

# LEND Council Meeting

January 23, 2026  
8:00 AM  
ZOOM

Jen Figurelli  
Executive Director

Peg Agnos  
Executive Advisor



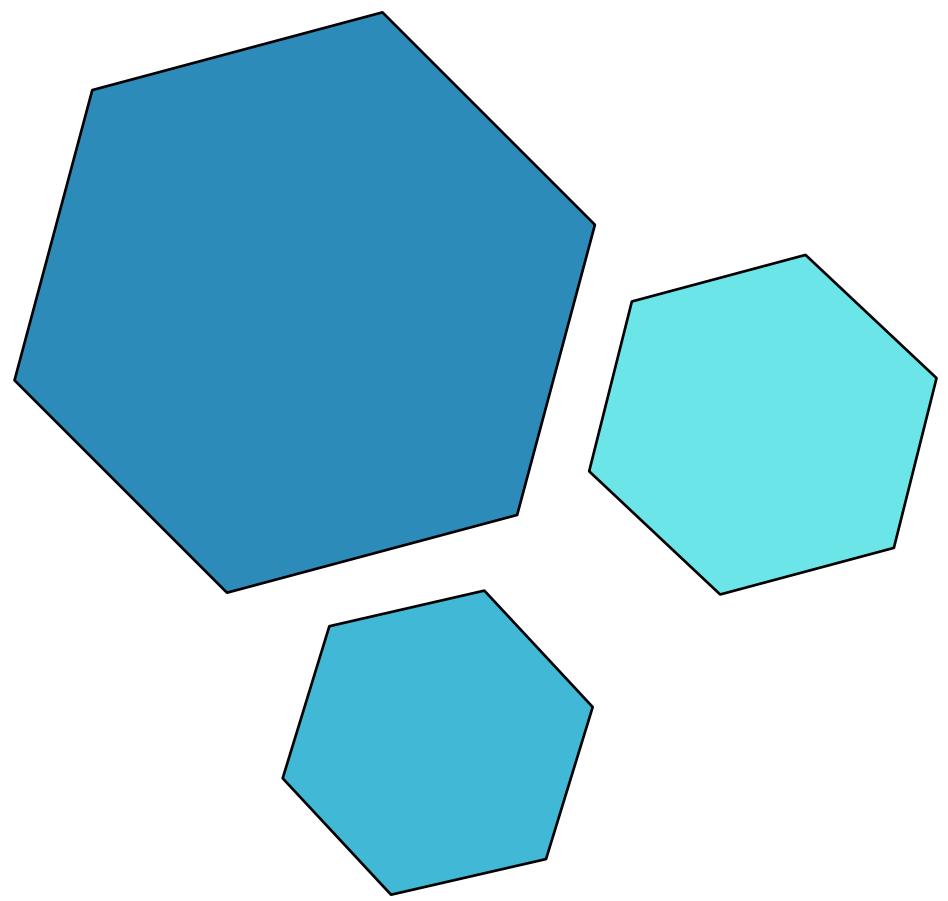


# Agenda



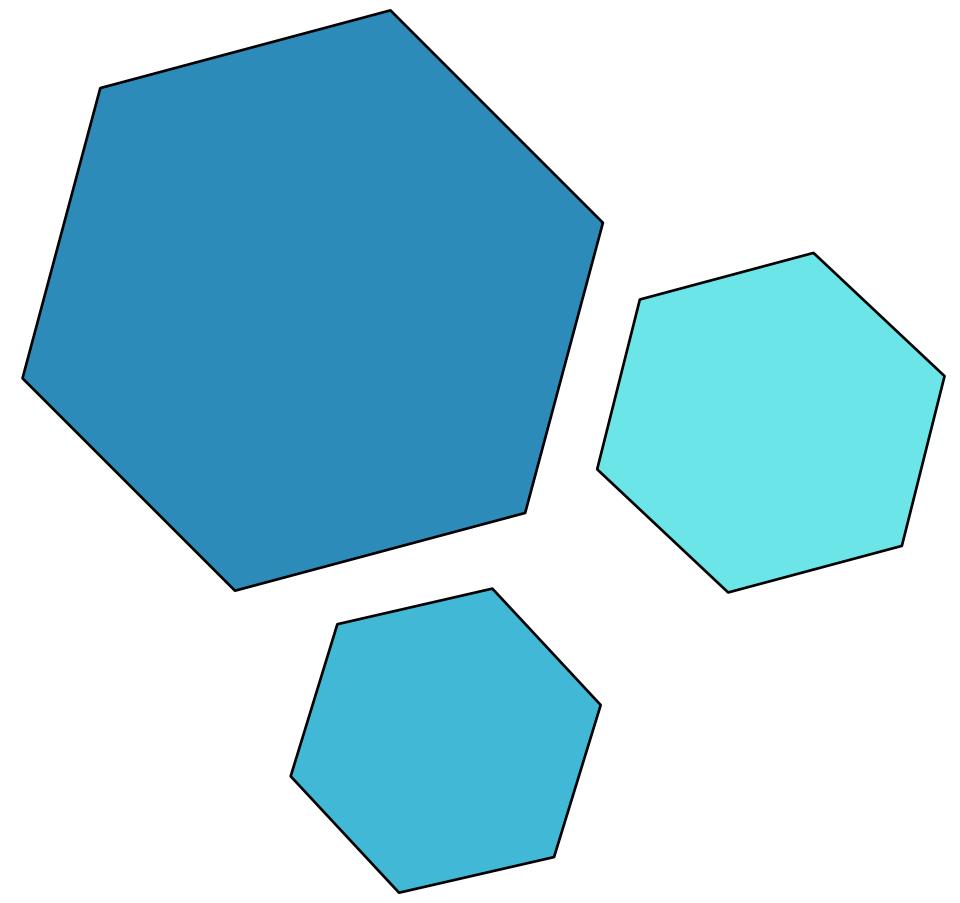
- Call to Order - LEND Co-Chair
- Executive Director Report - Jen Figurelli
  - Session update
    - LEND Initiatives
    - Bills of Interest
- Federal Relations Committee- Kara Casten & Julie Hill
  - Survey Results
  - April congressional meetings
- LEND Financial Review - Curt Saindon
- Member Concerns
- Adjourn





# Session Update





## LEND INITIATIVES





# LEND Initiatives

**HB4334**

**Remove Foreign Language Req**

**Representative Ryan**

- Removes language that requires, beginning with the 2028-2029 school year, as a prerequisite to receiving a high school diploma, each pupil entering the 9th grade to, in addition to other course requirements, successfully complete 2 years of foreign language courses.

**LEND World Language Update**

- LEND has filed a world language bill sponsored by Representative Katie Stuart.
- ISBE has filed a world language bill that exempts students from the graduation requirement if they are proficient in another language. (We have not seen ISBEs draft language).
- We had a very good meeting yesterday with Leader Lightford and ISBE.





# LEND Initiatives

## MCAT Resolution

- Our resolution has been filed by Representative Diane Blair- Sherlock and Senator Meg Cappel (Chair of the Senate Education Committee) is our Senate sponsor.
- Linked to our members only page.

## Polling Place Draft

- Representative Hirschauer has agreed to file legislation that allows for an additional E-Learning day to be used on an election day and not be counted on the districts scheduled emergency days.
