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Fwd: State reaches out to teachers on census count

1 message

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

Mon, Jul 22, 2019 at 1:25 PM

August Board Meeting

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: State School News Service <j.m.broadway74@gmail.com>
Date: July 22, 2019 at 3:42:14 AM MDT
To: jbauer@panaschools.com
Subject: State reaches out to teachers on census count
Reply-To: j.m.broadway74@gmail.com

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State reaches out to teachers on census count

By Jim Broadway, Publisher, Illinois School News Service

Question: Who should care the most about the accuracy of the 2020 census count in Illinois?
Answer: Anyone who cares very much about public education - school districts, administrators and teachers, taxpayers and, *especially*, the parents of children who'll attend our state's public schools during the next decade.

Billions of federal dollars will flow to Illinois schools in the ten years following certification of the 2020 Illinois census. How many billions? That will depend on how many people are counted as Illinois residents. Getting an accurate count would benefit our schools. Suffering an under-count would be painful.

So the state has a plan to reach that most important constituency - the parents of Illinois students - with a message about the importance of census survey responses. Who's the best messenger to the parents? Their children. And who can best inform and motivate and support the children's efforts? Their teachers.

State Superintendent of Education Carmen Ayala is asking teachers statewide to become [2020 Census Ambassadors](#). "We cannot overstate the importance of the census to ensuring Illinois' students receive all the support they deserve to access to the best possible resources," she said in a statement to the media.

The Census Bureau has posted some excellent support for teachers. Its "[Statistics in Schools](#)" program includes links to related subjects ([math](#), [history](#), [geography](#), [sociology](#)) and to what they call "Warm-Up Activities." There are also some well-done video clips that might be helpful for participating teachers.

The Ayala page included an email address (CLMSO.SISambassador@census.gov) and indicated that teachers who are willing to play a role in this endeavor should send a message there to "apply by July 31." (At www.census.gov, I was given a "Shape Your Future" form immediately. It was helpful. Try that if you prefer.)

As you know, efforts have been made to "[rig the census](#)" by frightening immigrants - even legal ones - into ignoring the 2020 census. That could cost states with large immigrant populations - like Illinois - a ton of money. The original ploy was to have a "citizenship question" included in the census survey.

Although that question apparently will not be on the survey form, folks who know about these things have suggested that the [damage has been done](#), that many millions of immigrants may have decided to skip the census. If so, that just makes the ISBE "Census Ambassador" plan all the more important to Illinois schools.

The governor has been signing School Code bills. Final action - the signature of Gov. JB Pritzker - has reached the record for a half-dozen bills affecting public education since the last issue of ISNS was distributed. Links to them - two of which relate to the teacher shortage - are posted *at the top* of the [ISNS bill-tracking page](#).

[HB 1472](#) extends until June 30, 2021, the period in which retired Teachers Retirement System members can return to teaching, under specific conditions, without jeopardizing their pension benefits. [HB 2982](#) facilitates the availability of substitute teachers into multiple Regional Office of Education areas.

The other recently signed bills deal with education support personnel ([HB 921](#)), epileptic seizure protocols ([HB 1475](#)), the deadline for school boards to fill board vacancies ([HB 2802](#)) and data to be included (number of students in "workplace learning" experiences) on district report cards ([HB 2822](#)).

Pritzker had previously signed six other bills of concern to education, mostly measures that related to the budget and the capital development program. On the bill-tracking page, the 62 bills listed below the line are categorized by topic and then listed within each topic in numerical order.

Jonathan Kozol, former elementary school teacher and education community icon, is up in arms these days. Fires of anger that smoldered within him for decades have been rekindled by the rhetoric of former Vice President Joe Biden, the veteran of many years in the U.S. Senate who now hopes to become president.

Later on Biden. First, Kozol is a prolific writer with a passion for schools and teachers and, especially, students of color who, for most of his life (and still in many urban areas), have lived in poverty and have been poorly educated in poorly maintained and poorly equipped schools by teachers who often quickly disappear.

