



Nicole Blodgett <nbloodgett@panaschools.com>

Fwd: PDK poll measures sad attitudinal milestone

2 messages

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

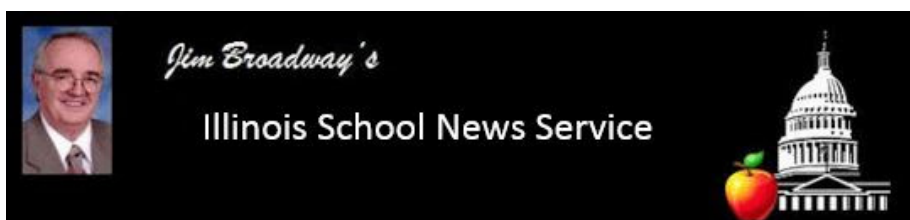
Tue, Sep 18, 2018 at 8:07 AM

September Board Meeting

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From: **State School News Service** <j.m.broadway74@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Sep 18, 2018 at 12:01 AM
Subject: PDK poll measures sad attitudinal milestone
To: jbauer@panaschools.com

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PDK poll measures sad attitudinal milestone

By Jim Broadway, Publisher, Illinois School News Service

Producing ISNS newsletters has brought me into regular contact with educators, mainly with regional and school district superintendents and school principals. Joining in their meetings has greatly informed my coverage and reinforced my attitude toward the profession of education - that it is an ennobling one.

But that experience has not always been uplifting. It was shortly after the enactment of the [No Child Left Behind Act](#), probably about 2003, I think, when I first heard a veteran school leader reach back in his reveries to the last time he remembered thinking that "teaching was fun." He said it had been quite a while.

The turmoil began, of course, on April 26, 1983, when the Reagan Administration published [A Nation At Risk](#), a feckless, factless report accusing educators of undermining the economy with their suddenly acquired "rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people." Whew!

Yes, that started the corporate community's war against public education. [You wouldn't expect those who dominate the economy to blame *themselves* for [double-digit inflation](#), high unemployment and soaring interest rates, all at the same time, now would you?] NCLB was the last big bombshell in that war.

"I don't advise anyone to go into teaching," the educator finally said. I asked for a show of hands. Who agrees with him? Almost every hand went up. No Child Left Behind (he called it the "Cover Your Behind" act) was just the last straw. Kids aren't "standardized." The testing was just about distrust of teachers.

I don't think I had ever heard an educator say it before that day. It reminded me of how my own father, a railroader, felt sad because he could not encourage me to follow in his footsteps. And it seemed disconnected from social attitudes in general. Most folks, I thought, would love it if their children were teachers.

Back then, I'm sure I was right about that.

Couple of weeks ago, you read in this space that a strong majority, 71% of Americans, told pollsters that they were "completely satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with their child's public school education. [That was a Gallup poll](#). It found people favoring their children's school, but not public schools in general.

What about the PDK poll, the gold standard of assessment of the public's confidence in the public schools? The PDK poll [results for 2018 were released this month](#). Results were similar to the Gallup data. People gave their own children's school a grade of A or B; schools in their town passed with C grades.

Would you like your child to become a teacher? That was the question with a most disappointing response. I'll let Letisha Marrero, a [senior writer and editor](#) for The Education Trust, tell you about it.

"For the first time in the [PDK] poll's 50-year history, a majority of parents are reluctant to support a future for their children as educators in public schools." This is an amazing - and troubling - data set.

When I reviewed the PDK poll data, I was shocked. How could anyone not want their child to enter a profession of such excellent public service, of such satisfaction at making a difference in the lives of so many students, a difference even of unknowable magnitude in the communities where the students would live in the future.

It was mostly the *low pay* (78% of parents said that they support teacher strikes for higher wages) and the *lack of respect* our society affords teachers that soured parents on having their children enter the profession. *"So what's it going to take to make teaching a noble profession once again?"* Marrero asks.

A return to respecting teachers would be a start.

TRS says new retirement option will be a while in preparation. [HB 5137](#), which passed the House and Senate without a negative vote cast, requires the Teachers Retirement System to set up an optional "defined contribution benefit" in which teachers (and perhaps their employers) could invest in their own retirement.

The concept is one of tax-deferred compensation. Contributions into a teacher's account would grow as invested by TRS until the teacher retires. Rep. Robert Martwick, the bill's sponsor, noted that [some school districts offer such plans](#) to their employees now, but the returns are often far less than TRS investments earn.

The new law also applies to members of the State Universities Retirement System. The other pension systems that are administered by the state already are authorized to make the deferred contribution option available to their members. The benefit is similar to those in other states and in the private sector.

Because the legislation become state law just last month, the TRS will take some time to gather input from other states and to implement the program carefully. The law requires reporting to pension system members more frequently than is the case under current law, and many decisions have to be made.

