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Fwd: Capitol Watch: Pritzker Focuses on Education in Budget Address

1 message

Jason Bauer <jbauer@panaschools.com>
To: Bridgett Heinrich <bheinrich@panaschools.com>

Wed, Feb 15, 2023 at 2:50 PM

February Board Meeting

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

From: IASA <iasa@iasaedu.org>
Date: Wed, Feb 15, 2023 at 2:07 PM
Subject: Capitol Watch: Pritzker Focuses on Education in Budget Address
To: <jbauer@panaschools.com>



Pritzker Focuses on EBF, Preschool, Teacher Shortage in State of the State/Budget Address

There were a lot of positive takeaways for school administrators in today's combined State of the State and State Budget Address, delivered by Gov. Pritzker from the Illinois State Capitol at noon.

Below are some of the key takeaways for IASA members. The governor's office also shared a [three-page flier](#) outlining his plan for public education in Illinois.

Evidence-Based Funding

In his address, he proposed the FY 2024 budget include an \$8.3 billion appropriation for Evidence-Based Funding — an increase of \$350.8 million over FY 2023. The \$350 million allocation would include \$300 million for new tier funding, and \$50 million for Property Tax Relief Grants.

Since its passage in 2017, the state has invested approximately \$1.8 billion additional dollars into public education, helping school districts develop innovative programs, balance budgets, hire additional staff and address infrastructure needs. As we know, there is still a long way to go to fully fund the formula, but today was another step in the right direction.

Early Childhood Education Investment

The Governor has been clear about his desire to improve and increase early childhood services for families across the state throughout his first term in office, and his first budget

address of his second term revealed the first step to realizing those efforts. During the address, he introduced the SMART START IL plan, which seeks to improve and expand early childhood supports in four service areas: preschool, childcare, early intervention, and home visiting.

The recommended allocation for FY24 represents an additional \$250 million investment for those service areas, with \$75 million of that amount going to increase funding for the Early Childhood Block Grant program. This \$75 million increase represents \$16 million over the amount ISBE requested in its budget recommendation and seeks to provide services to 5,000 more children across the state next fiscal year. The comprehensive analysis of early childhood services across the state has pinpointed “preschool deserts” where there are no available preschool spots for low-income children who need access to quality early childhood education. The program would prioritize new funding for Preschool For All programs to those identified areas of the state, with the hope of adding 5,000 new seats every year for the next four years.

Additionally, \$100 million dollars is being recommended for capital improvements for early childhood facilities, and an additional \$1.6 million for statewide access to Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library program which gifts books free of charge to children from birth through age five.

Teacher Pipeline Pilot Program

As outlined in Dr. Clark’s message, the Governor is proposing a program aimed at reducing the state’s unfilled teaching positions. This would be a three-year pilot program that directs \$70 million per year, beginning in FY24, to school districts with the greatest need to fill teaching positions. According to the 2023 Unfilled Positions Survey data, 80% of the unfilled positions for this school year are located in 170 Illinois school districts.

The pilot program is targeted to those 170 school districts, which collectively reported more than 2,800 unfilled teaching positions for FY23. Of the identified districts, 60% of them are in rural areas and 40% of them are located in urban areas. The administration believes this program will support districts that are in the highest need of attracting quality educators to their schools, and there will be significant flexibility for grantees to determine how to best utilize the funds. The goals of the new program would be to reduce the number of unfilled positions and attrition rates in these districts, as well as increase the number of applicants per job posting, the numbers of candidates on a strategic pathway to employment as teachers in the district, and the number of students with qualified and effective teachers prepared to meet their needs.

Overview of Education Budget Recommendation

The Governor’s FY 24 recommended education budget includes the following increases to the General Revenue Fund (GRF) compared to the current FY23 enacted appropriations:

- \$350.8 million Evidence-Based Funding
- \$86.4 million Mandated Categorical Programs
- \$75 million Early Childhood Block Grant
- \$3.0 million Computer Science Equity Program
- \$2.7 million Career Technical Education
- \$1.3 million Agency Capacity
- \$342,000 Philip J. Rock Center and School
- \$125,100 Educator Quality Investigations and Hearings
- \$50,000 Community and Residential Services Authority

Transportation

Of particular note is that the Governor’s recommended budgets for Special Education Transportation and Regular Transportation fall short of ISBE’s recommendation by about \$32 million between the two programs. Although there are recommended funding

increases for the MCAT funds over FY23 amounts, ISBE reported in its budget recommendation memo that proration would still be expected — even at these increased funding levels — for the transportation categoricals. ISBE anticipates its recommended funding levels would keep proration for Special Education Transportation at 84 percent and Regular Transportation proration at 83 percent, suggesting even higher levels of proration if the Governor’s budget recommendation is enacted by the General Assembly. ISBEs complete Fiscal Year 2024 Recommended Investment in Public Education budget book can be found [here](#).

Of course, today’s budget address is only the starting point for discussions. While we don’t anticipate any significant changes by the Illinois General Assembly to EBF, anything can happen in Springfield.

We will do our best to keep you informed of the changes via Capitol Watch and other legislative updates.

Sincerely,

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