

MONTHLY TICKLER

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

Percent Changes As Reported by the Bureau of
Labor Statistics
For the month of December, 2004
Urban Wage
Earners & Clerical

	All Urban (CPI-U)	Workers (CPI-W)
Chicago-Monthly	-0.6	-0.6
12 Month	2.2	2.4
St. Louis-6 Month	2.6	2.6
12 Month	3.9	4.0
U.S.-Monthly	-0.4	-0.4
12 Month	3.3	3.4

January CPI Figures will be released February 15, 2005.

Visit the CPI at <http://stats.bls.gov/eag/eag.us.htm>

Reminders/Notes

- Remember your statutory and collective bargaining agreement deadlines for reductions-in-force of certificated and educational support personnel. Contact Ellen Rothenberg with your RIF inquiries.
- Review the necessity for administrative reclassifications or non-renewal of employment contracts and take any necessary action prior to April 1.
- A new Administrator Academy approved program on the IDEA reauthorization has been approved by SELA due to overwhelming demand! SELA will soon announce an early March date for the program in the Lake County area.
- Jay Kraning and Bennett Rodick will speak at the Illinois Principals' Association's Special Education Conference on March 11 and 16.

The *Tickler* is intended solely to provide information to the school community. It is neither legal advice nor a substitute for legal counsel. The *Tickler* is intended as advertising but not as a solicitation of an attorney/client relationship.

Legislation Requires Special Education Students to "Graduate" After Four Years in High School/Mandates Board Policy--

On January 21, 2005, the Governor signed into law [P.A. 93-1079](#), containing "Brittany's Law" which requires districts with high schools to adopt a policy and procedures, **prior to March 1, 2005**, that will allow students with disabilities who have attended four years of high school to participate in the graduation ceremony with their class.

This graduation exercise must take place even if the student will return for further education as prescribed by his or her Individualized Education Plan. If the student will return to finish his or her education under an IEP, the district may issue a "Certificate of Completion" rather than a regular diploma.

The statute also requires districts to provide "timely and meaningful" written notice to the student and parents regarding its policy and procedures for "graduation." The new law, however, does not indicate what type of notice might be "meaningful" or how much time is needed for "timely notice." Because of the immediacy of this new law, school districts must formulate and adopt a policy in time for the February meeting of their Boards of Education in order to meet the March 1st deadline. This law will affect high school graduations for the 2004-2005 school year and, accordingly, districts must provide "timely and meaningful" notice of the policy and procedures to the parents of disabled students soon.

Please contact Shayne Aldridge to request a complementary copy of the Act.

Emergency Medical Legislation Becomes Effective--On August 12, 2004, the Governor signed into law the *Physical Fitness Facility Medical Emergency Preparedness Act*, [Public Act 93-910](#). It became effective January 1, 2005.

The new Act requires school districts and other entities which operate physical fitness facilities to adopt and implement a written plan for responding to medical emergencies before July 1, 2005. This plan must comply with the Act and rules adopted by the Department of Public Health.

While the Act is currently effective, the Department of Public Health has not yet released its rules.

For more information, please contact Sonja Trainor or Barbara Erickson.

Public Employers Subject to New Social Security Notice Requirement--Under new provisions passed as part of the [Social Security Protection Act of 2004](#), public employers now face an additional requirement regarding new employees whose service to the employer does not qualify for social security due to participation in a public pension system.

For such employees who begin work with the employer on or after January 1, 2005, the employer must provide written notice to the employee explaining how the employee's social security benefits will be affected (both as an employee and as a spouse or former spouse of an employee) due to his or her participation in the state pension system.

The Social Security System has issued a form that is to be used by employers to provide this notice. [Form F1945](#) is

currently available on the Social Security web site.

The Illinois Teachers Retirement System has sent a bulletin to school districts with additional information. A recent update on the TRS website indicates that since that bulletin was mailed, the Social Security Administration has determined that TRS may define the employee and employer's identification number that is required on the notice. TRS therefore directs that the employee's Social Security number be used as the employee's identification number and the TRS Code be used for the employer's identification number.

Please note that the vast majority of IMRF participants do, in fact, contribute to Social Security, making this new notice requirement inapplicable to them.

For further information regarding this new requirement, or for a copy of the statute, please contact Sonja Trainor.

Illinois Amends its Human Rights Act to Include Sexual Orientation--On January 21, 2005, Illinois became the 15th state to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, when Governor Blagojevich signed [P.A. 093-1078](#) amending the [Illinois Human Rights Act](#) ("IHRA"), 775 ILCS 5/1-1.01 *et seq.*, to include the newly protected category. The amendment takes effect on January 1, 2006

The amendment does not require employers to give special rights, preferential treatment, or to establish affirmative action policies or programs based on sexual orientation.

Contact Cindi DeCola for a complimentary copy of the Act, or for assistance with revisions to your District's various Equal Employment and Harassment policies to comply with the new legislation.