

1 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Results from the Prairie State Achievement
3 Examination indicate that approximately half of Illinois high
4 school juniors fail to meet State learning standards; and

5 WHEREAS, New federal education legislation requires that
6 all students meet State learning standards within 12 years;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, Over three-fourths of Illinois high school
9 graduates go on to higher education; and

10 WHEREAS, Illinois colleges and universities spend more
11 than \$100 million annually providing remedial classes to high
12 school graduates; and

13 WHEREAS, Workforce skills are changing, and two-thirds of
14 today's workers need advanced reading, writing, mathematics,
15 and critical thinking skills; and

16 WHEREAS, Illinois ranks last among Midwestern states in
17 the proportion of students completing a high school core
18 curriculum and last among all states in the number of core
19 curriculum courses required for graduation by the average
20 school district; and

21 WHEREAS, This high school core curriculum consists of the
22 following, contrasted with current Illinois minimum high
23 school graduation requirements:

- 24 (1) 4 years of English instead of 3 years;
 - 25 (2) 3 years of mathematics instead of 2 years;
 - 26 (3) 3 years of science instead of one year; and
 - 27 (4) 3 years of social science instead of 2 years;
- 28 and

29 WHEREAS, The content and learning level of the core
30 curriculum is more closely aligned with State learning

1 standards and the expectations of the workplace and higher
2 education than the current Illinois graduation requirements;
3 therefore, be it

4 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SECOND GENERAL
5 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF
6 REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING HEREIN, that the Board of Higher
7 Education, the State Board of Education, and the Illinois
8 Community College Board prepare recommendations to increase
9 student knowledge and skills in accordance with State
10 learning standards, to improve student performance on the
11 Prairie State Achievement Examination, and to better prepare
12 high school students to meet the demands of the workplace and
13 the rigors of higher education; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That these 3 boards jointly provide
15 recommendations on appropriate high school graduation
16 requirements in light of the high expectations articulated in
17 the Illinois Learning Standards and the Prairie State
18 Achievement Examination, which is a rigorous test of the
19 standards; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That the recommendations made by these 3 boards
21 be accompanied by estimates of the costs of upgrading
22 curricula, hiring additional teachers, retraining current
23 teachers, and making more extensive use of the Illinois
24 Virtual High School; and be it further

25 RESOLVED, That the these 3 boards report their findings
26 to the Governor and the General Assembly prior to January 15,
27 2003; and be it further

28 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
29 delivered to the chairs of the Board of Higher Education, the
30 State Board of Education, and the Illinois Community College
31 Board.