

February __, 2010

Governor Pat Quinn
Office of the Governor
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Quinn:

I write today urging you to propose funding for the Illinois Textbook Loan Program in your Fiscal Year 2011 budget.

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. Although most of the program's funding goes to public schools, nonpublic schools have long depended on this program and have used the benefit to continually update math, science and reading textbooks, as well as to purchase new instructional software for technology labs. Students cannot learn or succeed without effective and up-to-date learning materials, and this program has helped ensure those materials are present in ALL schools.

According to the Illinois State Board of Education's (ISBE) 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. There are not many grant programs in ISBE's budget that have had as far-reaching an impact for as long a time.

Obviously, the state's fiscal condition is dire. We understand funding cuts must be endured in these difficult times. However, when a long-standing program with a proven track record faces elimination, Illinois' entire education system suffers. It is also problematic when programs serving both public and nonpublic schools – such as Textbook Loan – are subject to disproportionate cuts in the state's education budget. ISBE's strategic goals cite service to “all students” and “all schools.” Unfortunately, last year's budget cut the Textbook Loan completely and failed to reflect similar concern.

We urge you to recommend that ISBE's budget restore funding at the Fiscal Year 2007 level of \$29.1 million. Such a recommendation recognizes the current fiscal condition of the state but also makes some attempt to meet the state's *obligation* to provide sound, up-to-date instructional materials to all children. Nonpublic schools provide great savings to the state: nearly \$2 billion annually. We do not deserve to lose the limited state support given back.

Thank you for your attention and support.

Sincerely,