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Fwd: Democrats gain in Senate, soar in House

1 message

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November Board Meeting

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From: **State School News Service** <j.m.broadway74@gmail.com>
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Democrats gain in Senate, soar in House

By Jim Broadway, Publisher, Illinois School News Service

At the extremes, there are two governing styles used by parties that win elections. One is "my way or the highway. We won so we can shape policy as we wish." That's usually a poor long-term strategy - as Gov. Bruce Rauner learned. The other is the "good government = good politics" approach. Better, long-term.

You should know that both House Speaker Michael Madigan and Senate President John Cullerton grew up, politically, with the latter formula. Despite the valid [criticisms by Mike Royko](#), the late Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley adhered to the "GG=GP" strategy for staying in power. So what? The implications are important.

In spite of the fact that the leaders of both Illinois legislative chambers have super-majority Democratic caucuses, they will not shut the Republican caucuses out. Legislation sponsored by members of the other party will occasionally pass. Clearly controversial measures will get bipartisan votes, or they will fail.

Now, that doesn't mean no party-line roll calls. There'll be some, but not at major risk to Democrats. It is Republicans who will need to be careful. Example: Public attitudes are [shifting strongly against privatization](#) of public education. There will be bills to reverse Rauner's policy in that regard, and GOP opposition will be risky.

The election outcomes exceeded expectations of even the most optimistic Democrats, I think, but there was little doubt about [the statewide offices](#). Billionaire J.B.

Pritzker had Rauner beat long ago. He and Attorney General-elect Kwame Raul and incumbent Treasurer Michael Frerichs scored in the comfortable mid-50s.

The venerable Secretary of State Jesse White won many deep red counties and garnered more than two-thirds of the vote in his contest, and incumbent Comptroller Susana Mendoza - [the next mayor of Chicago](#) - gathered nearly 60%. (Jesse will surely be in his last term in office. He may bow out before completing it.)

Cullerton already has a super-majority caucus, with a vote to spare at 37 members. Now it appears Senate Democrats will [increase to 39 members](#) in January. Madigan has only 67 members in his Democratic caucus, needing 71 for it to cast the magical three-fifths majority votes; it appears [he will have 73 next year](#).

When the governor is your friend, why is a veto-proof majority important? The main reason is that it takes three-fifths of each chamber just to *propose* a constitutional amendment. Pritzker favors a graduated income tax, but Republicans have demagogued that in the past. Look for the question to be on the 2020 ballot.

What do the elections mean for school policy? Generally, the shift from Rauner to Pritzker will tell the story. Pritzker seems to have been ahead of Rauner in the national trend away from school privatization policies. Rauner's unyieldingly pro-charter and pro-private school vouchers policy will surely be yielding.

For example, the power of the Illinois State Charter School Commission to overturn locally elected school boards' denials of charter applications, is almost certain to come to an end. [Legislation to restore local control](#) in this regard was vetoed by Rauner this year. An override vote could be successful, since joining the Democrats in that effort would probably be a wise Republican's vote. Otherwise, it will pass again next spring and Pritzker will sign it.

Pritzker has also spoken disparagingly about the voucher plan for rich privatizers, the one that was passed as a provision of the evidence-based school funding bill that Rauner caused to require Republican votes. It can consume many millions of dollars to the benefit of private schools - but it may be undone in 2019.

As you know, it has long been my view that the education committees of the House and Senate have functioned in a more congenial spirit of bipartisan cooperation than most other committees. Major issues are almost always negotiated. The committees generally have excellent leadership. That will continue.

The veto session of the General Assembly convenes next week. The [schedule](#) calls for the House and Senate to convene November 13-15 and November 27-29. Rauner vetoed an unusually large number of bills, so days may be added. More likely, however, only the highest-priority bills will be addressed.

