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AS AMENDED MAY 1, 2010
HB 2494 –SCHOOL CHOICE ACT
VOUCHERS TO ATTEND NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PTA POSITION IN OPPOSITION TO VOUCHERS:

Illinois PTA Legislation Platform, Item 3, Funding of Education, a) Adequate legislative and/or financial support for the operation, maintenance, and construction of tax supported schools, and **oppose the direct or indirect use of public funds for non-public schools.**

ILLINOIS STATE CONSTITUTION:

Section 3. Public Funds for Sectarian Purposes Forbidden. Neither the General Assembly nor any county, city, town, township, school district, or other public corporation, shall ever make any appropriation or pay from any public fund whatever, anything in aid of any church or sectarian purpose, or to help support or sustain any school, academy, seminary, college, university or other literary or scientific institution, controlled by any church or sectarian denomination whatever; nor shall any grant or donation of land, money, or other personal property ever be made by the State, or any such public corporation, to any church, or for any sectarian purpose.

SB 2494 – SENATE SPONSOR James T. Meeks (D-15) Bill has passed the Senate
HOUSE SPONSOR Kevin Joyce (D-35) Bill is on Second Reading in House 4/26/10
TITLE: School Choice Act. As amended as of May 1, 2010. The figures in bullet 4 are only preliminary estimates.

Bill Provisions: House amendment #1 in Italics

- “A pilot school choice program for students enrolled in the lowest performing schools in Chicago, **with the potential to expand elsewhere in Illinois.**”
- Eligible students, presently from kindergarten through 8 grade in lowest 10% of performing schools in Chicago, ranked by ISAT test scores, or students who would be eligible to enter kindergarten in one of these schools, *or students from the 5% of most crowded schools with at least 70% low-income students.*
- Eligible non-public schools are those that are State-recognized, non-public elementary schools in Chicago that **elect to participate.**
- Voucher is for no more than the foundation level of support *specified* in the School Code AND *total supplemental general state aid to low-income students.* Presently for Chicago GSA is estimated to be \$4,519 per pupil, *plus the low-income amount, number of students is not yet estimated because of adding crowded school students.* **One estimated cost to the State is \$100 million. The non-public school can still charge more than the amount of the voucher.** Vouchers are renewable every year.
- The child’s custodian shall receive a voucher, which he/she will present to the non-public school. The non-public school will send it to the State Board of Education (SBE) which will **pay the amount of the voucher to the non-public school.** The non-public school must test the pupils with the state tests, reporting those results to the SBE.
The amount needed to fund vouchers for all qualifying pupils SHALL COME FROM THE PORTION OF GENERAL STATE AID THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS RECEIVES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR. The voucher is not considered income of the custodian and is not be taxable.
- The SBE shall submit a report to the General Assembly on the current status of the program at the end of 2014, **including a recommendation on whether the program should be expanded to other schools in Chicago or OTHER AREAS OF THE STATE.**

NOTE:

- The non-public school can continue to enroll *or not enroll*, and/or retain pupils as it wishes, choosing only those with good test scores, or those with no special education needs.
- *The Chicago Public School must pay for vouchers out of its aid from the State, and loses that money to fund its schools*