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Fwd: House sets committees, skips out of cold town

1 message

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February Board Meeting

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From: **State School News Service** <j.m.broadway74@gmail.com>

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House sets committees, skips out of cold town

By Jim Broadway, Publisher, Illinois School News Service

The House has finally created committees. They even assigned bills to them and, for many of them, [scheduled hearings](#). They did all this on Tuesday. Then they got chased out of Springfield by the polar vortex. They must have been thinking about their families, since most are from northern Illinois. Got real chilly there.

There's only two House PK-12 education committees for this 101st General Assembly. One is to examine legislation that deals with education [Administration, Licensing & Charter School](#). It is scheduled to meet at 2 p.m. Wednesday in Room 115 at the Capitol. Former teacher (34 years) [Rep. Sue Scherer](#) will hold the gavel.

The other House PK-12 education committee deals with [School Curriculum & Policies](#). It convenes at 10 a.m. Wednesday in Room 413 in the Stratton Building with [Rep. Michelle Mussman](#), an activist in PTA and other community organizations, in the chair. (Links to the committee names reveal bill postings.)

We know who's in charge of each committee. We know when they meet and what's on the agenda. But who are the House members that will serve on these committees, that will vote on school policy measures that you care about. Well, we don't know that just yet. (Organizing a house is complicated, you know that.)

Committee appointments will surely be decided by Tuesday of next week. Maybe even by the weekend. Sure, I'll let you know as soon as I know. But we know what they'll be talking about even if we don't know who's doing the talking. Eleven bills are posted in the Mussman committee; seven are sponsored by [Rep. Mary Flowers](#).

[HB 18](#) is the Flowers mandate for "character education." Her [HB 42](#) would require Chicagoans to elect their school board, just like the folks in your town. [HB 52](#) would create a high school pilot program in "advanced manufacturing technical skills" instruction. [HB 208](#) would require students to be taught - and to pass a test - about "the effects of cannabis." Mary's [HB 222](#) and [HB 223](#) deal with sex abuse issues, and [HB 242](#) requires schools to report lead-testing results.

[Rep. Rita Mayfield](#) proposes in [HB 37](#) that graduates of non-public schools be eligible for the "State Seal of Biliteracy," as public school graduates are already. In [HB 191](#), [Rep. La Shawn Ford](#) proposes a massive proliferation of metal-detectors, including at schools. [HB 246](#), sponsored by [Rep. Anna Moeller](#), would require instruction on the historical roles and social contributions of LGBT people. [HB 247](#), by [Rep. Fred Crespo](#), will start a fight about hours of students' attendance.

Although we don't have the official word on committee membership, I would guess most of the bill sponsors listed above, and some other legislators as well, will be on the curriculum/policies committee. You may be able to monitor this hearing [at this link](#), starting at 10 a.m. Wednesday in Room 413 Stratton.

Does Mary Flowers have any bills posted for the Wednesday afternoon hearing of the House PK-12 education committee on administration/licensing/charters? Of course she does. But of the 11 bills on that committee's agenda, Rep. Flowers is the sponsor of only four - three of which ([HB 16](#), [HB 22](#), [HB 40](#)) relate to students' health and safety. (We've examined them before.) Her other bill, [HB 218](#), requires tuition-free summer school for children of low-income families.

You saw Ford's [HB 190](#) - the one requiring schools to connect at-risk kids to services that may help them - in the last issue of ISNS. His intent seems excellent, but he's asking a lot. [Rep. Will Guzzardi](#) has again filed a bill ([HB 254](#)) to codify "class size goals," and his [HB 256](#) would prohibit requiring a student teacher candidate to "videotape himself or herself or his or her students in a classroom setting."

Guzzardi also sponsors [HB 279](#), which would impose a moratorium on charter school authorizations in school districts that are classified as "financially distressed." [Rep. Jay Hoffman](#) has [HB 258](#), one of several bills to prevent the State Charter School Commission from ever overturning a local school board's decision to deny a charter application, and [HB 278](#), filed by [Rep. Emanuel Chris Welch](#), regulates charter school governance and expenditure patterns.

The other bill posted for the Wednesday hearing is [HB 277](#), filed by [Rep. Steven Reick](#), under which the holder of an educator license could lose it - or be fired - for failure to report "an instance of suspected child abuse or neglect." Again, you may monitor this hearing [at this link](#), 2 p.m. Wednesday, Room 115.

