

Herald & Review, April 15, 2011

State Senate OKs framework for creating performance-based higher education funding

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Posted: Friday, April 15, 2011 4:01 am**

SPRINGFIELD - The Illinois Senate approved a proposal Thursday designed to encourage college degree completion.

The legislation, sponsored by state Sen. Ed Maloney, D-Chicago, sets the framework for the state to create a system of performance-based funding for higher education.

Performance-based funding "could be a game-changer for the higher education of students of this state," Maloney said on the Senate floor.

The legislation instructs state officials, higher education and business groups to come up with measurements that base state funding on degree or certificate completion and support academically at-risk students, without diminishing the quality of degrees.

The state Senate endorsed the proposal without opposition Thursday, and the state House approved similar legislation last week.

A few other states also base university funding on measurements of performance.

In Ohio, the majority of state funds distributed to university main and regional campuses is based on course completion instead of enrollment, said Holly Hollingsworth, deputy director of communications for the Ohio Board of Regents, which is responsible for higher education issues in the state.

"The funding formula for community colleges continues to provide a large portion of funding on the basis of enrollments, primarily because the community colleges serve a large number of underprepared, nontraditional students," Hollingsworth wrote in an email.

The legislation is Senate Bill 1773. The House version is House Bill 1503.