- Senator Ram Villivalam will carry in the Senate.





# PENDING NEGOTIATIONS

## Cell Phone Ban

- Last spring, we left session in May with an agreed upon cell phone ban bill sponsored by Leader Castro. The bill stalled in the House.
- The Governors' Office shared a “new draft” with us that is more restrictive, limits local control, and mandates a bell-to-bell requirement.
- We remain neutral on the draft from the spring with additional provisions to satisfy concerns from House Black Caucus members.





# Topics of Interest

## Reciprocity

- New language has been drafted
  - An out of state applicant who has passed a content test in their state can be licensed in Illinois.
  - If the applicant has not passed a content test in their state they can begin working in IL on a 2-year provisional license, giving them time to pass the IL content test.
    - No renewals to a provisional license

## Accountability System

- This shift aims to make school designations more actionable by using clearer, fixed criteria and identifying areas of school improvement for all schools.
- **Next virtual listening tour:** February 11 at 4:00 PM & March 16 at 4:00 PM
  - Register [HERE](#)
- Public comment final draft March 3- April 3
- [\*\*Proposed Accountability Redesign\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Modeled Dataset\*\*](#) - This statewide dataset provides the performance of each school and student group on the indicators in the new system, the performance level of that performance for each indicator, and show how these indicator performance levels contribute to the profile of performance.





