WHAT
ABOUT
US?

A COMPENDIUM ON EQUITY IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

2017
"We as a nation, must undergo a radical revolution of values. 

... A true revolution of values will soon cause us to question the fairness and justice of many of our past and present policies."

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
NEW YORK, APRIL 4, 1967
CONTINUING ED.

PARENTS AND THE FUTURE OF ILLINOIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

What is the promise of public education? How can we achieve that promise? The seeming simplicity of these questions is deceptive - they’ve actually never quite been settled. In fact, our public education system has undergone dramatic changes, even in just the past 20 years, based on disagreements around these two questions.

Responding to these questions, we at Illinois Humanities shaped a yearlong, statewide series of free public programs called Continuing Ed., intended to help local communities across Illinois take more active roles in the future of their schools. Working in Chicago, Decatur, Elgin, and southern Illinois from April 2016 to May 2017, this initiative was made possible by robust partnerships with schools, principals, students, teachers, parents, local organizations, scholars, artists, and funders. We would especially like to thank the schools that hosted our programs: Senn High School, Kelly High School, Kenwood Academy High School, and UC/Chicago Charter Woodlawn Campus in Chicago; Dennis L. Small School; Eisenhower High School; and Stephen Decatur Middle School in Decatur; Elgin High School; Bartlett High School; and South Elgin High School in Elgin; and Egyptian High School, Cobden High School, and Grant City School in southern Illinois. In addition, we are grateful to all the many people who helped in countless ways from these organizations: Generation All, Brighton Park Neighborhood Council, Gail Border Public Library, Decatur Public Library, Grow Your Own Illinois, Education Coalition of Mason County, and the Association of Illinois Rural and Small Schools.

What we found over the course of this year is nothing short of thrilling: despite all of their apparent differences, these school districts face similar challenges in changing demographics, growing poverty, attracting and retaining talented educators, and engaging families. In addition, all seem under-funded. But we also saw innovations of all sorts – wrap-around family services, partnerships with nonprofits and colleges, data used to address poverty in the classroom, a parent leadership pipeline, and business leaders stepping up to help schools forge ahead.

Recognising that our efforts serve those who are in the public education sphere for the long haul, our initiative was based on the belief that bringing people together is an important contribution in and of itself. We were excited to see people talking, sharing, disagreeing, questioning, and learning new things; in fact, we adjusted the format of public programs to respond to our audiences’ desire to more actively participate. This belief in the power of conversation is at the heart of the work that we at Illinois Humanities do. As the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, we’ve been a part of Illinois’s cultural fabric since 1973 – offering grants, creating original programming, and advocating for the importance of access to the humanities for all Illinoisans. In response to the growing partisan divide that marks our nation, we’ve redoubled our efforts to bring diverse perspectives together to talk about the ideas and issues that matter.

We think of this initiative as our opportunity to celebrate the new, innovative, and effective ways that those committed to high-quality education across the state are serving their communities. Our hope is that though the series may have ended, we’ve been able to leave behind useful tools that those committed to education can continue to use.

These tools include:

The Illinois Speaks program

The Illinois Speaks program where we are working with local libraries, students, and nonprofit organizations to create monthly discussion groups in the communities where we’ve worked – such as the group in Kenwood, run by high-school students Brandon Brown, Nayla Hale and Laurence Minter of Kenwood Academy.

A Documentary

A documentary that captures some of the stories we’ve heard over the course of the statewide series. The documentary, which is going to be screened at public programs and on PBS affiliates across the state, is being produced by Free Spirit Media, a youth media project based in Chicago’s North Lawndale neighborhood.

The Compendium

And the compendium you now hold in your hands. “What About Us?” is meant to provide a snapshot of a moment in time and to inspire your continued involvement with schools.

As you peruse the following pages, we hope that you engage by reading critically and talking with others to see how much this compendium reflects everyday interactions with public education.

The choice of what to include and what to leave out is always a difficult one, especially for something that intends to be a survey of public education in Illinois. But when you encounter something that you like in these pages, please go learn more about it – go to an event, volunteer at a school, and advocate for ways to make the system better.

Just as we at Illinois Humanities believe that change begins by simply talking to others, we hope that the following pages inspire action and engagement within your community. We think that would be a most appropriate legacy for Continuing Ed.
“ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTIONS IN FRONT OF US IS HOW TO REBUILD THAT COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION AS A PUBLIC GOOD.”

DANIELLE ALLEN
SENN HIGH SCHOOL
CHICAGO, APRIL 27, 2016
GOAL – FREE SCHOOLS

A fundamental goal of the People of the State is the educational development of ALL PERSONS to the limits of their capacities.

The State shall provide for an efficient system of HIGH QUALITY public educational institutions and services.

Education in public schools through the secondary level shall be FREE. There may be such other free education as the General Assembly provides by law.

The State has the primary responsibility for financing the system of public education.
Equity in Illinois schools and districts is ...

**EQUAL ACCESS**
- to all available benefits and services.

**EQUAL TREATMENT**
- within schools, in terms of quality of social interaction.

**EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES**
- for both genders and all racial and ethnic sub-groups identified within the school population.

Equity is not the same as diversity and inclusion

**DIVERSITY ASKS:**
- "Who’s in the room?"

**EQUITY Responds:**
- "Who is trying to get in the room but can’t? Whose presence in the room is under constant threat of erasure?"

**INCLUSION ASKS:**
- "Have everyone’s ideas been heard?"

**JUSTICE Responds:**
- "Whose ideas won’t be taken as seriously because they aren’t in the majority?"

**DIVERSITY ASKS:**
- "Is this environment safe for everyone to feel like they belong?"

**EQUITY Responds:**
- "What conditions have we created that maintain certain groups as the perpetual majority here?"

**DIVERSITY ASKS:**
- "Isn’t it separatist to provide funding for safe spaces and separate student centers?"

**EQUITY Answers:**
- "What are people experiencing on campus that they don’t feel safe when isolated and separated from others like themselves?"

**INCLUSION ASKS:**
- "Wouldn’t it be a great program to have a panel debate Black Lives Matter? We had a Black Lives Matter activist here last semester, so this semester we should invite someone from the all-right."

**JUSTICE Answers:**
- "Why would we allow the humanity and dignity of people our students to be the subject of debate or the target of harassment and hate speech?"

**DIVERSITY:**
- Celebrates increases in numbers that still reflect marginalized status on campus and incremental growth.

**INCLUSION:**
- Celebrates awards for initiatives and credits itself for having a diverse candidate pool.

**EQUITY:**
- Celebrates reductions in harm, revisions to abusive systems and increases in supports for people’s life chances as reported by those who have been targeted.

**JUSTICE:**
- Celebrates getting rid of practices and policies that were having disparate impacts on marginalized groups.
QUALITY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS LOOKS LIKE THIS

City and suburban view

Melissa Mitchell
FEDERATION FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Rebuilding a commitment to education as a public good requires community-driven school planning processes, shared leadership and accountability for school goals and decisions and a commitment to making investments in schools in such ways as to address inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities. We can agree on some fundamentals. Every child should have ...

1. A well-trained and supported teacher
2. Culturally-relevant curricula
3. After school learning and enrichment opportunities
4. Arts education
5. Social-emotional supports
6. A safe, nurturing school environment.

What we can’t agree on is how to make all of these conditions for learning possible for every student, in every school.

In urban communities across Illinois, opportunity gaps and unaddressed barriers to success in school are compounded by an inequitable funding system and, oftentimes, an absence of community voice in decision making. We have an opportunity to rebuild a commitment to education as a public good — for everyone — by focusing on equity. If we want equal outcomes — for all schools to prepare all students for post-secondary education and life beyond school — then we must act in ways that acknowledge that some children need more supports than others to reach these goals.

Schools in Illinois across the board are underfunded. But in urban communities, where many students face additional hurdles, identifying and addressing nonacademic barriers to academic success are essential strategies for improving outcomes and strengthening neighborhood schools. Equitable funding and resources need to be coupled with a commitment to a community-driven approach. Communities own their schools.

We need a system that promotes shared leadership and decision making, prioritizing the community as drivers of planning processes and goal setting, and that honors community assets.

We know what children and young people need to be successful in school and beyond. We need to change how we do our own jobs — and fundamentally change how systems resource and support schools — to ensure that every student, regardless of zip code or neighborhood, can access a high-quality education in a supportive learning environment, one that includes a community-driven approach to student success.

Downstate view

David M. Ardrey
ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS RURAL AND SMALL SCHOOLS

I offer this assertion as it relates to Illinois rural and small schools: “Any commitment to rebuild public education in Illinois, will only come when an adequate and equitable funding source and distribution model is created to support public education.”

The greatest challenge facing rural and small schools in Illinois and throughout the country is the lack of equitable and adequate funding. The formula by which funds are distributed to our schools in Illinois is a broken formula. However, a significant contributor to this broken formula is the means by which school funding is established at the state level. In Illinois, funding is provided through property taxes and by nature of the wide gap in property values.

