



Nicole Blodgett &lt;nbloodgett@panaschools.com&gt;

## Fwd: Just half-keeping funding promise won't be easy

1 message

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

Wed, Sep 5, 2018 at 7:48 AM

September board meeting

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

From: **State School News Service** <j.m.broadway74@gmail.com>  
Date: Wed, Sep 5, 2018 at 2:04 AM  
Subject: Just half-keeping funding promise won't be easy  
To: [jbauer@panaschools.com](mailto:jbauer@panaschools.com)

### Subscribe to ISNS



Volume 24, Number 49, September 5, 2018

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

## Just half-keeping funding promise won't be easy

By Jim Broadway, Publisher, Illinois School News Service

As the Illinois State Board of Education [courageously demonstrated](#) this year, state funding for public education would have to be increased by more than \$7 billion if Illinois is to keep its promise of ensuring that the least affluent school would have "adequate" resources to educate all children by 2027.

It's important to point out that the adequacy-for-all-children promise (notice that the promise has nothing to do with "equity") was codified in 2017 legislation ([see p. 388](#)) as a *goal* to be achieved by 2027 - not this year - and also to point out that the promise *will not be achieved even then*, probably not ever.

Why not? Because the policy now determined to be in effect until 2027 relies on a \$350 million increase in school funding by the state every year. Two appropriations have been done; eight more remain. That's a total of ten at \$350 million each. That's a \$3.5 billion total increase - *only half of the promised \$7 billion*.

But even if we assume the promise of SB 1947 will merely be half-kept, *that's a dramatic improvement* over the state's school funding policy in all the decades since the Constitution of 1970 declared it to be a ["fundamental goal"](#) that all citizens were to be developed "to the limit of their capacities."

**Sadly, even that is not a safe assumption.** Already this fiscal year, the \$350 million has been slashed by \$50 million, to account for revenue-reducing tax credits for gazillionaires who donate up

to \$1 million each to a non-profit organization created to give children scholarships to attend private schools ([see p. 1](#)).

So now, if all other factors stay in place, we're down to gaining just \$3.05 billion by 2027. And if you pay attention to the House and Senate education committees, you'll see the powerful inclination of many legislators to siphon off even more "adequacy" funds for myriad other purposes, *all of them worthy*.

I get the sense that most everyone involved - even the poorest districts for whom the promise of "adequacy" by 2027 is certain to be broken - believes a net school funding increase of \$300 million per year would be powerfully beneficial, if that pace can be maintained through 2027. But even that's pretty doubtful.

The backlog of unpaid bills, once a staggering \$15 billion or more, has fallen to just \$7.5 billion (*Just?*), but the debt service on that is huge. The state owes about \$130 billion to the pension systems. The state's bond rating has improved, but Illinois lives in fiscally perilous territory. Therefore, so does "adequate" funding.

**There are ways of increasing revenue, however.** Some of them are nothing to be proud of, but everything seems to be on the table. Well, not quite everything. Despite Gov. Bruce Rauner's ubiquitous ad charging that his election challenger, J.B. Pritzker, is planning a "[26% tax increase](#)," that ad is [just another Rauner lie](#).

But more on the political spin later. First, let's get a handle on what \$350 million looks like and review some of the ways to make it happen, every year, as growth to state financial support of public schools. As to the first part, the target dollar figure - \$350 million - is in the neighborhood of *1% of annual GRF* receipts.

GRF (General Revenue Fund) receipts come mainly from individual and corporate income taxes, sales taxes and a variety of fees and other types of revenue. It appears that the state can keep its promise of adequate school funding if it can grow GRF by just 1% annually and send that growth money to the schools.

That all seems possible. Getting GRF growth to average 1% per year will be the easy part; even low inflation rates will produce that. But getting legislators to keep sending that growth to the schools - instead of to "new" and politically hot items that are good for election success - that will be a challenge down the road.

**Interest in greater GRF revenue flow is high** right now. Some of the ideas on the surface are of the predatory variety, however. [Rep. Robert Rita](#) (D-Blue Island), chair of the House Revenue & Finance Committee, is pushing hard for gambling expansion to be enacted as early as the fall "veto session."

Rita's proposal would expand casino gambling - in response to communities that are salivating for the meager resources of their most math-challenged citizens, and those with least impulse control - and he also wants to capitalize on the U.S. Supreme Court decision to [allow sports betting nationwide](#).

Rita believes his total gambling package would increase the annual GRF revenue base by \$700 million. Do the math. That would take care of two years' worth of the promised \$350-per-year growth in state support for adequate school funding. (If more [gambling creates more social problems](#), that can be ignored, as always.)

Other ways to make funds available for educational adequacy include GRF spending reductions. For example, legislation recently signed by Rauner is expected to [save up to \\$100 million](#) per year by improved state fiscal management. That will help. And, of course, [shrinking teachers' pension costs](#) is always a priority.

**Okay, since Pritzker may be our governor** after the November elections, what *are* his views on taxes? What Pritzker has said about taxes is that he favors a [graduated tax structure](#) - which is how governments (the feds and most other states) keep taxes from hitting the poorest taxpayers so much harder than wealthiest ones.

Now, of course, the [Republicans are whining](#) that Pritzker has not spelled out all the details of "his" tax plan." But the first requirement is to get the voters' permission to even have a graduated

tax. It takes a constitutional amendment, ratified in a general election. The next opportunity for that would be 2020.

