



# Illinois State Board of Education

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**James T. Meeks**  
*Chairman*

**Tony Smith, Ph.D.**  
*State Superintendent of Education*

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## Available Quotes for Attribution

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### Full Evidence-Based Funding

"Evidence-Based Funding has been the most significant positive funding change that we have seen," said Dr. Gary Kelly, Superintendent of DuQuoin Community Unit School District 300.

"I implore state legislature and governmental leaders to continue to fund Evidence-Based Funding, and we will continue to see districts utilize dollars to benefit students," said Kelly. "I know we have limited resources in our state, but this is worth the investment. I believe we will continue to see major benefits."

"EBF has allowed us to have some financial stability," said Galesburg Community Unit School District 205 Superintendent Dr. John Asplund. "And now we can start making decisions based on what's best for kids, and not merely based on what we can afford."

### Universal Access to High-Quality Preschool

"I have worked in other states that do not have early childhood as a value," said Katie Kogut, director of Early Childhood for Aurora School District 131. "This has stayed a priority (in our state), and our kids have such an advantage. This supports equity."

"Our community needs support to increase kindergarten readiness," said Kogut. "If we did not have the Early Childhood Block Grant, we would not be able to provide these services. We rely heavily on it. To implement all our ideas and meet our community needs, we need to be able to have people to do the work. If we could hire additional highly qualified staff to do this work, it would strengthen our program."

During the course of many budget hearings, ISBE heard from those who had benefitted from Prevention Initiative (PI) programs.

A staff member from Baby TALK shared, "...Haylee, 15 years old and in eighth grade, was visited in a local hospital at the birth of her son in 2017 as

part of a universal screening. She was made aware of a teen parent alternative education program provided through a joint collaboration of Macon-Piatt ROE 39 and Baby TALK PI program. She attended her first day of class 10 days after the birth of her baby. This program provides academic instruction for the teen through the Macon-Piatt ROE and family supports, including on-site child education, home visiting, developmental monitoring and family goal-setting through Baby TALK PI services. [Haylee started attending high school for the first time this month.] Her son is now 16 months old, and through the focus on the nurturing of the parent-child relationship, community resources and supports provided by Prevention Initiative services, he is a healthy, typically developing toddler. He is on target to be kindergarten-ready and demonstrates advanced social-emotional skills. Through the efforts of highly prepared and effective teachers and school leaders, this opportunity is being made available to Haylee and her son and other mothers who are pregnant and parenting. The success of this family is due to the effective partnership between multiple education providers, including Prevention Initiative, Decatur Public School District, and the Macon-Piatt Regional Office of Education."

### **Career-Connected Learning for the 21st Century**

"We have braided local and federal funding in order to support our work," said Dr. Lazaro Lopez, associate superintendent for Teaching and Learning at High School District 214 in Arlington Heights. "Further state funding would be particularly helpful towards defraying the costs of transportation, since we have to make sure that our students get to the internships and other experiential learning experiences that we provide for them."

One student who was able to do CTE classwork at her high school explains how the program helped her find her passion.

"I have been wanting to go into engineering since I was about 13 years old," said Maram Safi, a recent graduate of Elk Grove High School. "When I went into the Career Pathways program, I truly connected with engineering, and I was like, OK, this is definitely what I want to do."

Stand for Children Illinois provided testimony stating:

"An increase in funding will allow educator leadership in Illinois to explore, expand, and increase the high-wage, high-growth, and in-demand occupations in career and technical education and provide new pathways for all students such as Arts and Media. Rural programs are at a disadvantage with federal funds because the allocation is generated by population. Additional funds for

CTE programs will give additional dollars to the rural schools to increase CTE programs in their area.”

Natalie Wold, a Grundy Area Vocational Center (GAVC) alumna, shared an experience about her time at GAVC:

“I had the privilege of taking both of Ms. (Deb) Eungard’s Early Childhood Education courses my junior and senior years. Throughout the course, I was given many opportunities to better myself as a future early childhood educator. During the first year of the course, I was able to assist in three different early childhood classrooms and familiarize myself with the environment of a school setting. I ended up falling in love with one of the teachers that I worked side by side with during that first year of GAVC and I was able to work with her all year during my advanced year. This was an inspiring experience for me because I was able to see how the students in that class progressed over the school year.”

“A couple added benefits from taking this course include the opportunity to participate in what is called the Skills USA Championship and/or take a visit to Springfield. Neither of these are required, but both of them are a great time! I chose to partake in both of these activities and I am so incredibly glad that I did. At Skills, my partner and I competed in the Early Childhood Education Preschool Interactive Bulletin Board contest and we were lucky enough to take home the first-place gold medal! In Springfield, I was able to visit the State Capital Building and meet a number of important people while also having the opportunity to show off my award-winning Preschool Interactive Board.”