While this issue is significantly more complex than is discussed in this brief document — unless there is a willingness and appetite by the Illinois general assembly to completely overhaul the means by which funds are derived for schools then any attempt to reform the formula will be repeating the mistakes of the past.

Secondly, and equally as important, is the significant teacher shortage that exists in Illinois and the impact this will have on our rural and small schools. The shortage statewide will result in larger, more affluent districts consuming the available candidates, and higher salaries will be the key factor new teachers will consider. Again, the lack of equitable and adequate funding will raise the ugly head and rural and small schools will be left to suffer the consequences.

Significant work is being done in Illinois by all stakeholders affected by these issues. Follow the progress throughout 2017 as these issues are prevalent throughout many states with rural school and communities.
PUBLIC OPINION

My school's better than yours ...

55%
percent of Americans rate their local school as an "A" or "B"

25%
percent give an "A" or "B" grade to American schools as a whole

Opportunity Hoarding

Historically, efforts to address the black/white achievement gap have often focused on some version of the question, "What's going on with the black kids?" However, to understand why some aspects of educational outcomes are so entrenched, we must ask, "What role do white parents play here?"

... It is clear that white parents are actively engaged in shaping their children's school experiences. At least one consequence of their cumulative behavior is to reproduce their racial advantage. Of course, most white parents don't see themselves as personally responsible for other students' educational outcomes. They see themselves as personally and organizationally advocating for their own kids. Some do not even need to do much advocating on behalf of their kids—a one of them put it. "The system just works." The current organizational practices are benefitting white students, and most white parents seem to be aware of this. They actively work the system on behalf of their own kids. passively accept the status quo as it benefits them, and / or resist changing school practices. They also largely explain unequal outcomes as the responsibility of those on the bottom.
THE SERIES
WHERE, WHAT, WHEN

CHICAGO
1. April 27, 2016, Town Hall, Senn High School, Topic: Purpose of Public Education
2. June 9, 2016, Town Hall, Kelly High School, Topic: Equity in Resources and Quality
3. September 22, 2016, Town Hall, Audrey Academy, Topic: Retaining and Attracting Quality Teachers
6. March 9, 2017, Town Hall, UIC Charter, Topic: Shifting Good Reforms from Bad
7. May 17, 2017, Roundtable, Union League Club, Topic: Purpose and Promise of Public Education

DECATUR
1. November 13, 2016, Town Hall, Dennis Lab School, Topic: Impact of Poverty on Public Education
5. March 13, 2017, Community Dialogue, Decatur Public Library, Topic: Equity in Resources and Quality
6. March 14, 2017, Town Hall, Stephen Decatur Middle School, Topic: Equity in Resources and Quality
7. May 22, 2017, Roundtable, Decatur Public Library, Topic: Purpose and Promise of Public Education

ELGIN
1. October 13, 2016, Community Dialogue, Gail Borden Public Library, Topic: Equity in Resources and Quality
2. October 28, 2016, Town Hall, Elgin High School, Topic: Equity in Resources and Quality
3. December 14, 2016, Community Dialogue, Gail Borden Public Library, Topic: Common Core
5. February 21, 2017, Town Hall, South Elgin High School, Topic: Impact of Poverty on Public Education
7. April 20, 2017, Roundtable, Gail Borden Public Library, Topic: Purpose and Promise of Public Education

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS
1. April 25, 2017, Town Hall, Egyptian Community Unit School, Topic: Future of Rural Schools
2. April 26, 2017, Town Hall, Coeburn High School, Topic: Future of Rural Schools
3. April 27, 2017, Roundtable, Giant City School, Topic: Purpose of Rural Schools
35 FACTS ABOUT CHICAGO DISTRICT 299

16.8 PTS Gap between the percentage of black students (38.9%) and the percentage of black teachers (22.1%).

32% Percentage of chronically truant students who miss 9 or more days of school without a valid excuse.

19% Percentage of students who transfer in and out of schools between Oct. 1 and the last day of the school year, also known as the mobility rate.

4% Number of students who are homeless. This is double the state average.

84% Percentage of students from low-income families, which is down 3 points from 2012. Unclear why.

41.7 PTS Gap between the percentage of white students (9.7%) and the percentage of white teachers (51.4%).

11 PTS Decline in the percentage of black CPS teachers from 2007 to 2016.

1% Change in the percentage of Latina teachers during the same time period.

26% % of CPS students who met or exceeded expectations on the PARCC exam.

4% Illinois state average percentage of students meeting or exceeding on the PARCC.

$13 MILLION Amount the district pays, with support from the City of Chicago, to the Police Department to provide security services in the schools.

62% % of graduating seniors enrolling in a 2- or 6-year college within 16 months.

30% College readiness rate, equivalent to the percentage of students who earn a score of 21 or higher on the ACT exam. Statewide average is 46%.

86% Statewide four-year high school graduation rate.

74% Four-year high school graduation rate for CPS, up five points from 2012.

90% % of all charter school students in Illinois who are served in Chicago.

15.7% % of CPS high school students opting to stay at their assigned neighborhood school. The rest travel to magnets, charters, and specialty schools outside their neighborhoods.

25% % of CPS high school students opting to stay at their assigned neighborhood school. The rest travel to magnets, charters, and specialty schools outside their neighborhoods.

59.6% % of teachers with masters degrees.

2009 CPS Schools CEO Arne Duncan selected by President Barack Obama to serve as Secretary of Education.

1997 First charter schools open.

1995 Year when state legislators conentrated authority over schools to the city’s mayor, curtailing local control.

1989 Year of the first Local School Council elections, a state-mandated approach to school governance that is unique to Chicago and gives elected members the power to hire principals and approve school budgets and improvement plans.

1989 Number of students in overcrowded classrooms, according to the Better Government Association.
26 FACTS ABOUT DECATUR SCHOOLS

1. Pre-K/early learning center in the district
2. K-8 or K-12 elementary schools
3. Middle schools
4. Magnet elementary and middle schools
5. High schools

1865

Year district was established

27th

Largest district in the state

559

Increase in the number of students enrolled since 2012, a 6.5% increase

9,106

# of students enrolled in 23 district schools

1. Percentage of Latina students
2. Percentage of White students
3. Number of school days in the year, below the state average of 172
4. Elected School Board members

All facts from 2015-2016 Illinois School Report Card unless otherwise noted.

46%

Percentage of Black students

73%

Percentage of low-income students

15%

Student mobility rate, or the percentage who transfer in and out of schools not including graduates

14.7%

Percentage of students who are considered chronically truant who miss five percent of school days without a valid excuse

72%

6-year graduation rate, 14 points lower than the state average

33

Number of full time teachers of color

442

Number of full time teachers

$2,565

Dollar amount the district falls short of Illinois statewide average of $7,352 per pupil instructional spending

$5,147

Amount of instructional spending per student

$21.1 million

Decatur students meeting or exceeding expectations on the 2016 PARCC exam

$3.5 million

State poverty funds earmarked for Decatur schools in 2016-2017

5

Number of standardized tests Decatur students are required to take in their K-12 years. This is similar to Chicago’s 4 main standardized assessments.
31 FACTS ABOUT ELGIN DISTRICT U-46

1. 39,963
   # of students enrolled in Elgin schools

2. Largest district in Illinois, behind Chicago

3. 3
   # of counties from which the district pulls: Cook, DuPage, and Kane

4. 11
   # of municipalities from which the district pulls

5. 40
   # of elementary schools in the district

6. 8
   # of middle schools in the district

7. 5
   # of high schools in the district

8. 52.3%
   % of Latina students, constituting the largest racial or ethnic group in the district

9. 6.3%
   Black students

10. 28.5%
    White students

11. 8.3%
    Asian students

12. 9%
    American Indian students

13. 3.7%
    Students that identify as two or more races

14. 28%
    % of students who are English language learners

15. 58%
    % of students from low-income families, up 3 points from 2012

16. All facts from 2015-2016 Illinois School Report Card unless otherwise noted.

17. 33 PTS
    Size of the gap between Latina students (52%) and Latina teachers (19%)

18. 9%
    % of chronically truant students who miss nine or more days of school without a valid excuse

19. 29%
    Percentage of white teachers

20. 33 PTS
    Size of the gap between low-income students who met or exceeded expectations on the PARCC exam

21. 17%
    % of students who met or exceeded expectations on the PARCC exam

22. 25 PTS
    Size of the achievement gap between Latina (38%) and white students (45%) meeting or exceeding standards on the PARCC exam

23. 39%
    % of students with an ACT score of 21 or higher

24. 1061
    # of students earning college credit for one or more AP exams

25. 1 IN 50
    Number of students who are homeless. This matches the state average.