# Graduation Requirements

**HB4239**

**High School Course Credit**

**Representative Janet Yang Rohr**

- Provides that the school board of a school district that maintains any of grades 9 through 12 is authorized to adopt a policy under which a student enrolled in grade 7 or 8 who is enrolled in the unit school district or would be enrolled in the high school district upon completion of elementary school may enroll in a required high school course, provided that the course is offered by the high school that the student would attend and **the student participates in the course where the student attends school** as long as the course is taught by a teacher who holds a professional educator license and endorsed for the grade level and content area of the course (instead of just as long as the course is taught by a teacher who holds a professional educator license and endorsed for the grade level and content area of the course).





# Student Records

**HB4301**

**Student Records**

**Representative Didech**

- Expands “school student record” to include parent and family communications related to a student.
- Include email communication in the student record where context identifies the student even with the student name is redacted.
- The new language amends “temporary student record” requiring storage for 5 years.
- We are waiting for clarification that storage shall be “cloud”, “virtual” and not printed and filed.



# Consolidation

**SB2793**

**Unit School District Study**

**Senator Glowiak Hilton**

- Amends the School Code. Provides that the regional superintendent of schools for Regional Office of Education 19 (DuPage County), the regional superintendent of schools for Regional Office of Education 31 (Kane County), and the regional superintendent of schools for Regional Office of Education 56 (Will County) shall jointly conduct a comprehensive study evaluating the feasibility of reorganizing school districts within their educational service regions into unit school districts. Sets forth the components and requirements of the study.
- LEND and the IFT are meeting with Senator Glowiak Hilton on January 28.





# LEND Position on Mandates

- As bill filings increase, there is a pattern emerging this year with legislators filing several bills that are either “subject to appropriation” or mandates.
- FY27 is expected to be a difficult budget year for the General Assembly
- We are working overtime to try and get the General Assembly to direct limited K-12 resources to EBF and MCATs.
- LEND will be opposed to legislation that relies on K-12 funding being sourced outside of EBF and mandates.
  - We will be certain to review each bill on a case-by-case basis.
- The Mandates Reduction Council held their first meeting on January 15th.
  - ISBE has a list of approximately 1,000 mandates that have been divided up into 10 categories: Assessment, Curriculum, Facilities, Finance, Student Health and Safety, Non-Instructional Services, School Operations, Personnel, Reporting, Miscellaneous.
  - The work of the Council should be completed prior to passing additional mandates.





# Mandates

## **SB2676**

### **Cursive Writing Requirement**

**Senator Preston**

- Provides that, beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, the cursive writing instruction offered by public elementary schools must be offered to students in grades 3 through 5 (rather than requiring school districts to determine at what grade level or levels students are to be offered cursive writing, provided that such instruction must be offered before students complete grade 5).

## **HB4441**

### **Computer Science Requirement**

**Representative Faver Dias**

- Requires, beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, school boards to report specified data to the State Board of Education regarding computer science courses in schools maintaining any of grades kindergarten through 8. Requires the State Board to make the data publicly available. With respect to a Professional Educator License, provides that the State Board shall create an introductory content area endorsement for teaching computer science in grades 5 through 12 that allows licensed educators to teach introductory computer science courses.





# Mandates

**HB4372**

**Latin Studies**

**Representative Delgado**

- Requires every public elementary and high school to include in its curriculum the study of the contributions made by Latin Americans to the economic, cultural, social, and political development of the United States. Provides that the regional superintendent of schools shall monitor a school district's compliance with the requirement during the regional superintendent's annual compliance visit and make recommendations for improvement. Provides that the failure by a school district or school to comply with the requirement shall result in a written warning for the first offense, and if the school district or school continues to fail to comply with the requirements, the school district or school shall face disciplinary action at the discretion of the regional superintendent





# Mandates

**HB4241**

**School Book rating & Transparency**

**Rep Jed Davis**

- Requires a publisher supplying books to a public or nonpublic school, including a charter school, or a school-sponsored book fair to assign a content rating to each book and provide that content rating. Provides that each school shall ensure that the content rating is displayed in at least one of the following locations: (1) the school library's online catalog entry; (2) the school library's website; (3) the classroom library's catalog or posted list; (4) printed or digital reading lists distributed to students; or (5) signage or catalogs displayed at a school-sponsored book fair.

**SB2832**

**Etiquette Education**

**Senator Collins**

- Provides that, beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, the State Board of Education shall establish a pilot program in 5 school districts requiring pupils in prekindergarten through grade 12 to receive developmental etiquette education. Provides that, beginning with the 2028-2029 school year, every school district in this State shall require pupils in prekindergarten through grade 12 to receive developmental etiquette education.





