

**Approved**  
**03/11/2025**

**Illinois State Board of Education**  
ISBE Board Room, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
100 N. 1<sup>st</sup> St., Springfield, IL

Education Policy Planning Committee of the Whole Minutes  
February 19, 2025

**1. Roll Call**

Committee Chair Dr. Donna Leak brought the meeting to order at 2:40 p.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was present, with five members attending in person. State Superintendent Dr. Tony Sanders also was in attendance.

**Members Present**

Committee Chair Dr. Donna Leak  
Dr. Steven Isoye  
Dr. Sherly Chavarria  
Laura Gonzalez  
Dr. Patricia Nugent

**Members Absent**

Dr. James Anderson  
Roger Eddy  
Dr. Anna Grassellino

**Staff Present**

Dr. Tony Sanders, State Superintendent  
Jo Ireland, Board Services Coordinator  
Kim Clarke, Executive Assistant to the State Superintendent  
Isabel Schoeman, Special Assistant to the State Superintendent  
Kristen Kennedy, Chief Legal Officer  
Dr. Kimako Patterson, Chief of Staff  
Dr. Matt Seaton, Chief Financial Officer  
Tassi Maton, Chief Internal Audit Officer  
Edobor Efam, Chief Information Officer  
Dr. Jason Helfer, Chief Education Officer – Instruction  
Jennifer Saba, Chief Education Officer – Operations  
Irma Snopek, Chief Policy and Communications Officer  
Miguel Calderon, Chief Operating Officer  
Dr. Nakia Douglas, Director of Special Education  
Angela Foxall, Director of Assessment  
Michael Gum, Director of School Business Services  
Joyce Gronewold, Executive Director of Specialized Instruction  
Dr. Ronda Dawson, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning  
Dana Stoerger, Executive Director of Legislative Affairs  
Emily Fox, Director of Educator Effectiveness  
Rae Clementz – Executive Director of Data, Accountability and Assessment

**2. Public Participation**

There was no public comment.

**3. Presentation | AI Presentation**

Chief Education Officer of Instruction Dr. Jason Helfer and State Representative Abdelnasser Rashid presented on artificial intelligence (AI). Chair Leak thanked Representative Rashid for attending virtually, and Dr. Helfer repeated that sentiment before introducing Representative Rashid.

Representative Rashid shared that he served as a co-chair of the state's AI Task Force, which included Dr. Helfer, and added that the creation of the task force was partially motivated by AI's effect on the education space. He stated the task force's goal was to evaluate the impact of generative AI, such as Chat GPT, which is novel in its wide accessibility to the public. The task force evaluated generative AI's impact throughout 2024 on a number of areas, including education, the workforce, the economy, civil liberties, cybersecurity, and the delivery of public services. Representative Rashid noted that this work culminated in a report containing a summary of federal and national guidance on AI, a definition of generative AI, and recommendations to legislators and the governor regarding AI.

He gave examples of impact the task force found, from health to environment. He shared examples of recommendations that were made, including regulating algorithmic discrimination, cautioning against deepfakes, and monitoring the environmental impact of AI. Representative Rashid encouraged Board members to review the report and welcomed questions.

State Superintendent Dr. Sanders expressed gratitude to Representative Rashid for leading the AI Task Force and for taking the time to speak to the Board. Board members echoed this sentiment. Chair Donna Leak asked Dr. Helfer if a collaborative space exists for the crafting of general AI policy language for school districts. Dr. Helfer explained that some districts already have policies, which vary greatly, and ISBE is currently working to create a set of surveys for districts that are examining their current levels of implementation of these policies, from operational and administration purposes to student use. He added that other states are factoring in both uses when contemplating how to make access to and use of AI equitable. Dr. Helfer added that the surveys also will ask about what supports districts might need from ISBE, noting that there are bills in the works to establish committees on this topic, and many suggest that ISBE facilitate that work. He continued that ISBE hopes to use the survey data to wisely target resources pertaining to AI, and as the landscape changes, the agency will be responsive to needs. Dr. Helfer then explained that ISBE also is examining the influence of AI on educator preparation at both the institutional and professional development levels. He added that the drafts of the surveys are being finalized. As the surveys are finalized, they will be shared with the Board. Potential new legislation will be factored in.