26. 1869
    The year that Elgin High School opened, one of the oldest public high schools in the state

27. 0
    Number of charter schools in the district

28. 6 TO 1
    Results of the 2014 school board vote against Elgin Math and Science Academy Charter

29. 1
    # of police officers that work full-time in each middle school and high school

30. 29
    # of students earning college credit for one or more AP exams

31. 10
    # of Federal-Needs 504 students discussed at IDEA meetings. Chicago has one.
All facts from 2015-2016 Illinois School Report Card unless otherwise noted.

24 FACTS ABOUT SOUTHERN ILLINOIS SCHOOLS

1. # of students in Egyptian Schools: 498
2. # of students in Cobden Schools: 553
3. # of students at Giant City Elementary School: 246
4. Low-income students in Egyptian Schools: 99%
5. Low-income students at Cobden Schools: 61%
6. Low-income students in Giant City School: 32%
7. Percentage of Egyptian students who are homeless or do not have permanent or adequate housing: 15%
8. Low-income students in Egypt in 2012, the year before Tamms Prison closed and put more than 300 people out of work: 62%
9. Student mobility rate (the percentage of students who transfer in and out of schools) at Giant City School - compare this to the 12% student mobility rate in Illinois: 7%
10. Percentage of white students in Egyptian, Cobden, and Giant City schools: 73.7%
11. Percentage of black students in Egyptian, Cobden, and Giant City schools: 8.8%
12. Percentage of Latino students in Egyptian, Cobden, and Giant City schools - with far the highest percentage (12.8%) at Cobden Schools: 12.8%
13. Percentage of black teachers in Egyptian District: 8%
14. # of teachers of color at Giant City School: 0
15. Cobden students meeting or exceeding expectations on the PARCC exam: 33%
16. Egyptian students meeting or exceeding expectations on the PARCC exam: 17%
17. Giant City students meeting or exceeding expectations on the PARCC exam: 63%
18. 4-year graduation rate from Cobden High School: 98%
19. 4-year graduation rate from Egyptian High School: 82%
20. # of Jackson County voters who favored in 2016 a one percent increase in county sales tax to pay for school facilities: 12,203
21. Average salary of teachers in Egyptian, Cobden, and Giant City schools - much lower than the state average of $43,450: $48,100
22. Average student daily attendance rate in Egyptian, Cobden, and Giant City schools: 95%
23. Average percentage of teachers who are absent 10 days or fewer in Egyptian, Cobden, and Giant City Schools: 90%
24. Average class size in Egyptian Schools, lower than the average of 19 and 22 at Cobden and Giant City Schools, respectively: 15
WHAT STUDENTS NEED
Hidden Bias in the Classroom

AWARENESS IS THE FIRST STEP:

Is the way I'm approaching this student affecting outcomes?

Who do I call on and how often? Do I need to switch to a randomized technique, like pulling popsicle sticks?

How do I seat students or group them?

Am I treating everybody the same when it comes to homework, or am I giving a break to the kid I think has a bad home life or little chance of getting to college?

HOW TO GET MORE CHILDREN OF COLOR IN GIFTED PROGRAMS

A recent study of underrepresentation in elementary school gifted programs in a large school district provides an example of bias. A policy change shifted student selection from an ad hoc screening system, in which only certain students were screened, to a universal screening program. Prior to the change, candidates were identified during 1st and 2nd grades through an informal referral process: teachers could identify students, or parents could nominate their own children. IQ tests were administered for free to those who were nominated, or parents could have their testing done through outside vendors. The baseline minimum IQ score required for assignment to the gifted education program in third grade was 130, with a lowered target of 115 for English-language learners and students who qualified for federally subsidized meals. But despite the lower score requirement, the number of English-language learners, low income students, and students of color in the gifted education program remained extremely low.

Once the universal screening policy was in place, the district administered an estimated 1,300 additional IQ tests. Each test took about three hours, and the cost of the process eventually led to its discontinuation. While it operated, however, it identified biases of unequal access in the informal referral process:

A comparison of the newly identified gifted students to those who would have been identified even without screening shows that black and Latino students, free/reduced price lunch participants, English-language learners, and girls were all systematically “under-referred” to the gifted program. Newly identified gifted students were more likely to come from schools in poor neighborhoods with relatively few gifted students, leading to a substantial equalization in gifted participation rates across schools. We hypothesize that parents and teachers often fail to recognize the potential of many poor and immigrant children with less than stellar achievement levels, accounting for their likelihood of being under-referred.

Universal screening produced a 180 percent increase in the gifted assignment rate among all students who qualified for subsidized meals, a 150 percent increase among Latinos, and an 80 percent increase among blacks. When universal screening ended, the previous patterns of under-identification—and bias—returned.

TEST YOURSELF AT: bit.ly/TWVtests
"RACIALIZED TEACHER PERCEPTIONS’ OF THEIR STUDENTS

“What a teacher may attribute to precocity for one student may be considered disruptive behavior for another.”

“... Black students indeed are referred to gifted programs, particularly in reading, at significantly lower rates when taught by non-Black teachers, a concerning result given the relatively low incidence of assignment to own-race teachers among Black students.”
“IT’S IRRITATING THAT SOME TEACHERS WILL BAD-MOUTH KIDS AND DISMISS THEM BY SAYING, ‘THESE KIDS WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO LEARN ANYWAY.’ THAT’S INAPPROPRIATE. WHAT DO YOU MEAN, ‘THESE KIDS?’ THEY HAVE THE ATTITUDE, ‘OH, THEY’RE BLACK, THEY’RE POOR, THEY’RE NEVER GOING TO LEARN.’ BUT THE ATTITUDE IS THE PROBLEM, NOT THE CHILDREN.”

- Shonneil Kimble, GYO teacher candidate, Rockford
COGNITIVE EQUITY

Who are you allowed to be?

Who are you allowed to become through your engagement with schools?
4 WAYS TO MANAGE STEREOTYPES

A survey of upper elementary and middle school students asked whether they were aware of stereotypes and if they belonged to a negatively stereotyped group. The survey examined how they managed the burden of those stereotypes.

1

Unaware of stereotypes:

Kids in this group did well in school; however, no one was left in this group by 7th grade.

2

Aware of stereotypes and took on traits of those stereotypes:

These kids’ performance was hurt by this coping strategy.

3

Believe stereotypes but feel that they are exceptions:

Kids did reasonably well in school, but carried a burden of being “found out.”

4

Don’t believe stereotypes are true:

Kids took it upon themselves to prove stereotypes to be untrue. These kids were doing well.
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL EQUITY

Leading the Way

Illinois was the first state to require social-emotional learning in all schools, setting statewide standards and benchmarks for districts to incorporate at all grade levels. Even now, in a state that went the entire 2015-16 fiscal year without a budget and in a city toeing the line of financial disaster, Chicago Public Schools remains committed to the value of social-emotional learning.
Adverse Childhood Experiences: A survey

ACEs are adverse childhood experiences that harm children’s developing brains so profoundly that the effects show up decades later; they cause much of chronic disease, mental illness, and are at the root of most violence.

“ACEs” comes from the CDC-Kaiser Adverse Childhood Experiences Study, a groundbreaking public health study that discovered that childhood trauma leads to the adult onset of chronic diseases, depression and other mental illness, violence and being a victim of violence.

The ACEs the researchers measured:

1. Physical abuse
2. Sexual abuse
3. Verbal abuse
4. Physical neglect
5. Emotional neglect
6. A family member who is depressed or diagnosed with other mental illness
7. A family member who is addicted to alcohol or another substance
8. A family member who is in prison
9. Witnessing a mother being abused
10. Losing a parent to separation, divorce or another reason

Of course, there are many other types of childhood trauma — such as witnessing a sibling being abused, witnessing violence outside the home, witnessing a father being abused by a mother, being bullied by a classmate or teacher — but only 10 types were measured.

The Score

The more types of childhood adversity a person experienced, the higher their risk of chronic disease, mental illness, violence, being a victim of violence and a bunch of other consequences. The study found:

64%
Of people have an ACE score of at least one

12%
Of the population has an ACE score of 4

Having an ACE score of 4 nearly doubles the risk of heart disease and cancer. It increases the likelihood of becoming an alcoholic by 700 percent and the risk of attempted suicide by 1200 percent.

Trauma-Informed Care for Children and Families

Experiencing repeated trauma not only leaves emotional scars that can last a lifetime, but literally alters a child’s brain chemistry. It can force children into constant “flight or fight mode,” which could lead to emotional development delays, poor school performance and a variety of chronic health conditions...

We’ll be introducing legislation to improve coordination and training to identify kids who have experienced trauma and provide them with immediate support. The Trauma-Informed Care for Children and Families Act capitalizes on the amazing, innovative work being done in Chicago and across Illinois.

Our bill will help more children experience the benefits of curricula like Pause! Center Academy’s, which goes beyond the books to teach kids resilience. It will promote in-school mental health services like latitude Children’s Hospitals Bounce Back program or Chicago Public Schools’ social worker training.