# Mandates

## **HB4247/SB2837**

### **Asthma Medication**

**Representative Mayfield & Senator Johnson**

- Requires at least one member of an athletic coach's staff at a school and any athletic trainers at that school to complete the training curriculum relating to the administration of undesignated asthma medication
- We are in discussions with the advocates and staff.

## **HB4253**

### **Compulsory Kindergarten**

**Representative Schmidt**

- Provides that, beginning with the 2028-2029 school year, any pupil enrolled in the public schools who is of compulsory school age but who has not yet attended kindergarten at a public, private, or parochial school shall be required to satisfactorily complete kindergarten before advancing to first grade.





# Mandates

**HB4339**

**High School Register Voter  
Representative Du Buclet**

- Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, requires a school district maintaining any of grades 9 through 12 to provide all eligible students graduating from high school with the opportunity to register to vote. Effective immediately



**HB2762****Minimum Employee Salary**  
**Representative Hirschauer**

- This is the bill from last Spring that requires minimum salary requirements for non-certified employees.
- The bill will not move this session.

**HB4196****Loc Gov Credit Card Statements**  
**Representative Deluca**

- Provides that if a township, park district, municipality, **school district**, or community college has been issued a credit card, then, each month, the governing authority of the township, park district, municipality, school district, or community college shall vote to verify the validity of an itemized statement of all purchases made using the credit card in the preceding month. Provides that the itemized statement must include all purchases made using the credit card in the preceding month and may not be redacted.





# Finance

**HB4216**

**Sch Cd BD Member/ Association Representative Stuart**

- Allows a school board association to offer and provide scholarships or other reimbursements to school board members and a school board member to receive a scholarship or other reimbursement from the association for reasonable travel and lodging expenses to attend meetings or other events hosted by the association that are reasonably related to the school board member's duties and will contribute to the professional development of the school board member. Effective immediately

**HB4375**

**Interfund Transfers Representative Hoffman**

- Extends the time period during which a school district other than the Chicago school district may transfer moneys from specified funds for any purpose from June 30, 2026 to June 30, 2029. Effective immediately.



**HB4399 UNDER  
Biodiesel Use  
Representative Delgado**

- Provides that, beginning July 1, 2027, a diesel powered vehicle owned or operated by the State, any county or unit of local government, any school district, any community college or public college or university, or any mass transit agency must use a biodiesel blend that contains 19%, unless the engine is designed or retrofitted to operate on a higher percentage of biodiesel or on ultra low sulfur fuel. Allows, in December, January, February, and March, a biodiesel blend of at least 10% to be used.  
Effective immediately

**HB4416  
Unemployment Ins Academics  
Representative Evans Jr**

- Provides that, with respect to a week of unemployment beginning on or after June 1, 2026, benefits shall be payable to an individual on the basis of wages for employment in other than an instructional, research, or principal administrative capacity performed for an educational institution or an educational service agency, as long as the individual is otherwise eligible for benefits. Effective immediately



**SB2779****Revenue Prop Tax Replace  
Senator Collins**

- Provides that the Department of Revenue, in consultation with the Governor's Office of Management and Budget, shall conduct a study to determine the feasibility of phasing out the use of property taxes as a funding source for school districts and replacing that revenue with other State and local revenue streams.





# Pensions

## Pensions

- Tier 2 pension fix is still out there. Highlighted on this slide are bills we are following.
- We are talking to staff to see if budget discussions include the Tier 2 fix.

## Pension Bill numbers

- HB4384, IMRF Tier 2 SLEP Salary Rep Cabello
- HB4390, IMRF Tier 2 SLEP Salary Rep Cabello
- SB2- Tier 2 benefits, Senator Martwick





**HB4354**

**Career Pathway Program**

**Representative Vella**

- Requires the State Board of Education to establish and administer a program to strengthen this State's workforce by creating structured pipelines from public high schools into in-demand careers through public-private partnerships with employers, public community colleges, and school districts. Under the program, provides that the school board of each school district maintaining a high school shall allow the high school to partner with local employers and the community college district where the high school is located to establish a pathway program for careers in priority sectors.



