



Nicole Blodgett <nblodgett@panaschools.com>

Fwd: Early childhood is today's Senate panel topic

1 message

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

Tue, Nov 13, 2018 at 7:44 AM

November board meeting

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **State School News Service** <j.m.broadway74@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Nov 13, 2018 at 2:00 AM
Subject: Early childhood is today's Senate panel topic
To: <jbauer@panaschools.com>

[Subscribe to ISNS](#)

Volume 24, Number 61, November 13, 2018

To view the web version, [click here](#).

Early childhood is today's Senate panel topic

By Jim Broadway, Publisher, Illinois School News Service

Funding for Early Childhood Education - a longtime priority in Illinois and a hot topic nationwide - is the focus of a "subject matter" hearing of the Senate Education Committee scheduled for **3:15 p.m. today in Room 212** at the Capitol. (You may be able to monitor the discussion [via the Senates "webcast" link](#).)

At nearly a half-billion dollars currently, Early Childhood has been the fastest-growing line item in the annual budgets of the Illinois State Board of Education for years, going back to the Blagojevich Administration. This growth has been driven not just by program popularity, but also by brain research.

As Harvard education researcher-writer [Dr. Suzanne Bouffard](#) notes in her recent book, *The Most Important Year*: "The brain develops faster during early childhood than at any other time, especially when a child is engaged in enriching relationships and activities, like reading, singing, building, and pretend play."

As a peer-reviewed article co-authored by [Dr. Chad Noggle](#) of the SIU School of Medicine, describes this development: "Beginning in the earliest embryonic stage and lasting until approximately 2 years of age, new neurons and synapses are formed at an amazing rate, at times reaching **40,000 new synapses formed per second**." Then brain later "prunes" extra synapses to increase "the efficiency of the neural network."
[Emphasis by ISNS.]

"The entire process [of pruning superfluous synapses] continues up until approximately 10 years of age by which time nearly 50% of the synapses present at 2 years of age have been eliminated." So children lose about half of their brain connections. *How does the brain choose which synapses to prune?*

[Healthline.com](#) says it "is influenced by the experiences a developing child has Constant stimulation causes synapses to grow and become permanent. But if a child receives little stimulation the brain will keep fewer of those connections." So early childhood *is a crucial period* in every person's brain development.

Dr. Broussard cites studies showing that good pre-K programs "are linked with a host of benefits: higher reading and math achievement, lower rates of grade retention and special education placement, and, in some cases, stronger social skills and self-control and even more positive parenting practices later in life."

WDIAM? (What does it all mean?) It means there is more than money to be considered in Early Childhood Education policy. While the programs consume vast resources, they are also [complex and quality is key](#). They are not just day care. Well done, they [save public dollars in the long run](#). It's a huge committee topic.

I enjoyed an hours or so in a room full of teachers over the weekend, talking with them about the impact of state policy on their professional lives. It's pretty significant, I told them. We talked about some of the major programs funded through the State Board of Education's budget. In fact, the subject of money kept coming up.

The excellent Evidence-Based Funding law adopted by the state last year has been pouring funds where they have been needed the most for the longest time, and the benefits are beginning to show. The promise of the EBF law can't be kept, of course, because the legislature has adopted a policy of just half-way keeping it.

That is, as the State Board demonstrated this year by [requesting a \\$7 billion increase](#) for FY 2019 - to get all districts the funds they need to "adequately" educate all their kids now, not waiting for 2027 as the law suggests. The \$350 million per year increase policy adopted by the legislators will get them just half-way there.

But that is not to suggest the new law is ineffective. It's had wonderful impact already. It's just not a promise that will be kept. Perhaps the most pressing concern is the erosion of the \$350 million. Advance Illinois has already encouraged them to [bump it up by \\$100 million](#), to offset the \$50 million being [drained away for property tax relief](#). In the spring, further siphonings will be chatted about in committees, mark my words.

All of this points to the importance of opportunities for new revenue streams. Massive expansion of casino gambling was considered in the spring, but the [bill stalled in the House](#). Bottom line, the existing casinos and small businesses that run video games joined forces with the church lady to block it.

There are also other sin taxes under consideration. Sports betting was legalized by the U.S. Supreme Court a few months ago; that will surface in the spring, but existing gambling profiteers probably will load the dice again. The committee hearings should be entertaining, but the odds are not good for more boats.

Now, marijuana, that's another story. The weed [has made friends nationwide](#). Governor-elect J.B. Pritzker says he looks forward to signing a bill to [legalize - and tax - some Illinois pot](#). Look for this to come to a vote in the Senate and, perhaps, the House in the spring. Prohibition just funds crime, not schools and healthcare.

