NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jeanne Nowaczewski, (312) 814-1258

State Charter School Commission Set to Deny Virtual School Proposal

Executive Director Jeanne Nowaczewski has recommended that the Illinois State Charter School Commission deny the eighteen charter school appeals submitted by the Virtual Learning Solutions to establish the Illinois Virtual Charter School @ Fox River Valley. The Commission will meet June 11 to act on the Executive Director’s recommendation.

Virtual Learning Solutions had submitted charter school applications to eighteen suburban school districts to operate a single virtual school serving students in those eighteen districts. Each of the eighteen districts denied the application and Virtual Learning Solutions appealed those denials to the State Charter School Commission in May.

On May 24, Governor Pat Quinn signed into law Public Act 98-0016, sponsored by Representative Linda Chapa LaVia of Aurora, that establishes a moratorium on new virtual schools in Illinois until April 1, 2014.

Ms. Nowaczewski stated:

“Public Act 98-0016 prohibits the establishment of a virtual school in Illinois from now until April 1, 2014. Because Virtual Learning Solutions is proposing to open a virtual school in 2013, the establishment of that school would not comply with the Charter Law. State law gives the Commission the power to deny charter school applications that are not in compliance with that law. As Executive Director, I am recommending that the Commission do that at its meeting next week.

“I’d like to compliment all of the parties in this case and the many parents and students who have taken an interest in this proposed school. Although there were differences of opinion about the proposal, it is heartening to see so many people so strongly committed to improving public education for our children.”

The State Charter School Commission is an independent commission established by the Illinois legislature effective November 2011 with the power to approve or deny charter school proposals that are denied by local school boards throughout Illinois. The Commission also serves as authorizer for two pre-existing charter schools, Prairie Crossing and Southland, has approved two additional schools to open in
September 2013, and is legislatively mandated to provide best practices for authorizers and regular reports on charter schools to the legislature.

The Commission’s nine members were originally nominated by Governor Quinn and appointed by the Illinois State Board of Education. They are:

- Chairman Greg Richmond, CEO, National Association of Charter Schools Authorizers, Chicago;
- Chair, Operations Committee, Dr. Michael Jacoby, CEO, Illinois Association of School Business Officials, DeKalb;
- Chair, Schools Committee, Jaime Guzman, Big Shoulders Fund, Chicago;
- Vice Chair Angela Rudolph, Consultant Think. Plan. Do., Chicago;
- Secretary Dr. Paul Swanstrom, retired Superintendent, Joliet Township High School, Crete;
- Member Glen Barton, former Chairman and CEO of Caterpillar, Peoria;
- Member Bill Farmer, Science Teacher and Local Education Association President, Evanston High School, Evanston;
- Member Rudy Valdez, General Manager—Asia Programs, Hamilton-Sunstrand Corp., Rockford;
- Member DeRonda Williams, DGW Inc., Long Grove.

The Commission’s offices are located at the Michael A. Bilandic Building, 160 North LaSalle Street, Suite S-601, Chicago, IL 60601, (telephone 312.814.1258), and its website, including postings of upcoming meetings and events is http://www.isbe.net/sesc/default.htm

# # #