Dr. Sanders thanked Dr. Helfer for serving on the AI Task Force on behalf of ISBE. He then discussed that AI in schools and among students is inevitable. He shared that he is excited about using AI at the state level to eliminate potential adverse outcomes for students, such as dropping out of school. Dr. Helfer commented that Dr. Sanders' ideas and excitement are ahead of what the majority of states are considering, as they are primarily focusing on containing and controlling AI use rather than considering its beneficial uses. Representative Rashid stated that one of the promises of AI is analytical work and the insight the technology can glean from major data sets, but he said it's important to be careful when AI is being used for recommendations and decision-making because ethical issues and issues of bias can arise.

Dr. Patricia Nugent thanked Representative Rashid and Dr. Helfer for taking their time to examine AI technology and see what the future will hold, and she appreciated the framework outlined in the report mentioned by Representative Rashid. Dr. Helfer shared that two recent national reports ranking states' uses of AI placed Illinois in sixth place; he credited this high placement not only to what is happening in the K-12 but also in the financial industry and quantum computing. He also credited Governor JB Pritzker and officials like Representative Rashid.

Laura Gonzalez thanked both Dr. Helfer and Representative Rashid as well, sharing that as an educator, she has witnessed AI's impact on schools firsthand. She asked for the name of the AI report referenced by Representative Rashid. Dr. Helfer said that the title is "The Report of the Generative AI and Natural Language Processing Task Force."

Chair Leak advocated for keeping the Illinois Association of School Boards apprised of new developments so that it can inform school districts via its press updates. Representative Rashid seconded the sentiment that hundreds of school districts should not have to wrestle with this issue alone and highlighted that one of the recommendations of the report is to somewhat centralize direction and guidance. Chair Leak thanked him again for his time and the rest of the Board members agreed.

**4. Approval of Minutes: Jan. 14, 2025**

Dr. Nugent moved that the Education Policy Planning Committee of the Whole hereby approve the Jan 14., 2025, meeting minutes. Dr. Steven Isoye seconded the motion, and it passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

**5. Superintendent's Consent Agenda – Feb. 20, 2025**

Chair Leak reminded the Board that these items have been discussed previously. There were no questions regarding the Consent Agenda.

**6. Chairperson to Appoint Nominating Committee for Board Officers – Illinois State Board of Education Bylaws Article IV(A)4 (as needed)**

Dr. Isoye stated that per the Board's Bylaws, the Board "Vice-Chair and Secretary shall be elected from among, and by the membership of the State Board of Education. This election shall take place biennially in February of odd-numbered years ... A nominating committee appointed by the Board Chairperson shall recommend a slate of elective officers to the Board for its consideration." He nominated Dr. Nugent and Dr. Sherly Chavarria to serve with him on the Nominating Committee.

He additionally stated that the committee will discuss and bring their nominations for vice chair and secretary to the Board, and nominations also will be accepted from the floor. The Board will then hold an election at the regular February meeting.

**7. New Business: Items for the Next Agenda**

Dr. Chavarria expressed appreciation for Dr. Sanders' Jan. 30 column in the ISBE Weekly Message addressing recent federal executive orders, noting that many other educators from other states had not yet heard from their State Education Agencies on this subject. She requested that ISBE provide updates to the Board going forward on any changes to interpretation of policy or changes of that nature. Dr. Sanders said that his weekly message coming out that day would address the press release and memo regarding the Dear Colleague Letter from the U.S. Department of Education that came out the week prior.

Dr. Chavarria also asked for an update from ISBE on how the agency plans to work with the soon-to-be-established state early childhood agency to support early childhood education. Dr. Sanders said that is absolutely something that can be discussed. Dr. Nugent shared that at the National Association of State Boards of Education Early Childhood Education Committee meeting she attended, one state shared it was opposed to consolidating an early childhood agency because of a fear of losing control over early childhood education. Dr. Chavarria expressed optimism for the two agencies being able to collaborate effectively on early childhood education.

**8. Next Meeting: March 11, 2025**

Chair Leak reminded the Board that the next meeting of this committee will take place in Plainfield Community Consolidated School District 202.

**9. Adjourn**

Dr. Chavarria made a motion to adjourn. Dr. Isoye seconded the motion, and it passed by a unanimous roll call vote. Chair Leak adjourned the Education Policy Planning Committee of the Whole meeting at 3:12 p.m.