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## Fwd: Attack on local control? Probably Friday

1 message

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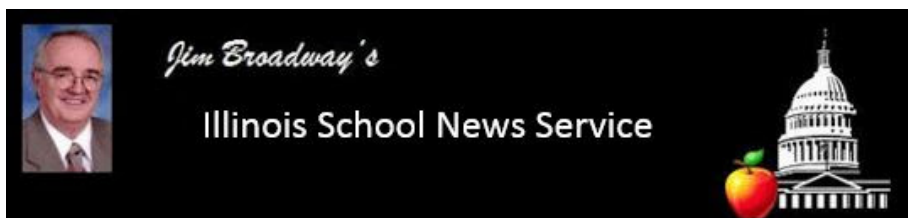
Wed, Aug 22, 2018 at 8:09 AM

September board meeting

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From: **State School News Service** <j.m.broadway74@gmail.com>  
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## Attack on local control? Probably Friday

By Jim Broadway, Publisher, Illinois School News Service

When will Gov. Bruce Rauner show again his disrespect for locally elected school board? That will probably happen Friday when he is likely to veto [HB 5175](#), a bill that would return to school boards the authority to say whether it is the folks who elected them that will - *or will not* - have to foot the bill for a charter school.

Currently, that authority is held by the [Illinois Charter School Commission](#), a body appointed by the governor, a body whose members nobody knows. The commission was created in a 2011 scurry by lawmakers breathlessly seeking a "Race To The Top" ([bottom](#)) grant from the Obama ([Arne Duncan](#)) Administration.

Did Illinois get a grant? #!\*\*, no. But we did get stuck with the commission. After a while, the more thoughtful legislators realized that trumping (#!\*\*) local control on such a fundamental issue was a bad idea. But by then Rauner, the champion of charters ([he has one named for him](#)) was occupying the Capitol.

Why Friday? Although the commission has a lot of fans in Illinois, they are far outnumbered by folks (potential voters) who (1) don't even know there is a commission and (2) do know, and truly like, the local-control-of-schools concept. PR rule of thumb: If it will be unpopular, do it *inconspicuously*, late on a Friday afternoon.

The deadline for Rauner to act on HB 5175 is the middle of next week. So Friday is the last inconspicuous day available to him. Did the Democrats who control the legislature time the bill's delivery to Rauner for their political advantage? Surely not. :) Will Rauner's veto be an issue in the November 6 elections? Yes, it might.

**How about an override?** Can the legislators make HB 5175 law over Rauner's objection (like they did the humongous tax increase)? The [Senate](#) could muster its 36 votes on an override motion, but the [House](#) would need Republican help to get its 71. Good luck with that. Rauner will get to thumb his nose at local control.

What's wrong with charters? I'm not saying anything's wrong with them. That's not the point. The question is, should a virtually anonymous state commission have the power to trump (#!\*\*) an elected school board on this question? As to the value of charters as educational entities, the [research is ambiguous at best](#).

But the man who invented them *subsequently wished he hadn't*, [according to Diane Ravich](#), the nation's top education historian - and a deeply apologetic former advocate for charter schools. The late Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, [proposed charters in 1988](#), Diane reminded.

But within five years, [Shanker regretted it](#), Diane reported, because the idea had been "adopted by businesses seeking profits, he said, and would be used, like vouchers, to privatize public schools and destroy teachers unions." Shanker died in 1997, she wrote, "too soon to see his dire prediction come true."

**There are over 7,000 charter schools** in the U.S. (over [140 campuses in Illinois](#), mostly in Chicago), attended by 3 million students ([about 65,000 in Illinois](#)). The Illinois Network of Charter Schools reports that charter schools in Illinois have high percentages of [students in poverty](#) and minorities, compared to public schools.

The INCS would disagree with Diane Ravich's claims that charter schools are more segregated than public schools and that they are about 90% non-union. But Diane quotes the [Civil Rights Project](#) at UCLA which called charter schools "a major political success [but] a civil rights failure."

Diane's conclusion is that charter schools "compete with public schools instead of collaborating. Charter proponents claim that the schools are progressive, but schools that are segregated and nonunion do not deserve that mantle."

But a study [reported by CALDER](#) (**C**enter for **A**nalysis of **L**ongitudinal **D**ata in **E**ducation **R**esearch) in 2016 asserted that, while early disparagement of charters may have been valid, charters have "evolved" to become competitive in quality compared with public schools. (Two of the four authors are at U. of Chicago.)

**What about the School Code-amending bills?** Rauner apparently thought the legislature had passed too many bills, so he vetoed a slew of them - including a half-dozen of the 34 bills affecting the public schools. (Last week, I predicted he would veto just one - meaning the one on charters. [Sure blew that call!](#))

Our friends at [Raise Your Hand Action](#) (probably the most effective school policy lobbying group, other than a few that are run by professional educator associations) complained about Rauner's veto of [HB 5481](#), which requires school districts to report class sizes to ISBE and sets class size goals for the 2020-2021 school year.

[Rauner's veto message](#) says class sizes are already reported on district report cards, and goals would "limit the number of students per class." (As governor, Rauner should know that a goal is just a goal; it doesn't mandate anything. Anyone who has read the [first paragraph of Article X](#) knows that.) Besides that, Rauner said, Illinois is "well on our way to universally achieving" the goals of the bill, so it is just "another unnecessary directive from the General Assembly."

