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HOUSE BILL 1199 & SENATE BILL 1964: Textbook Loan Funding

The Textbook Loan Program has been in operation since 1975. Its purpose is to provide secular textbooks, learning materials and instructional computer software to public and nonpublic school students grades K-12.

Students cannot learn or succeed without effective and up-to-date learning materials, and this program has helped ensure accurate and up-to-date textbooks and other instructional materials are present in ALL schools for over thirty years. Unfortunately, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) decided to zero out funding for this program despite the General Assembly's intention that grant programs be funded at 50 percent.

Their decision was a mistake for many reasons:

- According to ISBE's own published analysis, the Textbook Loan program impacts 2.1 million students and 164,000 educators.
- In Fiscal Year 2009, the program provided 849,214 instructional items to pupils in grades 7 through 12. The program operates on a two-year cycle: provided materials to grades K through 6 one year, 7 through 12 the next.
- The policy of this State is to ensure that Illinois' students have instructional materials that have current information and are in good working condition; and ISBE's strategic goals cite service to "all students" and "all schools." The Illinois Textbook Loan meets these goals: serving students in public and nonpublic schools.
- The Illinois Textbook Loan program is for many school districts and nonpublic schools the sole source of funding for instructional materials and serves as a safeguard against increases in property taxes and tuition and fee increases.
- There may not be any grant programs in ISBE's budget that have had as far-reaching an impact for as long a time. Providing good textbooks and instructional materials to children is a fundamental responsibility of the state!