Finally, the House PK-12 [education appropriations committee](#) (2 p.m. Tuesday in Room D-1, Stratton building) has three bills posted: [HB 12](#), Flowers' bill seeking \$1 million for autism programs; [HB 17](#), her \$15 million proposal to reimburse parents for transportation costs; and [HB 192](#), Ford's proposal of \$215 for "grants to Chicago Public Schools." The chair of the committee is [Rep. Rita Mayfield](#).

The bills are for talking points, not likely to be passed.

The Senate braved record cold weather this week to convene on all three scheduled days. From an education policy standpoint, the major event was the movement of [SB 28](#), [Sen. Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant](#)'s bill that would redefine the pupil attendance calculation, from committee to 2nd reading status on the floor.

The bill had very few proponents, the teachers' unions mainly, [but 31 opponents](#), including the State Board of Education, Statewide School Management Alliance, the Large Unit District Association and numerous school districts. Still, it sailed out of the Senate Education Committee (chaired by Bertino-Tarrant) 16-0.

The unanimous vote does not mean [SB 28](#) is certain to be enacted in its current form. On bills that divide interest groups so sharply, compromising amendments are almost

always sought, based on rationales that are usually specific to the bill. A common factor is the sense that no group is totally right on major issues.

The committee meets again at 2 p.m. Tuesday with five measures posted: [SB 10](#), [Sen. Andy Manar's](#) bill for a minimum wage for starting teachers; [SB 59](#), Bertino-Tarrant's bill to protect dual-credit students from high fees; [SB 116](#), a bill filed by [Sen. Chuck Weaver](#) to foster charter school proliferation; [SB 117](#), filed by Sen. Jason Barickman, requiring emancipated students to receive notice before documents from their records are destroyed; and [Senate Joint Resolution 10](#), sponsored by Weaver, calling for the creation of a task force to study charter school facilities.

ISBE has determined that 28 school districts are eligible to receive a total of \$50 million in [property tax relief grants](#) for the current fiscal year. To get the grants, their school boards will have to pass abatement resolutions to be filed with their county clerks and shared with ISBE; the money is for taxpayers, not for schools.

The \$50 million property tax relief program was negotiated into the Evidence-Based Funding law enacted in 2017 after Gov. Bruce Rauner vetoed an EBF bill that did not include tax relief. This is the first year that the relief has been provided. The money for it comes from funds otherwise budgeted for schools.

To fully fund EBF (per the 2017 enactment) for FY 2020, the State Board of Education has recommended an increase of [nearly \\$5 billion](#), compared to the state EBF funding for the current fiscal year. That increase, of course, will not happen, but the recommendation may effectively boost the budget somewhat.

The policymakers decided to raise EBF funding by \$350 million per year, in spite of the fact that reaching the legislation's goal ("adequate" resources for every child's education) by the year 2027 would require twice that much. Then reducing the school funding by another \$50 million just breaks the promise even more.

The districts whose taxpayers could get a break under the property tax relief program are those with the "highest unit equivalent tax rate" compared with all 373 districts that applied for the program. The 28 districts are:

- Antioch Community High School District 117
- Argo Community High School District 217
- Bloom Township High School District 206
- Bremen Community High School District 228
- Community High School District 218
- Dolton School District 148
- Elementary School District 159
- Evergreen Park Community High School District 231
- Ford Heights School District 169
- Gen. George Patton School District 133
- Grayslake Community High School District 127
- Homewood Flossmoor Community High School District 233
- Lansing School District 158
- Leyden Community High School District 212
- Oak Lawn Community High School District 229
- Oak Park & River Forest District 200
- Ohio Community High School District 505
- Park Forest School District 163
- Rantoul Township High School District 193
- Reavis Township High School District 220
- Rich Township High School District 227
- Rock Falls Township High School District 301
- St. Anne Community High School District 302
- Thornton Fractional Township High School District 215
- Thornton Township High School District 205
- Township High School District 211
- Zion Elementary School District 6
- Zion-Benton Township High School District 126

The policy agenda is filling up. At this time, nearly [2,400 bills have been filed](#) for consideration in the 2019 session. Most have originated in the House, and by far the most in both chambers are shell bills sponsored by leaders. (Most shells will be just created to meet a possible need, but will not be needed.)

The total being tracked by ISNS - bills to amend the School Code, the Pension Code, property tax law such as PTELL, or to amend laws affecting juveniles - has reached nearly 140. The [ISNS bill page](#) will be updated by Saturday. Listings include a bill's impact and whether it is posted for a committee hearing.

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Yeah, that photo on the web page is me. It's recent, too, a January 2019 photo. It just seemed inappropriate for me to keep on the page photos of me that were taken a decade or more ago.

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2/1/2019

Pana Community Unit School District #8 Mail - Fwd: House sets committees, skips out of cold town

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