



Nicole Blodgett <nblodgett@panaschools.com>

Fwd: Should Illinois invest more in CTE programs?

1 message

Jason Bauer <jbauer@panaschools.com>
To: Nicole Blodgett <nblodgett@panaschools.com>

Wed, Oct 2, 2019 at 7:50 AM

October board meeting

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From: **State School News Service** <j.m.broadway74@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Oct 2, 2019 at 2:01 AM
Subject: Should Illinois invest more in CTE programs?
To: <jbauer@panaschools.com>

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Should Illinois invest more in CTE programs?

By Jim Broadway, Publisher, Illinois School News Service

It's time to start thinking seriously about the FY 2021 state budget.

By the end of the year, members of the Illinois State Board of Education will vote on a proposal for the funds it wants to spend directly, or pass through to school districts and other local education agencies in the fiscal year starting next July 1, and ISBE is inviting you to say what you think that plan should look like.

Toward that end, the board has scheduled four budget hearings, two this month and two in November. You will be able to testify at one of them - or you can simply express your opinion without testifying orally or even attending a hearing in person. In any case, however, you'll need to complete [an online witness form](#).

Here are the dates and locations of the hearings:

10/16/2019	East St. Louis Public Schools Admin. Bldg. 1005 State Street, East St. Louis	Following the Board meeting from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
10/23/2019	Bloomington High, Senior Cafeteria 1202 E. Locust St., Bloomington	3:30 - 5:30 p.m.
11/6/2019	Osborne Center CORE Classroom 401 N. 30th St., Mt. Vernon	3:30 - 5:30 p.m.

11/21/2019

Thompson Center, Room 16-503
100 W. Randolph St., Chicago

1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

In addition to the board meeting noted above for 10 a.m. to noon October 16 in East St. Louis, the board is also has a session scheduled for the day before, from [1 to 4 p.m. on October 15](#); and also from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. November 22 (the day after the budget hearing) at the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago.

When will the board vote on its budget recommendations for FY 2021? Most likely, that will happen at the board's last meeting of the year, which is scheduled for December 18, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the ISBE headquarters, 100 N First St., Springfield. That document will serve as a reference for Gov. JB Pritzker (who will recommend a total state budget to the General Assembly in February), and to the legislators (who will enact the budget legislation).

You also have the board's standing invitation to express yourself in its regular meeting sessions, of course. But there are twelve rules to follow on that, too.

Click the link labeled "[Public Participation Guidelines](#)" to find learn those rules are.

Does it do any good to testify about the budget? It might. The recommendations of professional educators "in the field" and of associations that represent them are valued input to the processes of the policymakers. Ultimately, it is important to note that *a program that totally lacks advocacy could be in deep trouble*.

The General Assembly paid much more attention to the recommendations of ISBE than it did to Gov. Bruce Rauner during his four floundering years in office. Chairman James Meeks' board urged robust funding, while Rauner's proposals pretty much zeroed out programs he didn't understand - which was most of them.

The Meeks board also made sure the legislators saw - *every year* - the number of dollars "evidence-based" funding will require when FY 2027 (the year funding is promised, by law) arrives. That communication should continue, even though it is obvious that *the promise will be broken by billions* of dollars.

Okay, but why the headline about CTE? State funding for Career and Technical Education, like most ISBE budget lines in the Rauner years, stalled at \$38 million since FY 2016. It would have been less, maybe even zeroed out, if someone hadn't told Rauner how many millions of federal dollars that would have lost us.

Current CTE funding is \$46.5 million. That's a nice 20% increase. Now, it's long been obvious that CTE education is far advanced from the "shop class" activity of my youth. Sure, we learned to cut sheet metal with some shears, and we learned to saw wood into rectangles. Then everything turned into bookends.

But today, students in CTE programs learn skills for which there is an actual market. And the results of a study by a couple of Vanderbilt University professors seems to demonstrate clearly the value CTE has for the students who participate in it, and the sad consequences for those who wish to but cannot get in.

