will start 2009 with financial uncertainty. The Illinois Constitution requires a balanced budget and legislators sent the governor a budget that was at least 2 billion dollars out of balance. The governor will reduce the budget sent to him unless the General Assembly acts to pass revenues to support the proposed budget.