Even Edgar now supports casino gambling expansion. Former Gov. Jim Edgar, who rejected gambling as a source of state revenue when he occupied the Governor's mansion, has endorsed a gambling package that resides in the House and will be the subject of a hearing before the elections.

[SB 7](#), which started life as part of a "grand bargain" being shaped in the Senate to bring the state budget crisis to an end (only to have a few House Republicans break from Gov. Bruce Rauner and end the crisis with a vote to override Rauner's veto of a tax increase-driven budget bill last year) [will be heard October 17](#).

There was a time when a gambling bill debate pitted those who are concerned about profiteering on the weaknesses of the math-challenged and the gaming-addicted against predators seeking that very kind of profit. But now, with gambling near Illinois' saturation point, it's the gambling licence haves versus the have-nots.

You can see it in the witness slips filed in May. There were 175 have-nots in favor of more gambling (including U.S. Rep. Mike Bost's wife Tracy, *representing her hair salon* in Murphysboro) and just 7 opponents - mostly lobbyists representing businesses enjoying - and not wanting to share - their gambling profits. (*Slots in a hair salon?*)

As we reported recently, [Rep. Robert Rita](#) (D-Blue Island), the House sponsor of SB 7, believes there is \$700,000 per year in state revenue to be derived from gambling taxes and fees included in the bill. Good. Schools can use that money.

More casinos, including one to be owned by the City of Chicago; expansion at existing casinos; electronic gambling at horse racetracks (Edgar was always a great supporter of the tracks); possibly sports betting - something for everyone is in the bill.

Will it happen during the veto session? Maybe, but I doubt it. The vote would be close, so if this General Assembly is to pass this bill it will have to wait until January 1 or later - when a simple majority vote will send a bill to the governor. Even then, it would need Gov. Bruce Rauner's approval or even life-support won't save it.

Snippets:

Music can relieve election-season tedium. I want to share with readers - and encourage them to share with students and music teachers - some information in this regard. The first political song I recall was a spoof of U.S. Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Arizona) during his 1964 campaign to unseat President Lyndon Johnson.

It was called "Barry's Boys" and was performed by a group called the Chad Mitchell Trio. 1964 was the first election year in which I was eligible to vote. Sure, it was ancient history now, but issues and individuals were referred to in that song that remain relevant today. Sure, there's a quiz involved. ([Check it out at this link.](#))

Fact-checking Rauner continues. Rauner keeps fabricating J.B. Pritzker's agenda as governor, and media fact-checkers keep setting the record straight. "Worse yet he wants a car tax," Rauner's ad about J.B. declares, "which will also come along with a tracking device. How much is that going to cost us...?"

In truth, Pritzker merely said Illinois *should test* a Vehicle Mileage Tax, [as other states have](#) done for years, to make up for road fund revenue lost due to laws requiring cars to achieve higher mileage standards. He never said he would adopt such a tax. And, as even Rauner knows, a governor cannot enact a tax anyway.

Pritzker has taken a rational position on sales tax base expansion, but his campaign [staff said he "misspoke."](#) It just shows how fearful campaign staffs are of the "T-word." The position is actually conservative. The Civic Federation, for example, thinks Illinois should [tax the same services as Wisconsin](#).

The Civic Federation is not some wild and crazy group of tax-and-spend liberals. They are just business leaders who see Illinois still mired in costly debt. They've also

recommended (at the same link above) that Illinois apply the income tax to the same retirement income that's taxed by the federal government. (Wow!)

Rauner is not alone in needing to be fact-checked, of course. You'll probably find misdirection, position embroidery and even outright lies, in the rhetoric exchanged in many campaigns. Take Seth McMillan, for example. He's a Republican who hopes to unseat 48th District's Sen. Andy Manar in the November voting.

McMillan is running an ad - fact-checked by veteran political writer Bernard Schoenburg - in which a video clip of Manar talking about term limits has been *trimmed to change the meaning of what Manar is saying*. Then the McMillan ad has the timidity to spell out these words: "You can't trust Andy Manar."

Rauner's goal of flipping the House is even more unlikely. Rauner has talked about seeing Republican Party candidates prevail in nine House districts currently held by Democrats; then Republicans could elect their leader, Rep. Jim Durkin, as Speaker of the House, unseating Rauner nemesis Rep. Michael Madigan.

Well, now Rauner needs 10 flips, because one-term incumbent GOP Rep. Jerry Lee Long of Streator seems all but certain to lose in November. For behavior termed "harassment," Long has [lost his party's support](#) (huge piles of money) and has been asked to step aside. But he won't. He'll just lose in his hotly contested district.

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

9/18/2018

Pana Community Unit School District #8 Mail - Fwd: PDK poll measures sad attitudinal milestone

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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

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

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