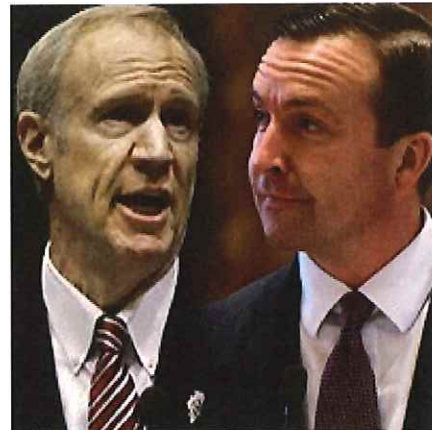


SB 231 Passes Senate

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School Funding Reform Resolution in Sight?

The playing field now shifts to a different venue for [Senate Bill 231](#), Senator Andy Manar's (D-Bunker Hill) proposal to revamp the 20-year-old Illinois school funding formula after Manar's bill passed the Senate. The bill now goes to the House, where its prospects are not yet known.



The Senate vote late Tuesday afternoon was 31-21, mostly along party lines with Senator Sam McCann (R-Plainview) the lone Republican to vote for the bill along with 30 of the chamber's 39 Democrats. Three Democrats voted against the measure while two voted "Present" and four did not vote.

Governor Bruce Rauner has not embraced the reform measure and has offered his own school funding plan that adds \$55 million for FY17. Though he has been critical of SB 231, Rauner has not specifically said he would veto it. Tuesday's Senate vote was one more than the 30 needed to pass a bill, but short of the 36 needed to override a veto.

Manar said the governor's proposal "stifles progress and promotes the status quo... it spends more money and makes the inequity gap wider."

The partisan battle lines in the Senate focused mainly on the fact that the CPS system would stand to receive an estimated additional \$175 million under Manar's plan plus \$205 million for the Chicago Teachers Pension Fund, something Senate Republicans labeled a "bailout" of the cash-strapped CPS.

The next hurdle for SB 231 is the House. The House sponsor is Rep. Christian Mitchell (D-Chicago). Manar said his role now is "continuing advocacy" and he declined to predict what might happen to the bill in the House, saying "We'll find out."

Manar has tweaked this year's proposal, the biggest change being a "hold harmless" provision that would keep even the wealthiest districts at their current levels for next year and would be phased out over four years. The price tag for that provision is estimated to be more than \$400 million.

House Speaker Michael Madigan (D-Chicago) has formed his own House task force to study school funding. Madigan spokesman Steve Brown said he thought the House task force would

look to incorporate "the best elements" of Senator Manar's plan in their recommendations.

Evidence-Based School Funding Model Presented to ISBE

Meanwhile, Illinois Association of School Business Officials (Illinois ASBO) Executive Director Michael Jacoby and IASA Executive Director Dr. Brent Clark presented information Wednesday about the Illinois Evidence-Based School Funding Model to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) after Jacoby and Brian Battle, a school board member from Barrington, testified Tuesday in front of the House Education Committee.

Dr. Jacoby believes that no matter the outcome of [SB 231](#), the evidence based model still has many pathways forward:

"School funding reform is one of the most difficult things to achieve. The formulas are complicated and the implications are really significant for districts that have been waiting for new revenues from the state. In a diverse state like Illinois, it is critical to address the needs of all students and preserve the future for them. Senator Manar has been leading the charge for over three years and he has opened the door for a deep discussion on this complicated topic.

In the end, there could be a merger of ideas or one or the other moving forward. In any event, the evidence based model built through collaboration and a passion to see the world change for many students, has many pathways forward. Today that journey began in earnest. Equity and adequacy is something that everyone wants for the children in Illinois and that is a great foundation upon which real change can be built."



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