And we will share the best strategies to help strengthen families, such as through Family Focus’ home visiting programs or the Illinois Education Association’s efforts to build better partnerships between parents, students and school personnel...
PHYSICAL EQUITY

Let’s Move: Illinois Edition

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day. How much exercise do Illinois’ students get?

AVERAGE # STUDENT PE DAYS / WEEK

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# Student PE days / week

Students in these school districts in Southern Illinois—Coles, Giant City and Egyptian—have physical education every day, on average, while those in Elgin school district average only twice a week.

When students miss recess

Despite overwhelming evidence that periods of unstructured play and social interaction are a crucial part of children’s cognitive, academic, physical and mental wellness, schools continue to take away recess privileges as a penalty for academic or behavioral transgressions. I’ve done it many times. When students fail to hand in assignments or when a child acts up in class, I’ve taken their recess privileges hostage.

Recess plays an important role in the ability to maintain self-control during class time. Self-control is not an unlimited resource, and by the time unstructured play rolls around, most children have depleted their reserves. Memory is also enhanced by breaks, because cognitive rest after learning new material allows that material to be retained for longer periods of time. And recess helps young children develop social skills, such as negotiation, social dynamics, and the use of verbal and non-verbal communication cues.

STUDENTS WHO ARE KEPT INSIDE STAND TO LOSE:

1. Brain power. Instead of being refreshed and ready to learn, they are brain-drained, as they have lost out on the opportunity to regain the energy needed to focus.

2. Connection with peers. Not only does the benched kid gain a reputation of being a “bad kid,” they lose out on the opportunities to practice social skills, make new friends and strengthen existing friendships.

3. Relationship with teachers. When a teacher holds a student out of recess, she undermines her relationship with that student. Consequently, the student will tune that teacher out just when she should be tuning in and learning.

4. Opportunities to learn a different behavior. Being left out of recess doesn’t help a child understand what she did wrong, and even more importantly, doesn’t help her learn how to make it right the next time.
SpiriTual Equity

Souls in Schools

If we are educating for wholeness, for citizenship, and for leadership in democracy, spiritual development belongs in schools...

[Spiritual reflection helps students] transcend prejudice, increase academic motivation, improve focus and cooperation, foster creativity, and keep more kids in school. In other words, caring about the inner lives of our students makes educational sense at every level.

Minding Mindfulness

One aspect of Resnick’s Engaged Teaching model is “being present,” a central idea in mindfulness. A new research effort is looking to measure the impact of mindfulness practices on students.

16

The number of Chicago Public Schools that are implementing mindfulness techniques and participating in the study.

2

The number of groups of kindergarteners that a research team from the Erikson Institute is following over two years.

1,500

The number of kids who researchers are testing face-to-face testing on academics, executive function, self-regulation, auditory attention, and social-emotional skills. They are measuring classroom climate and tracking disruption and engagement. They are also collecting qualitative interviews about program implementation.

Findings So Far

Mindfulness is getting more attention in schools and research is catching up with what could have been a fad but seems to be getting real results.

Teachers have found mindfulness techniques help students pay attention, empathize with their classmates, control their own emotions and limit stress. In Chicago, the mindfulness study is measuring whether and how these techniques contribute to improved academic outcomes for students in addition to social-emotional ones.

Erikson researchers say mindfulness adds an additional layer of compassion in classrooms, where students are taught the skills to recover from what might have been considered failure in the past.

Teachers, administrators, security guards, and counselors at the 14 Chicago schools are all trained on mindfulness techniques. While the study is tracking outcomes for kindergarteners, first graders, and second graders only, the goal is to implement a schoolwide system.

The most traditional technique is three-minute-long mindfulness exercises developed by Calm Classroom, that teachers lead three times per day. Students also participate in 25 group-based lessons throughout the school year; they learn new vocabulary that integrates mindfulness concepts into academics, and parent meetings help entire families learn about the concepts and how to use them at home.

Teachers are finding that mindfulness techniques don’t take away from math or reading lessons. Anecdotally, teachers who used to spend half an hour getting kids back on task after lunch recess say they can do so in as little as three minutes, with a mindfulness exercise. So far, it looks like mindfulness actually creates more time for instruction.

Meditation

"Self-development is the real focus: How to be a better person. How to handle whatever comes your way. How to navigate the world peacefully internally and externally."

— Sylvia Ewing, author and host of “This Moment with Sylvia Ewing" podcast at gypsyscar.com
IMPACT OF POVERTY

What we know—A deficits approach

How many kids are poor in Illinois

20.7%

How many public school students are poor in Illinois

50%

Achievement gap between low-income and middle-income and wealthy students on the 2016 PARCC is

26 POINTS

(19% of low-income students met standards while 45% of non-low-income students met standards)

Low-income students’ four-year graduation rate:

77%

(9 points lower than the state average of 86%)

Ratio of low-scoring students who got an out of school suspension

1 IN 4

High school students with high test scores that received out of school suspension

7%
DISPEL THE MYTH

What data tells us: An assets approach

"There's no such thing as a culture of poverty. Differences in values and behaviors among poor people are just as great as those between poor and wealthy people."

"In actuality, the culture of poverty concept is constructed from a collection of smaller stereotypes which, however false, seem to have crept into mainstream thinking as unquestioned fact."

"Low-income parents hold the same attitudes about education that wealthy parents do (Compton-Lilly, 2003; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Leichter, 1978).

"Low-income parents are less likely to attend school functions or volunteer in their children's classrooms—not because they care less about education, but because they have less access to school involvement than their wealthier peers. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005)

"They are more likely to work multiple jobs, to work evenings, to have jobs without paid leave, and to be unable to afford child care and public transportation.

"It might be said more accurately that schools that fail to take these considerations into account do not value the involvement of poor families as much as they value the involvement of other families."
WHAT SCHOOLS NEED
MINORITIES ARE MAJORITY

Illinois public school enrollment in 2015-2016

48.8% White
25.5% Latinx
17.3% Black
4.7% Asian
3.2% Multiracial
.3% Native American
.1% Pacific Islander
DIVERSITY GATEKEEPER

Passing edTPA = Illinois teaching license

... Beginning on September 1, 2016, all candidates completing teacher preparation programs in this state are required to pass an evidence-based assessment of teacher effectiveness approved by the State Board of Education, in consultation with the State Educator Preparation and Licensure Board. All recognized institutions offering approved teacher preparation programs must begin phasing in the approved teacher performance assessment no later than July 1, 2019. Student Teachers must pass this assessment to be considered a completers of their teacher preparation program and to be eligible for entitlement by the college or university for their teaching license.

... Pearson, our testing partner, is responsible for the assessment of the edTPA. They are in the process of training evaluators and providing ongoing professional development for these evaluators. Quality control, including statistical validity and reliability, is Pearson's responsibility.

Spreading across the country

Many scholars and activists are especially concerned about the role of Pearson Education, who is the exclusive administrator of edTPA and charges $300 per candidate per submission. Seventy-five dollars of this goes back to a "calibrated scorer" -- a teacher or teacher educator who, with just 19-23 hours of computer-based training by Pearson is magically transformed from unqualified to evaluate their own teacher candidates to a national expert in evidence-based assessment. The other $225, presumably, goes to Pearson and [two nonprofit test developers], who are surely celebrating their resounding success: 18,463 candidates were required to take edTPA in 2014. At $300 each, that's $5,538,900. It is true that Pearson offers some vouchers to offset the cost for candidates. But in 2014, there were a whopping 400 vouchers available for the entire state of New York.


Teachers in Illinois

Persistent wide gaps between teacher -- student race and ethnicity

IN 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>83.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Illinois School Report Card

A COMPREHENSIVE LOOK AT EQUITY IN PUBLIC EDUCATION
TEACHERS SPEAK

“I’m a native Chicagoan, but my parents moved to Mexico when I was 2 or 3 and I first went to school in Mexico. When we moved back to Logan Square, I needed English language support in school and didn’t get it until the end of 2nd grade. I watched Arthur cartoons on TV every day and repeated every single word. That was my support....

“When I was enrolled in community college, I got a call about a part-time tutoring position at an elementary school. I got placed with a first-year teacher. Three students needed language support. Without any formal training, I took on that responsibility and created lesson plans for them. I felt like I didn’t know what I was doing, but at the same time I realized that I really liked teaching. The kids were learning and beginning to speak English. They inspired me to become a teacher.”

— Fatima Salgado, Grow Your Own teacher candidate, Chicago

“There’s a lot more to teaching. It’s not just ABCs and 123s. It’s life. I have to understand where students are coming from. I grew up here. I was a teenage mom myself. I see them at the grocery store and on the block. I can relate to them. It makes all the difference in the world. They don’t sit down and talk to strangers. They have their guard up. So I watch. I listen. I wait for an opening. I have been where they are.”