Professors Shaun Dougherty and Stephen Ross [focused on very similar students](#) - thousands who barely were able to get into the Connecticut Technical High School System, and other thousands who applied but, because space in the schools is limited, barely missed being enrolled. They studied 60,000 students in all.

It's about much more than the money, more than the difference in earnings between a young person with only a high school diploma but who succeeded in a strong CTE program versus one with only a diploma and no documented CTE skills. No, it's also about a job and, perhaps, over-all well-being - and [even physical health](#).

So how did the barely made-its do compared to the barely missed-its? Dougherty and Ross followed up with students and found that the made-its were 10% more likely to graduate from

high school, and their earnings were 30% greater than the earnings of the high school graduates who barely missed the CTE program.

Among the students who got into the program (from the 2006-2007 school year to 2013-2014) absenteeism rates fell 14%; compared with their peers, their 10th grade test scores rose from the 50th to the 57th percentile; their graduation rate was 85%, rather than 75%; quarterly earnings were more than 30% higher. There was a slight decline in college enrollment at first, but the researchers found in that regard "no differences ... by age 23."

Illinois has a [Math and Science Academy](#) in Aurora, a residential facility to which about 650 students who are deemed to be most gifted in those subjects are recruited from throughout the state. The [Connecticut Technical Education and Career](#) System operates 17 technical high schools serving 11,200 students.

Should Illinois invest more in CTE? I think maybe so.

Are you - do you want to be - running for office? If you are a candidate, or aspire to be one, there's a "Messaging Bootcamp" experience available for you - at no cost (I think). It's offered by the online site "[Rust Belt Rising](#)," a group that seeks to "reconnect the Democratic Party to its base of working families."

Oh yeah, I forgot to mention that you're supposed to be a Democrat to take this online course. But there's a workaround for that. When you register to participate, if you're a Republican (or a Green, or a Whig) *you could lie* about your party affiliation. (If you're going into politics, this is a skill you may need to develop.)

Okay, forget I said that. The program is open to Democrat candidates (or campaign managers or communication directors) in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, or Wisconsin. It will take one hour per week for six weeks this month and November. [Use this form to register no later than Friday](#) of this week.

Sure, Illinois is already pretty blue, but you can't have too many educators in public office, I say. Forward the information to any teachers or administrators you know, here or in the other states, who might give politics a shot. If you know of an Illinois teacher who's a candidate, let me know. [I'll endorse teachers only in 2020](#).

Can the "school-to-prison-pipeline" start in kindergarten? Even the worst of the "zero-tolerance" craziness didn't match this for adult stupidity. A school resource officer in Florida [handcuffed and arrested two six-year-olds](#) and charged them with misdemeanor battery. An interesting citation for their permanent record.

The school cop got fired. The prosecuting attorney refused to prosecute the kids, citing her inclination not to "play any role in the school-to-prison-pipeline." School administrators need to be trained, apparently, to know how to prevent their police officers from getting involved in matters of student discipline.

One more item on kindergarten from The Conversation. University of Texas-Austin Associate Professor Christopher Brown crunches the numbers and raises the question: [Shouldn't kindergarten kids get to play](#) a little? He's an expert on this, as a father and as an early childhood teacher-researcher for 20 years.

"Policymakers, schools systems and schools need to recognize that the standards and tests they mandate have altered the kindergarten classroom in significant ways," Brown writes. "Families need to be more proactive as well ... [as teachers'] advocates for a more balanced approach to instruction."

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Your input - questions, comments, suggestions - are valued. For twenty-four years ISNS has been guided by wisdom "from the field." To contribute in this way, just [click this link to my contact form](#).

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State School News Service, [347 S Durkin Dr, Springfield, IL 62704](#)

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Mr. Jason Bauer
Superintendent - Pana CUSD #8
14 E. Main Street
Pana, IL 62557
Phone: (217) 562-1500
Fax: (217) 562-1501