

## ***HCAA Legislative Report***

*July 10, 2023*

*Respectfully submitted by Jim Edstrom and Linda Kolbusz*

### ***March 30, 2023***

“The Pritzker Administration recommended increasing the state’s appropriations for public higher education institutions by \$219 million, or 9.74 percent, in non-inflation-adjusted dollars for FY 2024. Increasing state-level General Fund support for public institutions of higher learning can help drive down tuition costs, and simultaneously make college more affordable for low-income students . . . This in turn should help Illinois begin to reduce the discrepancies in the rates of postsecondary degree completion by race and ethnicity. The Commission on Equitable Public University Funding . . . is working on developing data-driven criteria and approaches to funding public universities in a manner that would be adequate in amount, equitable across income, racial and ethnic lines, and stable over time.”

### ***April 3, 2023***

Senate Bill 2288 equalizing the value of major course credits at all Illinois higher education institutions reducing the time and money students spend towards earning a degree was unanimously passed by the Illinois Senate. It “provides that all public institutions' Illinois Articulation Initiative major courses must be transferable as direct course equivalents toward the requirements of the major (instead of all public institutions shall determine if Illinois Articulation Initiative major courses are direct course equivalents or are elective credit toward the requirements of the major).” “It strengthens the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) Act by requiring public colleges and universities to accept all major courses approved for transfer through IAI as equivalent major courses, as long as a specific major is offered at the receiving institution.” The bill was passed in its final form on June 9 and sent to the governor for his signature.

### ***April 4, 2023***

In an opinion piece titled “Defending Community Colleges Against Attacks on DEI” in *Inside Higher Ed*, Steve Robinson wrote: “From my perspective, there are three nonpartisan reasons community college leaders cannot sit this one out when it comes to the attacks we see on higher education across the country. First, these attempts to limit or chill efforts in DEI challenge our core mission and purpose as community colleges. Second, much of the anti-DEI legislation and rhetoric constitute an infringement on local control. Third, these culture war attacks on diversity are completely out of step with the business objectives of our partners in the private sector.”

### ***April 13, 2023***

Dr. Nour Al Naber, Instructor of Business Waubonsee Community College, wrote an opinion piece appearing in *Kendall County Now* on the positive role played by community colleges in Illinois. She noted that:

- “Community colleges in Illinois provide stable employment opportunities that nurture a prosperous economy.”
- “Entrepreneurs get help in business planning, marketing, and finance. According to the ICCB report (2021), an average of 9,800 firms collaborated with Illinois community colleges.”
- Most community colleges offer a wide range of certificates that help increase earnings for workers, courses specifically tailored to meet the needs and interests of their community.” They benefit the local workforce by helping students get the education and training they need to prepare for careers, reducing unemployment, and filling jobs that contribute to economic stability.”
- “Community colleges are dedicated to developing, promoting, and expanding workforce training options, in addition to helping underrepresented groups find successful employment.”
- “Many colleges have adopted transfer agreements to make it easier for students to move credits across institutions and advance their education.”

### *April 20, 2023*

The Center for Tax and Budget Accountability released a report noting that “Between FY 2022 and FY 2023, aggregate Personal Property Replacement Tax revenue for all school districts increased by a record 76 percent. As things stand today, more record growth in PPRT revenue is projected for FY 2024. That revenue is a welcome addition to school district resources, however, if the projections for FY 2024 prove to be accurate, it will mean that collectively over the FY 2020 through FY 2024 sequence, the statewide Adequacy Gap under the Evidence-Based Funding formula was reduced at a significantly faster rate because the local revenue increased at a faster rate over this time period compared to the increase in state-based revenue (new Tier funding).

### *May 27, 2023*

At the end of the 2023 spring legislative session the Illinois House gave its approval to a \$50.6 billion spending plan for the fiscal year that begins July 1 on a 73-38 party-line vote. It contained a number of initiatives set forth by Governor Pritzker in his February budget proposal:

- Investments in pre-K through 12th grade education, child welfare, combating poverty and homelessness, and increasing state spending on higher education
- “Smart Start Illinois,” a multi-year plan that aims to make childcare and preschool available to every three- and four-year-old whose family wants those services
- \$250 million to increase the number of preschool slots available, stabilize the early childhood workforce and expand the Early Intervention and Home Visiting Programs
- A \$100 million increase in funding for public universities and community colleges, along with a \$100 million increase in Monetary Award Program financial aid grants for low-income college students. This, Pritzker said, will effectively make a two-year community

college education available tuition- and fee-free for every working-class student in Illinois.

- A \$350 million increase in the Evidence Based Funding formula for K-12 education, the minimum amount called for under the law that lawmakers passed in 2018.

### ***June 13, 2023***

Governor Pritzker signed into law a measure that withholds state funding from any of the state's 1,600 public or school libraries that remove books from shelves. Libraries that adhere to the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, which states that books should not be removed because of partisan or personal disapproval, will continue to get state funding.

### ***July 8, 2023***

State revenues once again reached a record high in the fiscal year that ended June 30, creating what Gov. JB Pritzker called a "one-time" budget surplus of over \$700 million. The \$50.7 billion in base general revenues that the state collected in fiscal year 2023 – which exclude one-time pandemic-related federal funds – topped last year's previous record by \$373 million. That's \$726 million beyond what was projected by the Governor's Office of Management and Budget in its most recent estimate adopted in May during negotiations for the fiscal year 2024 budget.