— Jacqueline Crockett, Grow Your Own teacher candidate, East St. Louis

“I’m interested in helping with the effort to increase minority recruitment. The Peoria school district has 14,000 students, and about 50 to 60 percent are African American. But only 6.7 percent of teachers are African American. The district wants to expand recruitment to include candidates who are already in college and bring in high school students who have not decided about their career and encourage them to be teachers.

“We also have a huge need for men in our district. We have an ever-growing population of Latino students. So we need more of a melting pot, more diversity in the teaching force.”

— Linda Wilson, Grow Your Own teacher, Peoria
GROWTH COUNTS MORE

Testing and accountability 3.0

In its new state plan to hold elementary and secondary schools accountable, the Illinois State Board of Education is taking a new approach by focusing on growth, rather than just meeting fixed standards.

The plan approved by the state board of education gives academic growth twice as much weight as academic proficiency. That means schools will get a lot of credit for helping students catch up.

State Superintendent Tony Smith said the focus on growth will help Illinois close its racial and economic achievement gaps, a call board over and over while the state was collecting public comment on the plan.

"People said, 'It has to not be punitive. It has to help. It has to help us learn how to do this work better. And it has to be fair. It has to start from a place where it doesn't punish people just because they're from a low-income district or have not had resources,'" Smith said.

As required by the Every Student Succeeds Act, which replaced No Child Left Behind in 2015, Illinois' plan sets long-term goals, determines how it will measure those goals, and creates a system to identify and support schools that need improvement.

Long-term goals

By 2022, Illinois wants:

- All kindergarteners tested for "readiness"
- At least 90 percent of third graders reading "at or above grade level"
- At least 90 percent of fourth graders "meeting or exceeding expectations" in math
- At least 90 percent of fifth graders "on track to graduate" or time
- At least 90 percent of high school graduates "ready for college and career"

Illinois also wants at least 60 percent of residents to hold a "high-quality degree or postsecondary credential" by 2025.

PARCC facts

2016

The year state education officials decided to drop the PARCC exam for high school students.

2

Number of times the PARCC was administered to high schools—spring 2015 and 2016—before it was discontinued

2

Number of standardized tests elementary students will take this spring—PARCC and NWEA

SAT

Name of the test Illinois school officials will give high school students beginning in the spring of 2017

6

Number of states that originally fully adopted the PARCC

After years of flagging support, number of states that are fully participating in PARCC
Illinois has ...

143  charter schools
129  in Chicago
14   downstate

Pushback

“There will be a net zero increase in the number of Board-authorized charter schools over the term of this agreement, and the total number of students enrolled by the end of school year 2018-2019 will not exceed 101% of the total student enrollment as of school year 2015-2016.”

- CTU CONTRACT SIGNED IN NOVEMBER 2016

And response ...

“This is the first time a teachers’ union contract has incorporated a cap or moratorium on charter-school growth. This is a real step back for a city that, just five years ago, was leading the nation in the growing of our charter sector and the positive impact it has had on the students in the city of Chicago.”

- SPOKESWOMAN, ILLINOIS NETWORK OF CHARTER SCHOOLS
SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERING MATH

STEM workforce is ...

74% male
71% white

One area in desperate need of examination is the way we teach mathematics. Many Americans suffer from misconceptions about math. They think people are either born with a “math brain” or not — an idea that has been disproven — and that mathematics is all numbers, procedures and speedy thinking. In reality, mathematicians spend most of their working lives thinking deeply and slowly, investigating complex patterns in multiple dimensions. We sacrifice many people — women and students of color, in particular — at the altar of these myths about math.

Math is a prerequisite for most STEM fields, and the reason many students abandon STEM careers in higher levels of mathematics, gender imbalances persist. In 2015, about 76% of math doctorates were awarded to men. This figure should prompt alarm in mathematics departments across the country — and encourage focus on an area that is shockingly neglected in discussions of equity teaching methods in classrooms.

MakerGirl

Founded in 2014 by female engineering students and alumni from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, this nonprofit startup offers STEM and maker workshops for girls 7 to 10 years old in Champaign, Chicago and Southern Illinois.

Offerings in the spring of 2017 include “Rock and Roll,” a workshop that introduces 3-D print technology, and “Bubble Factory,” a session for girls to design and print bubble wands to learn about mass manufacturing and assembly.

Chicago Southside Mini Maker Faire

A showcase of diversity in the maker community, this annual summer event features makers of all ages, styles and abilities. The Southside Maker Faire was founded by Agape Works, a community organization that supports STEM-focused academic enrichment for Chicago youth. The nonprofit also launched Chicago Knights Robotics, a competitive robotics team for Chicago teens. LevelUP is their makerspace.
BORROWING AND CONSTRUCTION

Cashed-Out Cow

Illinois' public school districts are roughly $20 billion in debt, a staggering figure fueled in part by decades of special deals in Springfield that have given districts exemptions so they can keep borrowing beyond limits set by law.

It equates to about $10,000 for every Pre-K to 12th-grade public school student in Illinois, a Tribune investigation has found.

A Tribune review of state data show many districts have gone over their borrowing limit, or gotten close to maxing out. Seventy-six districts had more debt than their calculated limit in 2014-15, and another 66 used up more than 70 percent of their borrowing capacity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Borrowing Capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decatur</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elgin</td>
<td>71.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grafton City</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calhoun</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>8%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

New Schools for Some

A WBEZ analysis of the $450 million in new school construction shows:

$475 MILLION

$475 million or 73 percent of all money went to schools where white students make up more than a quarter of the student body.

That's in a school system in which only 12 percent of Chicago's schools have more than 25 percent white students.

LATINO STUDENTS

Latino students are more likely to be in overcrowded schools, though they don't get as much new construction. Seventy-five percent of the students in overcrowded schools in 2011-2012 were Latino, according to CPS data. But they make up half of the kids in schools that got new construction. Meanwhile, 18 percent of the students in overcrowded schools were white, but they made up 30 percent of kids in schools that got help with overcrowding.

$224 MILLION

$224 million or more than one-third of the recent and proposed projects are intended to relieve overcrowding at schools sharing a border with a school that has space for additional students.

$193 MILLION

$193 million is for magnet and selective high schools. Because of the way students are selected for top schools, they disproportionately serve white, middle-class families—a trend that has become more pronounced during Emanuel's tenure, and since CPS was released from a court-ordered to desegregate its schools.
**Funding (In)Equity**

Lowest per pupil spending in IL unit districts in 2015-16: $7,163 vs Highest per pupil spending in IL unit districts in 2015-16: $20,503

30+ Year Trend

Illinois expenditure per pupil in average daily attendance in public elementary and secondary schools, selected years, 1959-60 through 2015-16:

- $0
- $2,000
- $4,000
- $6,000
- $8,000
- $10,000
- $12,000


$ expenditure per pupil

System is broken

Illinois ranks worst-in-the-nation in funding equity. For every dollar we spend on a non-low-income student, we spend only 81 cents on a low-income student. Illinois ranks last in the share of education funding that comes from the state.

IL Supt. Tony Smith says...

"I think that funding inequity has to be the first, foremost and always on the conversation and on the agenda. Our ability to figure out how to support all the kids in Illinois in ways that they need it, ways to distribute resources in ways that are fair..."

"There has to be a state plan on how you distribute those dollars, based on need, English language status, poverty... You have to get real about what kids are really facing. If you just want to have a single high goal and say everybody has to have the same to get that high goal, I have never seen that happen."
THE TWISTING ARC OF FUNDING EQUITY

A Timeline of Reform

1970
- At the Sixth Illinois Constitutional Convention, delegates wait until the last three days to debate solutions to the inequities of the state’s school funding formula. Three proposals come to the floor.
- Illinois would be responsible for 95% of the cost of K-12 funding, and districts would be limited to paying no more than 5% of the funds provided by the state.
- School districts would be responsible for raising as much as 25% of the funds they needed, and the state would pick up the rest, thereby securing “substantial parity of educational opportunities,” a standard enforceable by the courts, or
- “the state has primary responsibility for maintaining the system of public educational institutions and services.” The latter, which is not legally enforceable, was adopted, raising the matter open in the hopes that legislators would take action.

1973
- A school reform law contained provisions for financing formulas that allocated more money to districts with high property taxes but fewer or declining property values—the so-called “resource formula”—and increased state funding to districts with increasing poverty rates. This law, which is known as the “goldilocks” age of Illinois school funding. Previously, districts could not rely on the state as a reliable funding source.

1976
- Property wealthy school districts successfully advocated to retain the power to raise local taxes and receive more state aid.

1978
- Wealthy districts began manipulating the revenue equalizer and the property tax relief formula to their favor. The funding equity built into the 1972 law was being eroded.

1980
- Raising revenues led to decreased state funding for schools.

1984
- Illinois legislature reformed to a foundation level school funding formula.