So the reality is: There is no "Pritzker progressive tax plan." The Democratic candidate for governor has merely endorsed the concept of a progressive tax. The details of it would come out - after the voters have allowed it to be enacted (not a certainty by a long shot - as a result of a deliberative legislative process.

Since the Republican party has no rational argument against progressive tax structures (and it would be a boon for the Democrats if they offered one), throwing up as much confusion as possible against the concept Pritzker has endorsed is the best they can do. (The GOP is flailing badly at all levels this year.)

**Rauner has plowed through that big stack of bills.** Of the 614 bills that the legislators have passed during 2018, the governor has taken action on [all except for two that he just recently received](#). (More about them in a moment.) He signed 541 into law, vetoed 52 and returned 29 with recommendations for change.

Rauner's actions create a relatively large agenda for the legislators. When they return to the Capitol in November (starting the [week after the elections](#)), they are scheduled to be in session only six days. They'll have to let Rauner have his way on a truckload of legislation if they want to keep the "veto session" that short.

A reminder: To enact a bill over the governor's veto requires three-fifths majority votes in the House (71 votes) and in the Senate (36 votes). To enact a bill in the form that it passed in the spring, over Rauner's recommendations for change, also takes three-fifths majorities. Simple majority votes will enact a bill as changed by the governor's recommendations. Any other action - or inaction - sends the bill to the cemetery.

There are three ways that a governor can reject bills that spend money, too, but Rauner signed this year's budget as it was passed. He didn't veto a single line item. This, you'll recall, was a budget he had considered bloated by dollars from a 2017 tax increase which he had vetoed, only to have the legislators override his action.

**What about the two late-arriving bills?** Both were held up when their Senate sponsors - a Democrat on one of the bills, a Republican on the other - filed motions "to reconsider" the vote that was taken for them to pass in that chamber. Such a motion suspends a bill until the motion is withdrawn. (Yes, this is a civics lesson.)

Why would they want to hold the bills up? Obviously, supporters of the bill are not truly thinking about the passing vote, not really wondering if it had been such a good idea for the bills to pass. There are other possible reasons, but I believe the motive for both of these bills was *to make Rauner's action stand out*.

[SB 2493](#), a popular measure sponsored by Sen. Chapin Rose, will trigger research at the University of Illinois on subjects that would be of interest to deer hunters, farmers and residents of rural Illinois in General. Rose would want Rauner to sign that bill to come on a day that will be uncluttered by other bill signings.

[HB 4163](#), sponsored in the Senate by Sen. Christina Castro, would require substantial gender-equity in hiring practices and in compensation of employees in the private sector. Rauner is likely to veto that bill. When he does, Castro likely wants it to conspicuously motivate women to vote (Democratic) in November.

#### Snippets:

**The "epidemic" of school shootings.** You see references to that urban (and rural) myth every day. As ISNS has calculated the danger that kids face by being in a school building it is clear that ... there is no such danger. To some extent, as NPR recently found, it is just more fake news - [spewing from the Trump Administration](#).

A U.S. Department of Education document asserted that "nearly 240 schools ... reported at least 1 incident involving a school-related shooting" in the 2015-2016 school year. NPR fact-checked that by reaching out to all of those schools. Only 11 incidents could be confirmed. There are 96,000 schools in the U.S.

**Who thinks U.S. schools are okay?** The parents, as usual. Public education in the U.S. has been under severe attack since April 26, 1983. That was the day [A Nation At Risk](#), a hyperbolic publication of the Reagan Administration declared that the sad state of public schools "threatens our very future as a Nation and a people."

But those who are closest to the public schools - parents of students enrolled in them - have been surveyed annually with regard to their satisfaction with the schools. This year 71% were "completely" or "somewhat" satisfied. That's down from 79% just last year. (Trump's DOE is very pro-privatization, like Reagan's was.)

**Speaking of fake news, what about "deep fake"?** You should know about this. Not believing everything you hear has been good advice for a long time. Now, the time has come to stop believing everything you see. Algorithms that rework film clips can make a person appear to be saying outrageous and false.

Here's an example in which former [President Barack Obama is filmed](#) "saying" some stuff that he would never actually say. It's most important for voters in an election year to be able to tell fact from fiction. Seems to me students in civics class, or any class, should also be exposed to the possibilities of AI fakery.

**White's opponent tries to use his age against him.** Jesse White, the Secretary of State who cleaned up that state office after his predecessor (former Gov. George Ryan) used it to score political contributions, is 84. But he's pretty athletic. It's not a good thing that his 2018 opponent [Jason Helland thinks he's too old](#).

Ronald Reagan was (until 2016) the oldest person elected as president. In 1984, running for re-election against former Vice-President Walter Mondale, Reagan vowed: "[I will not make age an issue of this campaign](#). I am not going to exploit, for political purposes, my opponent's youth and inexperience."

Jesse should just say something like that.

**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

9/5/2018

Pana Community Unit School District #8 Mail - Fwd: Just half-keeping funding promise won't be easy  
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](mailto:jbauer@panaschools.com)

Forward this email | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by [j.m.broadway74@gmail.com](mailto:j.m.broadway74@gmail.com) in collaboration with



Try it free today

--

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