In 1964, he taught fourth grade in a poor, segregated (yes, a decade after [Brown v. Board of Education](#)) Boston school. His 35 students hadn't had a permanent teacher since kindergarten. He *was the thirtieth teacher* to stand at the front of their classroom, as he wrote in a foreword to [Savage Inequalities](#).

He found them listless and disengaged. They were two grades behind in reading, three behind in math. He read to them some poetry by Robert Frost and Langston Hughes - to "resuscitate their interest," he wrote. A girl was moved to tears by Hughes: *What happens to a dream deferred?/Does it dry up/like a raisin in the sun?*

Kozel got fired the next day. Frost and Hughes were not on the school's list of approved poets. They were "too advanced" for fourth graders, he was informed. And, moreover, Hughes "was regarded as 'inflammatory.'" Kozel was not out of work long. He was recruited by a suburban district west of Boston.

"The shock of going from one of the poorest schools to one of the wealthiest cannot be overstated," he wrote. "I now had 21 children in a cheerful building with a principal who welcomed innovation." He left teaching years later, to get involved in other activities - always in the interest of the poor and under-educated.

He did the research for *Savage Inequalities* from 1988 to 1990. The book's first chapter is about the schools of East St. Louis - my home town. By 1988, I had been in Springfield quite a while and East St. Louis was deeply in the pits; 98% black, no trash collection, very few jobs. It set the tone for his great book.

Why is Kozol angry at Biden? He believed that segregation would leave black children forever in schools like those in East St. Louis, dangerous, decrepit, lacking everything, impossible places to learn in. He followed the issue closely after *Brown v. the Board* - and so he knows Biden's record very well in this regard.

"Joe Biden didn't simply reach out, in consensus, some kind of civility, to these Southern racist senators," Kozol told the web-based program [Democracy Now!](#). [There's an interesting 15-minute video clip at the link.] "It wasn't hard for him to reach out, because he shared their views in the first place. He didn't just support legislation introduced by James Eastland, Jesse Helms. He thanked them for supporting his legislation and his own anti-busing legislation."

In an argument between Biden and Kozol, I'll always side with Kozol. I was not aware of Biden's opposition to school integration. That's what "anti-busing" means, of course. The schools were so amazingly unequal that the only remedy was integration - and the only possible means of integrating them was busing.

Biden's reaction to the criticism of his record in this regard is also troubling. Now he says he was "not anti-busing," but, rather, he was only opposed to busing imposed by the federal government. As a local-option, he was okay with it. Well, if left to local decision-makers, when does Biden think it would have happened?

ISNS readers have been aware of my objections to Biden for a while. Obama was a favorite, but his VP is not. The man has too much baggage; he spins and dances way too often and way too badly; he voted for a horrible war; he guided Clarence Thomas onto the Supreme Court; he's a plagiarist; and he's way too old.

So who won on the school segregation issue? Well, there was a lot of turmoil, of course, but in the end Biden and his segregationist pals mostly got their way. As the great Gary Orfield and other researchers at the [UCLA Civil Rights Project](#) have reported, the desegregation of the 1960s and 70s has mostly re-segregated.

[Their full report](#), released just two months ago, is worth reviewing. There's a chart on page 22 that is interesting. It shows that, while the percentage of "intensely segregated" (90% to 100%) white schools has fallen sharply since 1988, the ratio of intensely-segregated non-white schools has risen sharply.

The demographics of U.S. schools have changed significantly in recent decades, of course, but through it all a student of any ethnicity (white, black, latino, Asian) is most likely today to attend a school in which a large majority (for whites) or at least a strong plurality (for others) of students are of the same ethnicity.

Race-related issues - by that I mean black-white issues - have challenged public education more than anything else in my lifetime. There has been progress, but often it has faltered. There have been moments of inspiration, but there have been more times, long and stressful times - like we live in today - of little promise.

We'll look more at this, perhaps as a side-issue, in the months to come.

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