1989
- State income tax rates were raised to 5%, resulting in higher revenues.

1990
- Advocates file a lawsuit in Cook County against Gov. James Edgar, alleging that the disparity in funding levels among districts violated the Equal Protection Clause and Education Article of the Illinois Constitution. Parents, students and 17 school districts join as plaintiffs. Community for Educational Rights v. Edgar was a landmark case but the plaintiffs failed to make it beyond the state’s motion to dismiss.

1995
- The Illinois Supreme Court denied advocates’ appeal of the dismissal of their constitutional challenge to the funding formula.

2001
- EDRH hires expert consultants to design a system to determine an appropriate foundation funding level. They devise a system based on a successful school-agreement that assures these performance measures—test scores, graduation rates, and spending efficiency—identify a group of successful schools and test scores, then adjust for differences between districts, determine the optimal base cost for a quality education. Based on this report, EDRH sets its first recommended foundation level at $5,243 per pupil. The General Assembly adopts EDRH’s first recommendation but does not follow it in its entirety.

2009
- Another lawsuit, Carsten v. Hoesch, wins a different case, allowing that the state’s funding formula has a de jure impact on students in the property-poor districts who pay taxes at a higher rate, contributing to a lack of educational opportunity. The Court did not agree with the plaintiffs’ logic. The case was dismissed.

Following the lead of the Chicago Urban League, the Chicago School Board cites the state’s 1972 civil rights law when it suits Gov. Rauner and the Illinois State Board of Education stipulating that state funding for education is distributed in a “manner that discriminate” against minority students. The lawsuit is filed on behalf of five Black and Latino families.

2013
- Several state senators, led by state Sen. Andy Manis, have filed a school funding Advisory Committee (EDRA) to recreate Illinois’ 1971 funding system and recommend changes that would deliver more adequate, equitable and fair funding. Their bipartisan team met with 18 interest groups, including teachers unions and advocate groups. EDRH findings provide basis for an equitable funding system across 10 areas.
WHATS NEXT
REAL PARENT ENGAGEMENT

A strategy for student success and shared decision-making partnerships between families and educators.

Informed by research on effective parent engagement, Illinois developed a Family Engagement Framework that centers on four principles:

**Developing a Family Engagement System**
- Shared voice to drive policy and practice
- Connected to district and school improvement
- Families serve cultural, linguistic, and educational needs as integrated into improvement plans
- Support and guidance to educational leaders from planning through implementation
- Collect and use data
- Allocate and restructure resources
- Build educator and parent capacity
- Families are partners
- Community organizations are collaborators

**Building a Welcoming and Supportive Environment**
- Culture of shared responsibility for students’ learning and healthy development
- Relational trust
- Proactive outreach to families to support students
- Responsive to family and student needs
- Effective engagement of families from diverse backgrounds
- Builds on family strengths and capabilities
- Shares students’ accomplishments with family

**Enhancing Communications**
- Meaningful two-way exchange of information
- Accessible to all families and their languages
- Clear and constructive
- Information on parental rights
- Information about how to support student learning and development
- More than one approach to relay information
- Policies and practices in the district, school, and classroom

**Including Parents in Decision Making**
- Empowers parents
- Solicits parents input for district and school improvement efforts
- Feedback loop to develop and refine educational programs
- Parents participate in problem-solving and discussions related to their child

Considerations around capacity building

It is necessary to train school personnel and parents to increase their capacity to work together.

**FOR EDUCATORS ...**
Many administrators, teachers, and pupil support personnel enter the education system with little to no training on how to engage families in further support student learning and healthy development.

**AND FAMILIES ...**
Likewise, families often find it difficult to partner with schools in a meaningful way for various reasons. Some of these reasons may relate to a limited understanding of student/family expectations, how they can support student learning and healthy development, and how schools operate.

Research has found that parents’ personal self-efficacy has a significant impact on whether or not they will engage in activities that support their children’s learning and healthy development. Personal self-efficacy refers to a parent’s belief that he/she has the necessary knowledge and skill sets required by the activity as well as the belief that it will result in positive outcomes for his/her child.

Deeply engaged in early learning

A precipitous decline in preschool enrollment in Chicago Public Schools leads some to blame a new enrollment process. Parents who have long pushed for increased access to early education cite other issues.

Some volunteers at the nonprofit Community Organizing for Family Issues (COFI) do not believe the new application system itself is the largest barrier for parents trying to enroll their students in preschool. On the contrary, a simplified application process was one of parents’ most requested changes and was an official recommendation of the organization in a report published in 2013.

The report was compiled by Parents Organized to Win, Educate, and Renew — Policy Action Council (POWER-PAC), a Chicago advocacy organization of low-income parents and grandparents trained by COFI. In 2007, POWER-PAC launched the Early Learning Campaign to help bring quality preschool education to low-income students of color. Their most well-known parent-led effort—which continues to be highly successful—is the Head Start Ambassador program.

Head Start Ambassadors canvass their communities, going door-to-door with information about the benefits of preschool and sharing their experiences. Ambassadors are parents and grandparents whose children have attended Head Starts in the area. Ambassadors are trained by COFI and prepared to help a family identify options and fill out a paper preschool application on the spot.

Rosalva Nava joined POWER-PAC after struggling to register her children for preschool. Nava sees the online application as a win for parents. “We have been working diligently with (the Department of Child and Family Services) and Head Start and CPS but it was very exciting to hear that they were all working on this website together,” she said. “That was one of the accomplishments of the ambassadors and the campaign.”
ON THE POLICY FRONT

Danielle Allen
Harvard University

5 Next Steps

1 Recognize that education is a constitutional right, secured by the state constitution.
2 Bring per pupil levels of funding for urban schools up to the levels of suburban schools.
3 Secure universal pre-K and stronger early literacy programs.
4 Rebuild civic education and social studies.
5 Connect STEM curricula to ethical and philosophical material about how technology affects human life.

Big Picture

Educational policy makers should make common cause with those seeking to bring an end to the War on Drugs. The U.S. should pursue the model of drug control pioneered by Portugal. Marijuana has been legalized there and use and modest possession of other drugs have been de-criminalized, while trafficking in these is still criminal. The resources of the criminal justice system are directed at large-scale traffickers, while public health strategies and harm reduction techniques pinpoint users and low-level participants in the drug economy. On this approach, drug use has been brought out of the shadows, the percentage of users seeking treatment is up, adolescent drug use is down, and Portugal is interdicting increased quantities of illegal narcotics.


Lynne Haefele
Illinois State University

In both the State of Illinois and across America, the vast majority of students are served by public education. It is the basis for a strong economy, thriving communities, and a healthy democracy. As such, it is imperative to continuously improve public education for the benefit of all.

Key Priorities

1 Assuring adequate, equitable and stable funding from state and federal government. Local resources, like property taxes can only go so far, and in challenged communities, they cannot possibly provide adequate and fair educational programming for all students. Many proposals to overhaul the current unfair and inadequate system have been made and left to wither on Illinois General Assembly. It will take strong leadership and collective will to assure that a reasonable solution is created and implemented.
2 Investing in the recruitment, preparation, placement and ongoing support of highly qualified school personnel. In addition to highly competent teachers, strong and innovative school leaders are essential to student success. It will be important to assure that these professionals are valued and supported with attractive salaries and benefits, as these jobs are very demanding and compete with many other career options.
3 Maintaining strong investments in early childhood education, birth-to-3rd grade alignment, and support systems for at-risk children and their families.
4 Establishing smooth 8th-grade-to-high school and high school-to-college/career transitions. Assuring that high school students have a variety of options to explore their futures after graduation, research career opportunities, sample work-based learning, acquire adequate academic knowledge and employment skills, and earn early-college credit.
5 Developing sophisticated and fair systems of determining school performance, including valid and reliable testing systems, multiple measures of student outcomes, and accurate depictions of effective programs. Current systems are still heavily reliant on multiple-choice testing and other simplistic measurement tools that fail to provide timely and meaningful information for students, parents, and educators.

Bottom Line

The percentages of students in poverty and otherwise at-risk for school challenges is on the rise in Illinois and across the country. Public education must continue to serve, and serve more effectively, students from vastly diverse backgrounds. Attention to equity, wrap-around supports, and continuous improvement will be essential to ensuring positive life chances for coming generations.
Frederick “Rick” Hess
American Enterprise Institute

5 priorities for Illinois' public schools

1. Attracting, retaining, and supporting terrific teachers.

2. Expanding access to high-quality career and technical education.

3. Using online delivery to ensure that every student has access to rigorous, advanced courses.

4. Boosting the amount of time devoted to the arts and civics, and increasing the quality of that instruction.

5. Adopting an Education Savings Account model that gives parents more ability to see that their child's needs are met and more reason to be attentive to the cost of education services.