### **Educator Recruitment and Recognition**

“My philosophy and 35 years of practice tells me we rightfully spend necessary funds on our students across the state, but if we don’t have the qualified people to support them, then all the programs in the world aren’t going to matter,” said Dr. Dee Ann Schnautz, director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessments for Mount Vernon City Schools District 80. “We need great people in the classroom who are supported for our students to be healthy and have the academic rigor they deserve. Teacher mentorship programs are key to that goal.”

CPS’s Empowered Schools leadership program has been tremendously effective according to principals and educators.

"This is our first year as an Empowered School," said Aldridge Elementary School Principal Cynthia Treadwell. "Our learning community is seeing the positive effects of this program. There are more students with access to high-quality instructional practices in more classrooms now, and our teachers are receiving additional instructional support."

"The mentee teacher is implementing a small-group rotation schedule and incentives discussed during our meetings," said LaRita Harris-Varnado, a teacher leader at Aldridge Elementary School. "Because of this implementation, students are receiving the instruction needed for growth and mastery of the standards, and students' behavior is improving."

The budget also recommends \$1.9 million for Teach for America programs.

"Once I knew about the mission and core values of Teach for America, I instantly knew that it was the right choice for me. I was accepted into the 2007 cohort of Teach for America, and joining has been one of the best decisions that I have ever made... In my eyes, there is no greater charge than that of a teacher. I knew that being in the classroom was my calling, and I decided to stay in my role beyond the two-year commitment," according to former Teach for America corps member Elizabeth Jamison-Dunn, who currently serves as a principal.

A 2017 alumnus who is currently serving as a special education teacher shared, "Teach for America shaped the trajectory of my career. I hadn't thought of teaching as my path after college, and now that's what I want to do in life."

In addition, the budget recommendation includes \$325,000 for the Educators Rising program.

One stakeholder affiliated with the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools stated, "Educators Rising represents an opportunity for ISBE to take the first steps in systemically fostering interest among high school students in the profession of teaching through pathway opportunities...The regional offices of education and intermediate service centers stand ready to support regional expansion of Educator Rising chapters."

Furthermore, a \$1 million appropriation is recommended for National Board Certification. One educator said of National Board Certification:

"I have become a much more reflective teacher. With the overwhelming (and increasingly more by the year) number of things teachers are asked to do, it is

very easy to get into survival mode. Going through the NBPTS process taught me how to avoid survival and really stop to think about what is best for my students. What do I see in the classroom that is working? Where are my students struggling? How can I change my plans based on my knowledge of students so that they are more engaged? These very basic and core questions I considered as I went through my certification process stuck with me and guide me always."

## **Regional Safe Schools**

Illinois' 71 Regional Safe Schools provide an option for students struggling to succeed in their traditional settings. Illinois' Regional Offices of Education and Intermediate Service Centers operate the Regional Safe Schools, giving the opportunity for a new direction to students who often have nowhere else to turn

"We focus on trauma awareness and having a trauma-informed process to respond to kids' needs," said Decatur Assistant Regional Superintendent Jill Reedy. "We help our teachers understand the impact of toxic stress on the brain and what complex childhood trauma does to our students.

"We have kids that will get explosive in the middle class. Because we do school differently, we understand kids need safe places and calm corners. We have 'chill' passes that kids can use to go talk to a counselor."

"We want to do more than graduate kids; we want to make sure we're educating the whole child," said Reedy.

## **Agricultural Education**

Asa Newell, a student at Waltonville High School, had this to say about his experience with agricultural education programs:

"... I realize vocational classes are important for the future of the economy and for the betterment of our society. [T]he true importance of vocational classes is to keep the students adequately equipped and properly trained on the newest techniques and standards. Through experiences in vocational classes, I have been able to see all the field that vocation covers, from agriculture, business and to public speaking. The future of the American workforce is in the hands of vocational organizations and teachers to make sure that we can thrive for many more years to come."

## **Southwest Organization Project**

Fiske Elementary School Principal Cecilia Miller invited SWOP Parent Mentoring Program to her school in the wake of the historic 2013 school closings that merged families from Sexton Elementary in with Fiske and moved Fiske's building to the one formerly occupied by Sexton. Though the school had volunteers during her 14-year tenure, the school principal notes that the formal program helped blend the two cultures into one — very successfully.

“We thought that was the best way to build community by integrating both cultures,” Miller said. “We’ve seen a difference in the overall culture and climate of the school community. We’ve seen a difference with the extra support we’ve been able to give our students.” “It feels very collaborative, it feels collective . . .” she said. “Our teachers are extremely happy and they appreciate the support.”

Find additional resources and historical information at [isbe.net/budget](http://isbe.net/budget).

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