The Raise Your Hand folks expressed disappointment that "Gov. Rauner doesn't value smaller class sizes," and started preparing for an override campaign. The Senate's vote on HB 5481 was veto-proof, so the RYH focus will be on "House members who voted no." Then they linked message recipients [to the roll-call](#).

**Other school policy bills that Rauner vetoed** were:

[HB 4283](#), which would require that at least three members of the Illinois State Board of Education must "represent the educator community." [Rauner said](#) such policy is not needed. Four current ISBE members have "education experience," he said, and board composition is mandated by law in only five of the 38 states in which governors appoint the boards. The bill passed with strong bipartisan, super-majority votes in both chambers.

[HB 4657](#), which creates a task force to develop recommendations for curriculum and best practices on "emotional intelligence and social and emotional learning." [Rauner said](#) his administration "believes deeply in supporting both the intellectual and emotional development of Illinois children."

Then came the blather: "However, by creating a Task Force without any substantive directives to address this issue, we will only add to government waste without any assurance of healthier outcomes for students." (If you already know what directives to give the task force, why would you need the task force?)

The bill passed both chambers almost unanimously.

[SB 2345](#) would require a school's report card to reflect whether it has "participated in the [Illinois Youth Survey](#)," which is a project based at the University of Illinois in which schoolchildren are surveyed and the project issues reports designed to help schools deal with such issues as bullying, depression and drug use.

[Rauner pointed out](#) that the unmandated survey keeps participating students and their responses confidential and issues reports only to school administrators, only by request. No one else can gain any information about the IYS, so putting the information on the report card would only "cause unnecessary confusion without providing any useful information to parents." (But, of course, whether or not the school participates in IYS may be useful information.)

This bill got veto-proof votes in both chambers.

[SB 2572](#), would require 150-minutes-per week minimum of physical education for students. [Rauner said](#) the bill is an attempt to roll back a "reform" enacted last year in which the previous mandate of an "overly burdensome" daily physical education class was replaced by a lesser mandate of three days per week.

The bill "fails to recognize that depending on schools' scheduling, this minute-based mandate may result in the very daily requirement that was just rolled back last year [and] will further push out other subjects and priorities on the days they are at school to satisfy the PE mandate," the governor said.

Votes to override this veto would be difficult to find in the House.

[HB 4514](#) got the "amendatory veto" treatment. The Constitution allows a governor to return a bill to the legislature "with recommendations for change." The chambers can accept his changes by simple majority votes - or override his action by three-fifths majority votes. Anything else (including inaction) just kills a bill.

As passed, HB 4514 would prohibit anyone who is not qualified - as *defined in current law* - to "use the title, 'school counselor.'" Pretty simple. But Rauner believes that simple provision might legally have the effect of title protection, of making it more difficult for non-school counselors to enter the field.

He's probably correct about that. Otherwise, there seems to be little rationale for the bill. But not a single vote was cast against it in either chamber. And only Republicans are named as sponsors and co-sponsors. What was Rauner to do? He almost had to give his GOP colleagues a way out.

[His recommendation](#) was to strike the sentence prohibiting non-certificated folks from using the "school counselor" title, and to insert in its stead a paragraph directing the Illinois Department of Employment Security to "conduct a study and issue a report authored by a labor market economist that studies the labor market impacts of title protection of the school counselor profession." Simple majorities can accept it; an override motion takes three-fifths. Otherwise, dead bill.

**More about mendacity:** [Yes, this is left-overs from last week.] I once asked a teacher if he had read James Loewen's book, [Lies My Teacher Told Me](#) - subtitled *Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*. He had heard of the book but didn't read it. "I guess I thought it would just piss me off," he said.

Well, the title does seem objectionable, but the subtitle describes the book. As a history teacher at Tougaloo College, a black college in Mississippi, Loewen (who is from Decatur, by the way) was appalled by his students' misunderstanding of the post-Civil War period of Reconstruction. He knew they had been lied to.

His said students thought Reconstruction was when "blacks took over the government of the Southern states. But they were too soon out of slavery and so they screwed up and white folks had to take control again." Three lies. Blacks never "took over" government, did not "screw up" and it was the KKK that took control.

In his very popular book, you should know, Loewen *did not blame teachers* for the profoundly false ways in which history is taught in America's high schools. For the "lies" about race, about war, about American "exceptionalism" and other myths, he blames the textbook companies and the folks they sell textbooks to.

**There are some state boards of education** - such as the one in Texas - that must approve books that are purchased for all the states' schools. Book content, therefore, cannot offend these people. Since Texas is such a huge customer, the comfort levels of its state board members strongly influence a book's content.

As Loewen [told NPR in a recent interview](#), his biggest concern is about the high school textbook version whose "overall theme of American history is we started out great and we've been getting better ever since kind of automatically." There are two things wrong with that, he said. First, "it's not always true," he said.

And the second wrong "is what it does to the high school student. It says you don't need to protest; you don't need to write your congressman; you don't need to do any of the things that citizens do, because everything's getting better all the time." "So it makes them passive," said [NPR's Anya Kamenetz](#). "Exactly," said Loewen.

If you "look inside" [the most recent edition of Lies](#), you'll see it has been updated for "the age of alternative facts." What kinds of facts are those? The term was [coined just recently](#), as coinings of terms go, to apply to different and contradictory descriptions of the size of the crowd that gathered for a ceremonial event.

Are alternative facts real? #!\*\*, no.

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