Pedro Noguera
UCLA

Pain points in public schools that need our attention

1. Inequality and how it affects education is a big issue throughout the United States. Schools serving the poorest kids in Illinois are the ones in most need. Most money spent on wealthy kids. Both schools are held to the same standard but no supports are provided to schools serving poor kids. Schools are overwhelmed by issues related to poverty. I’m talking about homelessness. I’m talking about trauma. I’m talking about the effects of poverty that are not just economic.

2. Illinois, like the rest of the U.S., has segregated schools. Schools serving white neighborhoods are serving children well. That’s why there’s not much talk about choice and no charter schools. Look at Champaign-Urbana—a university town that ought to be able to serve all students but there’s a large, underserved population of ELs and black children. Schools have unequal access to opportunity, like a microcosm. Some schools serving students well and some not.

3. Political failure is the third problem. There’s no support or guidance for high-poverty schools. The University of Chicago has done the research showing what it takes for schools to improve. Schools are trying to do this on their own but they do not get any support from the political arena. Those with the most power are the least accountable. Starting with the governor of Illinois and the mayor of Chicago. Democrats aren’t any better than Republicans.

4. Schools serving the poorest people are also the ones where parents are the least likely to vote or are not able to vote because of their immigration status. Voter turnout is very low. In Chicago, you have mayoral control. Theoretically, he should appoint people to the School Board who support public education. Thirty years ago, public schools were doing a better job.

5. We like to talk about teachers but not about the supports that the state should be supplying to schools for teachers. We keep thinking that threatening teachers and threatening schools is going to work and there’s no evidence that it will. Look at North Chicago. It’s very economically depressed and schools are in shambles. Everybody who can is trying to get out but everyone can’t get out. Leaving is not a solution to the problem.

6. We focus on achievement gaps but not on opportunity to learn. It showed up all the way through college. Look at Chicago State, an institution that used to educate large numbers of African Americans. The state won’t support them. They don’t treat Illinois State or University of Illinois that way.

*English-language learners

Bottom Line

If Illinois residents care about their kids as much as they care about the Cubs then there would be no problem, and the schools their children were attending would be taken care of. If the Cubs threatened to leave, the public sector and the private sector lining up to throw money at them.
ON THE POLICY FRONT

Robert Lee
Illinois State University

Top policy issues that we are facing and not doing a very good job of meeting in Illinois

1. College access and pathways for historically underrepresented students, including financial aid challenges for DACA.

2. College and career readiness - alignment between secondary and post-secondary institutions.

3. Privatization and more charters being established in our under-resourced communities. We need more research to determine their effectiveness before labeling it a panacea.

4. More support for public school teachers - funding, professional development, and investment in the arts.

5. Invest in and Re-establish local schools as community-driven learning centers - the hub of engagement for families, residents, and children through after school enrichment programs.

*Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, an Obama administration immigration policy that provides some undocumented immigrants two-year permits to remain and work in the U.S.

Susan Moore Johnson
Harvard Graduate School of Education

Recruiting and Retaining a Skilled, Committed, Diverse Teaching Force

The evidence is clear: The teacher is the most important school-level factor in students' learning. Therefore, every state should ensure that schools can recruit and retain a skilled, committed and diverse teaching force. Often policymakers and communities take teachers for granted, believing that supply exceeds demand and that, once hired, teachers will stay on the job until retirement. That may have been true 50 years ago, when well-educated women and men of color had few professional options, but it is not true today. Every career is open and many of the candidates who could be counted on to choose teaching in the past no longer do. Compared with opportunities in fields such as law, engineering, medicine, technology or business, teaching typically offers lower pay, lower status, disappointing workplaces, and few opportunities for advancement.

Nonetheless, bright and determined individuals still want to become teachers, because they like working with students and want to convey their love of learning and the life opportunities that education offers. However, if teachers find that their school fails to support them, even the most determined will leave. Teachers voice consistent complaints about such schools. They are disorganized; the principal is authoritarian; work is isolating; supplies are scant; and recognition for good work is scarce. Schools where teachers choose to stay have a strong, positive school culture, promote ongoing collaboration among colleagues, provide sufficient support for students and families, and are led by a principal who is fair, known good instruction, and engages teachers in making important decisions.

There is good reason to recruit and retain a teaching force that is not only skilled and committed, but also diverse. Teachers of color have been shown to have higher expectations and to achieve greater success with students of color than white teachers do. They can serve as role models of academic success, help to reduce stereotypes, and develop students' cross-cultural skills. However, nationally, over 80 percent of teachers are white women. Even in large, urban districts, the racial gaps between students and teachers are stark. Over 85 percent of students in the Chicago Public Schools are Black or Latino, while only 52 percent of teachers are, and this gap continues to grow.

Why is it especially difficult to achieve diversity in the teaching force? Colleges and universities enroll and graduate fewer students of color than white students, and fewer of those graduates choose to become teachers. Therefore, the hiring pool of fully licensed candidates of color is small. Because teachers of color are more likely to work in high-poverty schools than white teachers, they tend to leave schools and teaching at higher rates than white teachers. Research shows clearly that these teachers are not facing their students but rather the dysfunctional school environments where they work. Therefore, in order to recruit and retain a strong, diverse teaching force, Illinois can:

1. Promote respect for teaching as a career.

2. Support local programs that recruit and prepare local candidates of color.

3. Empower schools to hire the teachers they need.

4. Ensure that principals are trained and effective instructional leaders.

5. Offer both pay and opportunities for advancement that make teaching a worthwhile career.
Five Priorities for Public Education in Illinois

1. Significantly increase funding for public education.
   Public education in Illinois is dramatically underfunded. Illinois ranks last, fifth of the 50 states, in school funding. Illinois contributes less than 20 percent of the cost to educate students in kindergarten-12th grade. The national average for states is 45 percent, and Illinois spent 9 percent less in real terms on general state aid per student in 2016 than it did five years ago. At the same time, Illinois has the 10th highest gross state product in the U.S. How can a state with this much wealth be last in contribution to education funding? This is a question of priorities and political will. It is a problem that could be solved if there was the political will to replace the flat income tax with a progressive tax structure and to fully tax the wealthy and corporations. Right now, taxpayers in the bottom 20 percent pay three times as much taxes as the top 1 percent. Closing tax loopholes for corporations and taxing the extremely wealthy at higher rates, e.g., millionaire’s tax, would generate millions in revenue for schools.

2. Fund public education equitably—increase funding for the least resourced schools and school districts.
   Illinois has the most inequitable public education funding system in the U.S. Illinois received a failing grade of “F” in the 2015 National Report Card on fairness of the states’ school funding systems, published by the Education Law Center. For each dollar spent on non-low-income students, Illinois spends 81 cents on low-income students, and gaps in spending between low-income and wealthier school districts are among the very worst in the U.S. The primary reason is Illinois’ overreliance on local property taxes to fund schools. Illinois should move to a state-wide funding stream for all school districts and evidenced-based funding that determines per-pupil expenditures by identifying how much it costs to fully fund all academic and social/emotional resources. Schools that have been historically grossly under-funded and have the greatest needs would thus get the funding they need.

3. State-wide initiatives to end punitive and discriminatory discipline and criminalization of youth.
   Exclusionary discipline policies (suspensions and expulsions) push students out of school and are part of a continuum of criminalizing and incarcerating children. Harsh discipline policies disproportionately affect students of color, LGBTQI students, and students with disabilities, with African American students particularly singled out for harsh punishment, exclusion, criminalization, and incarceration. State officials should work with parents, teachers, students, and youth and restorative justice organizations and advocates to develop policy that supports and cares for young people rather than criminalizing them.

4. State-wide moratorium on school closings and support for community-driven school improvement through sustainable community schools.
   Closing schools is a racial policy. The schools that are closed are primarily in low-income communities of color, particularly Black communities. These closings are devastating for students, parents, and teachers, and overall they do not improve education. Neighborhood public schools are the glue that binds communities, particularly communities that have experienced public and private disinvestment. Instead of closing schools, the state could become a national education leader by enacting policies that support community-driven school transformation based on the Sustainable Community Schools model of engaging; culturally relevant and challenging curriculum; high-quality teaching and holistic assessment of learning, restorative justice, wrap-around services; and transformational parent and community engagement.

5. Moratorium on charter school expansion and funding.
   The state’s support for privately-run, publicly-funded charter schools undermines public education and leads to school closings. Charter schools increase racial discrimination; hire less qualified teachers; do not serve English-language learners and students with disabilities as well as public schools; weaken teacher unions; and undermine democratic community control of schools. Despite additional funding and autonomy from district requirements, charter schools on average perform no better than public schools in some cases worse. Through contracting out to for-profit management companies, charter schools channel public funds to private profit. Public education is a pillar of our collective commitment to the common good; it is not a product.
THE GREAT ANTI-SCHOOL CAMPAIGN

Robert M. Hutchins

‘In many American public schools the children are simply in custody’

The most elementary truth about education is the one most often disregarded. It takes time. The educator must therefore remember that unless he wants to be a custodian, or a sitter, or a playmate, he must ask himself whether what he and his pupils are doing will have any relevance ten years from now. It does not seem an adequate reply that they are having fun, any more than it would be to say they were learning a trade. Nor would it be much more adequate to say they were learning what their parents wanted. The community includes parents but is not confined to them. Taxes for the support of schools are paid by bachelors, spinsteres, childless couples, and the elderly on the theory that the whole community is interested in and benefits from its common schools.