**HB4440 Manley/ SB2773****Licensure Paraprofessional****Representative Manley & Senator Cappel**

- Amends the Educator Licensure Article of the School Code. Allows the State Superintendent of Education to issue a short-term approval for a paraprofessional educator to an individual who does not meet the requirements necessary for issuance of an Educator License with Stipulations with a paraprofessional educator endorsement. Provides that the short-term approval authorizes an individual to serve as a paraprofessional educator in a school district, including a charter school, or a State-operated program, with the short-term approval expiring on June 30 immediately following the third full fiscal year after the approval was issued without renewal. Provides that upon expiration of the short-term approval, the State Superintendent of Education shall issue an Educator License with Stipulations with a paraprofessional educator endorsement to the individual if the individual meets specified requirements.





# Sexual Harassment & Sexual Misconduct

**HB4432**

**Sexual Harass Policy**

**Representative La Ha**

- Requires a school district's policy on sexual harassment to include a method for reporting instances of sexual harassment. Provides that the policy may not require that a report be made in a particular manner for a complaint to be considered formal or official for the purposes of initiating an investigation. Provides that under the policy, a school district employee who is found to have engaged in sexual harassment shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**HB4480**

**Sexual Misconduct**

**Representative Mussman**

- Changes are being made to maintain records on substitute teacher employment history.
- The bill will require ROE or ISC to collect information in records and share it out with the school district or districts.
- Can use the information in records collected to determine a substitute teachers applicant fitness to be hired but it is ultimately up to the school district.





# Special Education

**HB4280**

**SPED Notice Forms**

**Representative Mussman**

- Requires biennial distribution of revised uniform notices with updated guidance and training resources.
- Standardizes individualized educational assessment forms and limits district customization.
- Representative Mussman is working closely with IAASE and other special education groups on the language. More to come.





# Special Education: Key Changes to Section 504 Plans

**HB4068**

**Accommodations Timeline**

**Representative Crawford**

- Timely district response: Within 14 school days of a parent's written request for a Section 504 plan, the district must determine whether existing medical information supports eligibility, whether further evaluation is needed, or whether no evaluation is warranted—and provide written notice if eligibility or evaluation is denied.
- Clear evaluation process: If an evaluation is agreed to, the district must hold a meeting with the parent within 14 school days and convene a team to identify the assessments needed to complete the evaluation.
- Fast-track for medical needs: For students with documentation from a licensed health care provider indicating a likely medical threat, the Section 504 team must meet within 5 school days to consider an interim 504 plan, and approved accommodations must be implemented within 5 school days after the planning meeting.





# Discipline

**SB2876**

**Suspension/Expulsion**

**Senator Bryant**

- With respect to the suspension or expulsion of a student, requires all evidence, including, but not limited to, video evidence and written materials, held by a school district that has led to the decision to suspend or expel the student to be given to the student's parents or guardians before a suspension or expulsion hearing. Effective immediately





# House Minority Leader Tony McCombie

## Vouchers and Tax Credits

- House Minority Leader Tony McCombie has set expectations for her caucus's priorities.
  - Real fiscal responsibility must be backed up with good public policy and include fiscal restraints and tax relief.
- She has filed several bills supporting voucher programs and tax credits. We are keeping a close eye on them.
- LEND maintains a long-standing position that public dollars belong in public schools.





# Vocational Education

**HB4264**

**Business/Voc School Exempt**  
**Representative Hoffman**

Provides that an educational institution that offers instruction or programs of study for which the participant or student is not charged any tuition or fees other than a nominal fee to cover the costs of books, tools, and similar materials shall not be considered a private business and vocational school.





# Licensure

**HB4397**

**School Psychologist Degree**

**Representative Crawford**

- Provides that "school psychologist" means a psychologist who, along with other qualifications, has graduated with a specialist degree, an equivalent degree with the completion of a minimum of 60 graduate semester hours, or a higher degree in school psychology (rather than a master's degree or higher degree in psychology or educational psychology) from an institution of higher learning and has had at least 1,200 clock hours of supervised experience (rather than one school year of full-time supervised experience) in the delivery of school psychological services.