The big deal in revenue, of course, is the graduated income tax. The federal government uses that, as do 34 states. Only eight states, including Illinois, are stuck (constitutionally) with the regressive flat tax model. A ratification vote to repeal the progressive tax prohibition will happen, but not before November of 2020.

Pension underfunding is driving one of the state's most severe financial needs. The Teachers Retirement System told the policymakers last month that the state's contribution for FY 2020 [will need to be \\$4.81 billion](#), an increase of more than \$400 million from the state's current funding to the pension system.

The TRS is the largest of the five pension systems administered by the state. Its unfunded liability grew by 3.04% since last year, due to underfunding. "Since its founding in 1939, state government has never once appropriated an annual contribution to TRS that equaled full funding in any year," the TRS reported.

The growth in unfunded liability came in spite of the fact that the pension system earned \$2.06 billion on investments last year, earnings at a rate of "8.45% net of fees," the system's news release said. That is more than the \$1.2 billion the state would have to pay if not for the "too large, and growing" unfunded liability.

That is, without the debt, the TRS could live next year on its own earnings. "The principal and interest we owe on that debt comprises about 76 percent of the state's annual contribution," TRS Executive Director Dick Ingram said. Yep, Pritzker's going to have to find some more money somewhere. But he's good at that.

Such presumption of our gullibility is insulting. John Tillman, leader of the pretend "think tank" Illinois Policy Institute (and some other equally misleading organizations) has alerted us that last week's election of J.B. Pritzker "sets the stage for [an epic battle](#) between Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan" and Pritzker.

But it will hardly be a fair fight, because, "Much like Gov. [Bruce] Rauner, Pritzker will be at the mercy of the most powerful House speaker in U.S. history." Tillman directs the IPI, pretending it is non-partisan while it is in fact an arm of the Illinois Republican Party. Demonizing Madigan has been its tactic.

In fact Tillman, who is the founder of the "[Illinois Liberties PAC](#)," spent millions in recent months trying to convince voters that, among other threats, "[Madigan And His Character Assassins](#)" will take your home. He funded a [library of attack ads](#), mostly featuring Madigan as the villain, mostly supporting Republican losers.

There's also something called the [Liberty Justice Center](#) that carries a grudge against Madigan. Who's behind that group? [No surprise, it's John Tillman](#). Mark Janus, you know him, [is now on staff of both](#) the IPI and the Liberty Justice Center. Finally, Tillman is also the founder and principal officer of the [Government Accountability Alliance](#), which tells the IRS it is a "government watchdog advocating for the people of Illinois."

Tillman stays busy. For more than \$400,000 a year, he should.

But should we expect an "epic battle" between Madigan and Pritzker, or for Pritzker to be at Madigan's mercy? It really can't be both. But there is no rational route to either. Madigan doesn't want to run government. He wants to win elections. Pritzker seems to want to govern, and he will be allowed to do so.

Links to newsletters posted so far this year are available [at this web page link](#). Please remember that *current* ISNS archives are for our subscribers only; *do not share this link*. But all 2017 issues can be found [HERE](#). You *may share the 2017 archives web page link* with anyone who wants to see it.

The only way to contact me: Use the link below. As soon as you "submit" your message, it is sent to me by email. Your message may be complex and "attached" to a document, or it may be as simple as "call me."

IF YOU NEED TO SPEAK WITH ME directly, leave a phone number for me to call and tell me what would be a good time to converse. I am always connected to my email, and I promise to respond to you as soon as possible.

Invoice Reminder: All invoices are *emailed* via the PNC Bank. ISNS is *now paperless*. If you need me to resend an invoice, use the contact link to tell me. I deeply appreciate your support of ISNS. This service cannot exist without you.

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

State School News Service (C) 2018

Subscribe to ISNS

DO NOT CLICK THE 'UNSUBSCRIBE' LINK! That would automatically drop you from the ISNS subscriber list. The "unsubscribe" link is required so we cannot remove it. But to continue receiving the ISNS newsletter, DO NOT CLICK IT. If you wish to update your account, including choosing your email preference (HTML or text-only) please [submit this form](#). Otherwise, use the "contact form" link in the last paragraph of today's newsletter to contact Jim Broadway for any reason. Thank you.

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

SafeUnsubscribe™ jbauer@panaschools.com

Forward this email | About our service provider

Sent by j.m.broadway74@gmail.com in collaboration with



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