Below are the School Code-amending bills, and some other bills of interest to education constituencies, that Rauner vetoed, and edited versions of *Rauner's stated rationale* for doing so:

HB1262 Governor: *"This legislation would require that when the State Board of Education submits to the General Assembly requests of school boards or superintendents for **relief from certain state mandates**, the requests must be reviewed by the entire General Assembly, and not a panel of the four leaders. Last year, Public Act 100-465 changed the process for how requests by school boards to have state mandates waived are handled. The new process allows the requests to be reviewed by the four legislative leaders as opposed to the entire General Assembly before the State Board is allowed to approve them. The purpose of this change was to streamline the waiver process and allow more flexibility when school districts do not believe that a given mandate serves the best interests of their students."*

HB3792 Governor: *"While I recognize the value of **instilling strong work-ethics***

***into our students**, I do not believe it is the role of the legislature to dictate to schools how and when this skill should be taught."*

- HB4284** Governor: The legislation dictates that **three members of the State Board** of Education must represent the educator community. However, there has historically been an abundance of educator experience on the board.... Out of the 38 states with Governor-appointed State Boards of Education, only five states require specific mandates for Board composition. (Erodes executive appointment powers.)
- HB4657** Governor: "My administration believes deeply in the importance of supporting both the **intellectual and emotional development** of Illinois' children. However, by creating a Task Force without any substantive directives to address this issue, we will only add to government waste without any assurance of healthier outcomes for students."
- HB4882** Governor: "Today I veto House Bill 4882, which would expand the **Grow Your Own Teacher** preparation program.... We must be rigorous in ensuring all teacher preparation programs are grounded in evidence, so that our taxpayers' dollars fund programs only of the highest quality. This administration is unwilling to experiment with the future of Illinois' children by sacrificing teacher excellence."
- HB5175** Governor: "Today I veto House Bill 5175 from the 100th General Assembly, which, per my veto message earlier this year, would eliminate an appeals process for certain denial or closure decisions affecting charter school applicants and operators....The **Charter School Commission** remains a proper venue to appeal these decisions of local school boards before sending parties to court, and the Commission has a history of thoughtfully evaluating appeals to ensure that all Illinois children have access to a high-quality education."
- HB5481** Governor: "The link between **smaller class size** and improved student outcomes has indeed been proven. However, information about classroom populations is already published on an annual basis in school report cards, thus making the bill's proposed reporting requirement redundant. Additionally, current class size averages in Illinois do not differ vastly from the goals set forth in the legislation. "
- HB5750** Governor: "This appropriation was incorporated into the **negotiated budget**, Public Act 100-586, and is this standalone bill is therefore moot."
- SB2332** Governor: "Raising the **age people can purchase tobacco** products will push residents to buy tobacco products from non-licensed vendors or in neighboring states. Since no neighboring state has raised the age for purchasing tobacco products, local businesses and the State will see decreased revenue while public health impacts continue."
- SB2344** Governor: "This bill was drafted in response to a single occurrence of a specific local disagreement. Since this bill's proposal and subsequent passage in the General Assembly, the **disputing parties have reached an agreement**. This has rendered this bill unnecessary and has demonstrated that local issues do not inevitably require statutory solutions."
- SB2345** Governor: "Mere disclosure of a school's participation in the **Illinois Youth Survey** will not reveal any substantive data findings, thus rendering the information useless. The information will make report card users no more informed about a school, as no additional data about academic performance or the school environment will be disclosed. This mandate will cause unnecessary confusion without providing any useful information to parents."
- SB2572** Governor: "I fully support efforts to encourage our students to be active and healthy. However, this legislation represents **an attempt to block reform** of the many mandates on our schools that are inflexible and overly burdensome. ... The new standard in this legislation fails to recognize that depending on schools' scheduling, this minute-based mandate may result in the very daily requirement that was just rolled back last year."
- SB2892** Governor: "Teachers are our greatest asset in ensuring the future of our

youth and they deserve to be well-compensated for their hard work. However, **minimum pay legislation** is neither the most efficient nor the most effective way to compensate our teachers. Illinois is one of only 17 states that utilize statewide teacher salary schedules to guarantee some level of minimum pay for teachers. This approach to teacher compensation both limits a school district's local control and imposes a significant unfunded mandate on school districts. "

SB3220 Governor: "Today I veto Senate Bill 3220, which would allow **higher education teacher preparation** programs that are denied recognition by the State Educator Preparation and Licensure Board (SEPLB) to have a standalone hearing on their appeal before a meeting of the State Board of Education (ISBE). This bill creates unnecessary statutory language as there is already an opportunity for denied programs to submit public comment at both ISBE and SEPLB meetings; a separate hearing would be duplicative. My administration has consistently prioritized the streamlining of governmental processes, not the addition of unnecessary bureaucratic requirements."

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11/7/2018

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