# Training

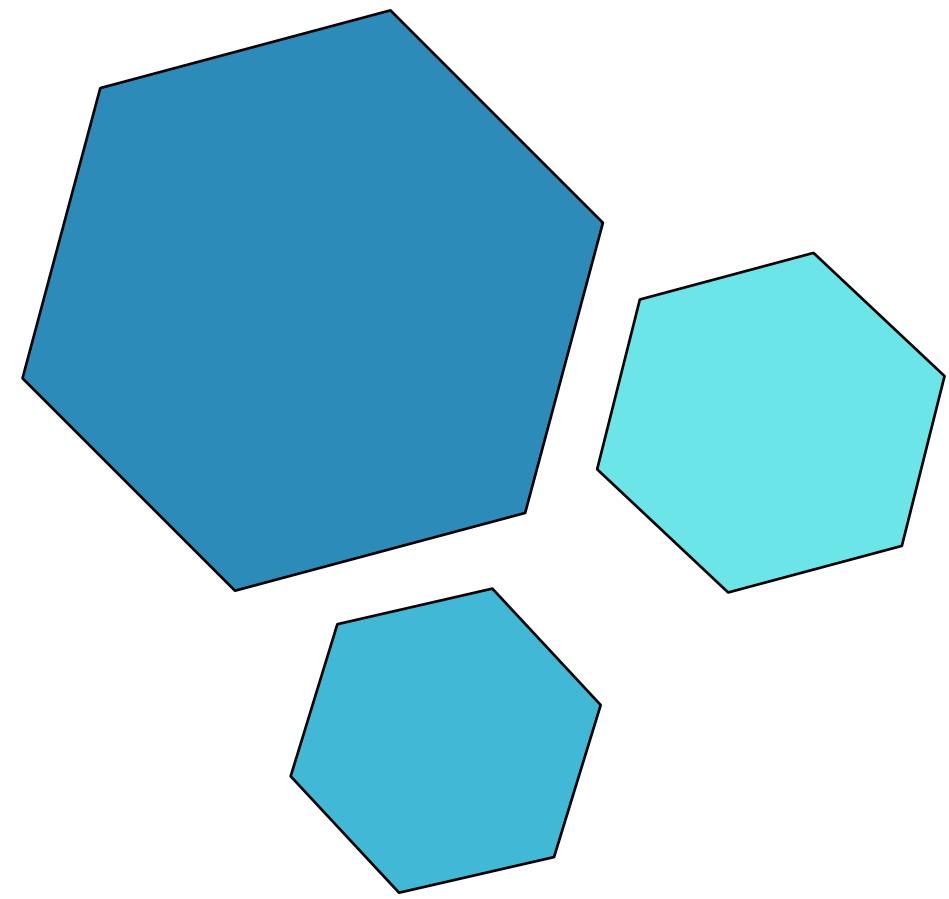
**SB2761**

**Training Service Animal**

**Senator Turner**

- In provisions concerning in-service training programs for teachers, administrators, and school support personnel, provides that the training regarding health conditions of students shall include the proper handling of service animals in the school setting and the instruction on the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, as it pertains to the school environment, shall include the proper handling of service animals, the rights of students who use service animals, and appropriate interactions with service animals.





# Federal Relations Committee

Kara Casten & Julie Hill





# Federal Relations Committee Overview

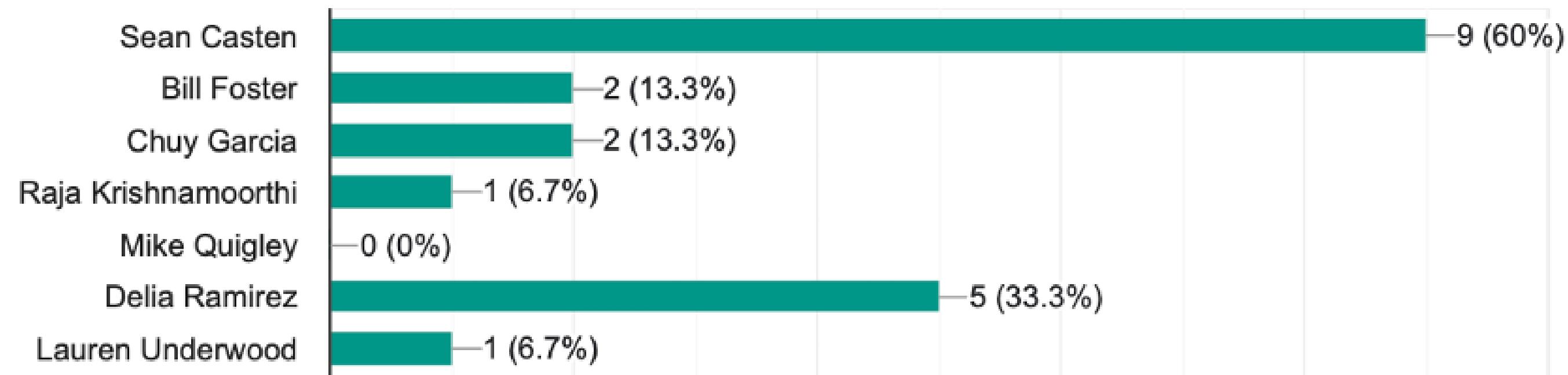
- **Co chairs:**
  - Kara Casten: Board Member; CSD 99 in Downers Grove
  - Julie Hill: Board Member; D41 in Glen Ellyn
- **Focus:** Follow federal legislation that impacts member districts and advocate on their behalf
- **Activities:**
  - Member survey to understand federal priorities and specific impacts on member districts (Jan)
  - Drafting & Circulation letters to elected officials on tops of concern (as needed)
  - Updates on key federal priorities at LEND meetings
  - Meetings with Members of Congress to advocate on behalf of member districts (Spring)
- **Current Membership:**
  - Kara Casten, Julie Hill, Bob Langman, Curt Saindon, Joel Filas, Donna Cain
  - All are welcome- contact Julie ([jhill@d41.org](mailto:jhill@d41.org)) or Kara ([kcasten@csd99.org](mailto:kcasten@csd99.org)) if you're interested in joining the committee





# Member Survey Overview

- **Responses:** 15 out of 41 districts, 36.5% of LEND Membership
- **Representative in Congress:**





# Member Survey Themes

## SNAP Funding Changes

- Higher eligibility threshold so fewer students qualify. Creates burden on district staff to verify eligibility taking away resources from direct student support
- Creating alternatives such as PTA-sponsored weekly food pantry
- Little or no impact for current school year or don't participate- half of responses

## Fully Funding IDEA

### ( $\frac{1}{3}$ Fed, $\frac{1}{3}$ State, $\frac{1}{3}$ District

- Allow districts to maintain a high level of service and programming for the most at need students. It will also allow districts to cover transportation costs for these students
- Ability to provide general education students higher quality services as funds could be returned to them that have been redirected for special education
- Help reduce reliance on local property taxes

## Use of E-RATE Funds

- Maintain and modernize technology infrastructure
- Provide reliable internet across district buildings
- Offset technology equipment costs and migration from physical to cloud services



# Member Survey Themes

## Mental Health Funding Costs

- Received Stronger Connections Grant but it was only funded for 1st of 5 years
- Rely on other sources for this funding
- Used IDEA funding for this in the past but have shifted to local sources to fund this need

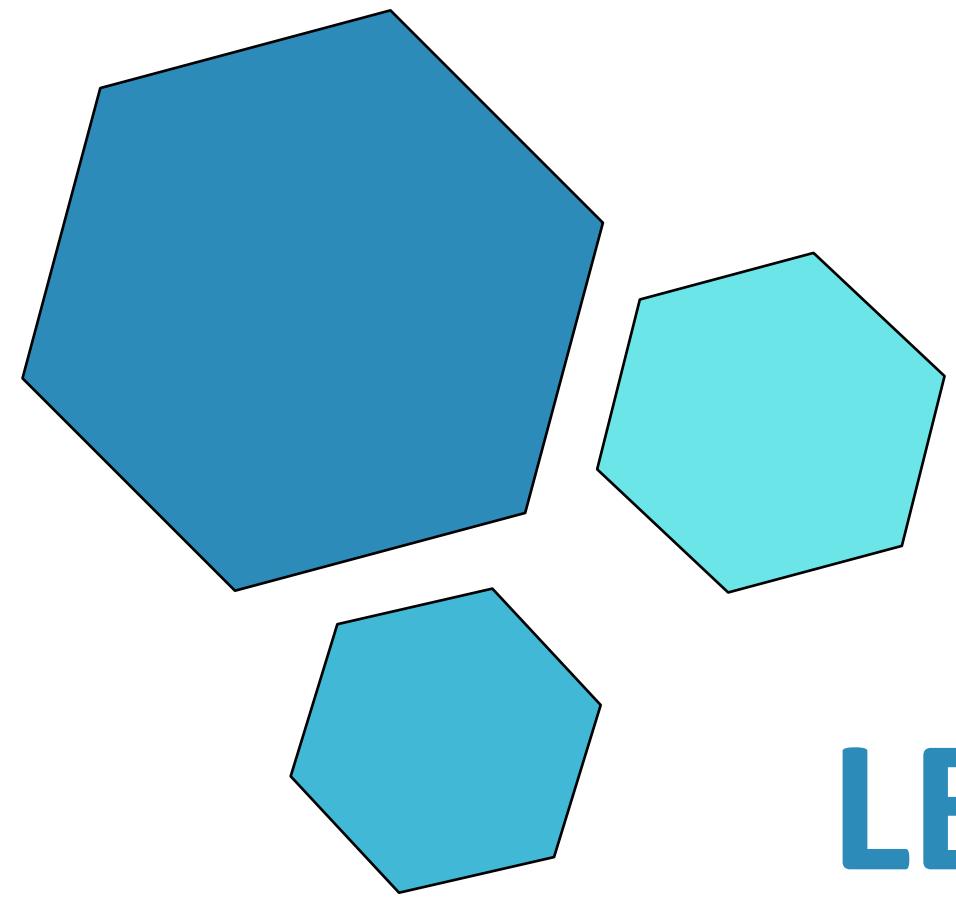
## Medicaid Funding Uncertainty

- Despite conservative budgets loss of funding requires reduction in these services (e.g., staff, assessments) or diverting funding from other areas (e.g., programs, hiring, staff)
- Mitigation efforts may not be enough without stable federal funding

## Absenteeism

- Increased student absenteeism related to federal immigration enforcement- half of responses
- Students are coming to school but federal immigration actions have increased stress levels- half of responses

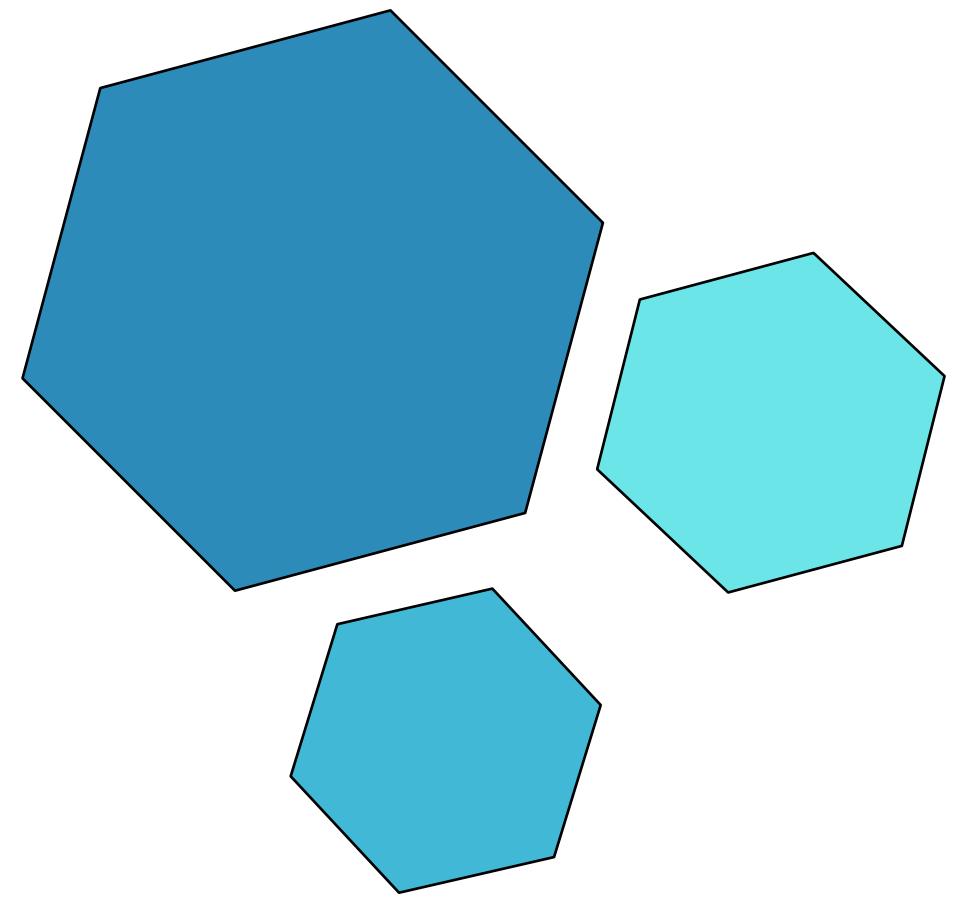




# LEND Financial Review

**Curt Saindon**





# MEMBER CONCERNS





## Contact Us

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