The barbarism, “communication skills,” is the contemporary jargon for reading, writing, figuring, speaking, and listening—arts that appear to have permanent relevance. These arts are important in any society at any time. They are more important in a democratic society than in any other, because the citizens of a democratic society have to understand one another. They are indispensable in a world community; they are arts shared by people everywhere. Without them the individual is deprived, and the community is too. In a technical age there are the only techniques that are universally valuable; they supply the only kind of vocational training a school can offer that can contribute to vocational success. They are the indispensable means to learning anything. They have to be learned if the individual hopes to expand his individuality or if he proposes to become a self-governing member of a self-governing community. Learning these arts cannot be left to the choices of children or their parents.

1. The first object of any school must be to equip the student with the tools of learning.
   These are the arts to which I have referred. With these arts at his command the citizen can learn all his life.

2. The second object of any school—and this is vital to any democratic community—should be to open new worlds to the young, to get them out of the rut of the place and time in which they were born.
   Whatever the charms of the neighborhood school, whatever the pleasures of touring one’s native city, whatever the allure of pretension, emphasis upon the immediate environment and its current condition must narrow the mind and prevent understanding of the wider national or world community and any real comprehension of the present itself. Hence those who would center education on the interests of children and on their surroundings, though these critics may seem up-to-date, are working contrary to the demands contemporary society is making upon any educational system.

3. The third object of any educational institution must be to get the young to understand their cultural heritage.
   This, too, is in the interest of the individual and the community. The individual ought to see himself in the community, a community having a tradition, which perhaps ought to be rejected, but not unless it is first understood. Comprehension of the cultural heritage is the means by which the bonds uniting the community are strengthened. The public school is the only agency that can be entrusted with this obligation. Its performance cannot be left to chance.

These obligations, teaching the arts of communication, opening new worlds, helping children learn how to learn, and transmitting the cultural heritage, rest upon the public schools, but it cannot be said that the American public schools are discharging them—or any one of them. In many American public schools the children are simply in custody. In many, the pupils are simply waiting out their time. It is sometimes said that this must happen in any institution.
School Partners

**CHICAGO**
Senn High School  
Kelly High School  
Kenwood Academy High School  
UChicago Charter School

**DECATUR**
Dennis Lab School  
Eisenhower High School  
Stephen Decatur Middle School

**ELGIN**
Elgin High School  
Bartlett High School  
South Elgin High School

**SOUTHERN ILLINOIS**
Cobden High School  
Egyptian High School  
Giant City School

Partner Organizations

AIRSS: The Association of Illinois Rural and Small Schools (AIRSS) has been supporting public education in rural communities for nearly thirty years. AIRSS recognizes the historical and recent challenges to small schools. After work completed in 2014 by the marketing committee and current President, the organization is re-positioning itself to create an active grassroots approach to supporting the small and rural schools in Illinois. AIRSS recognizes the necessity to be proactive and engage our stakeholders to the best of our ability in order to accomplish the following goals: (1) increase access to quality educational opportunities; (2) act as the voice for rural and small schools on the matter of policy; and (3) advocate for the quality of life and advantages unique to rural and small schools and communities.

Brighton Park Neighborhood Council: Brighton Park Neighborhood Council (BPNC) is a community-based, nonprofit organization serving a working-class neighborhood on Chicago's Southwest side. BPNC's mission is to create a safer community, improve the learning environment at public schools, preserve affordable housing, provide a voice for youth, protect immigrant rights, promote gender equality, and end all forms of violence.

Free Spirit Media: Since 2000, Free Spirit Media (FSM) has offered life-changing experiences to youth across Chicago. FSM is advancing education and digital learning through an innovative program model: hands-on and project-based media production opportunities that help young people develop their authentic voice while actively learning about and addressing community issues. Every year FSM provides arts education, access, and opportunity in media production to over 700 underserved youth.

Generation All: Generation All is a citywide initiative to unite Chicagoans in revitalizing neighborhood public high schools so that ALL students experience a high-quality education - one that supports their personal and academic development, both in and out of the classroom. Generation All aims to ensure that (1) all students have access to an inspiring education experience in a neighborhood school with the active support of the wider community; (2) all neighborhoods are grounded by high-quality schools acting as education anchors that not only serve students but also engage the community; and (3) all students graduate as engaged, educated, and capable adults who can contribute to the vitality of their communities and city.

Great Books Foundation: The Great Books Foundation is an independent, nonprofit educational organization that creates reading and discussion programs for students and adults. Through Shared Inquiry® discussions of enduring literature, we advance social and civic engagement and help people of all ages think critically about their own lives and the world we share.

Grow Your Own: Grow Your Own (GYO) is a unique partnership of community organizations and institutions of higher education whose mission is to support low-income parents and community members in becoming licensed, highly effective teachers in neighborhood schools. GYO creates a career pathway for individuals who have a passion for teaching but don't have the means or opportunity to realize that passion. GYO grew out of the work of Chicago community groups working in low-income neighborhoods to improve schools. Recognizing the untapped resources in their communities, GYO was created to provide a pipeline of highly effective justice and community-oriented teachers.
PARTICIPANT BIOS

Chicago

MAY BECK

Mary Beck is principal of Senn High School in Chicago’s Edgewater neighborhood. Named in that position in March of this year, she had previously held assistant principal positions at Villa Park and New Lawn Core Schools. Mary has also served in Farina’s Career Academy’s English department and as curriculum manager for the district’s Advancement Via Individualized Placement (AVID) program.

STEPHANIE DELION

Stephanie Delion is a Kelly High School principal and student of the student council. She has served as the president of the Chicago District Association of Student Councils and presided over the District Committee in May of Harvard High School. She will attend Taylor University this fall after a summer internship in New York City.

MARILIA ESTRADA

Marilisa Estrada is the director of organizing for the Brighton Park Neighborhood Council (BPN). In this capacity, she manages all of BPN’s health and wellness initiatives in Brighton Park’s community health centers. Marilisa also works closely with other community-based organizations to ensure that they work collaboratively to provide comprehensive health care services.

DAVID GREGG

In his 13 years at Senn High School, David Gregg has been a school leader and a local School Council representative and is currently as a Board of Education (BEO) program coordinator and the school’s director of athletics. He is a National Board Certified Teacher who has represented Chicago and the Public Schools as a presenter at both regional and national conferences, discussing student voices in teacher professional development and the use of evidence-based professional development.

SUSAN MOORE JOHNSON

Susan Moore Johnson studied urban studies and urban education and currently teaches at the Institute of Local American History, teaching the course in the city’s South Side neighborhood.

LAURENCE MINTER

Laurence Minter is currently a senior attending Indian Hill School High School. Laurence’s healthy interest in extracurricular activities and in and outside of the school setting. She is involved in student government and various community service and leadership-based organizations such as SADD, USA, and the Student National Honor Society. She also enjoys playing tennis and soccer, and also serves as the vice president of her school’s Student Council.
Chicago continued

CHARLES M. PAYNE
Charles M. Payne is the Frank B. McClung Professor and Service Professor in the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago. His interests include urban and educational reform, social inequality, social change, and modern African American history. He is the author of Getting What We Want: The Ambiguity of Success and Failure in Urban Education (1984) and For God the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition in the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement (1994). He is a co-author of Debating the Civil Rights Movement (2001) and co-editor of Time Longer Than Night: A History of African American Activism, 1892-1989 (2003). His Six Million Rifles, for Little Change (2008) is concerned with what we have learned about the persistence of failure in urban districts.

CHARLES TOCCI
Charles Tocci is an assistant professor of social studies education at the Loyola University Chicago School of Education. Charles started his career in education as a social studies teacher at South Shore Community Academy before joining the National Center for Restructuring Schools, Staffing, & Teaching at Teachers College, Columbia University. He returned to Chicago in 2010 to join the education faculty at National Louis University. From 2012-2016, Charles served as Loyola’s liaison to the Chicago Public Schools to help establish and coordinate their urban school university partnership. He has also been a community representative on the Celia Family Elementary School Local School Council and currently sits on the 45th Ward’s “Committee for Rogers Park Schools.”

DELOS BROWN
Delores Brown joined Stephen Decatur Middle School as an assistant principal in 2012 and became its principal the following year. Previously, she was a social science teacher (1999-2011) and data leader (2011-2012) at Evanston High School in Springfield. The daughter of an educator and a Baptist pastor from the south suburb of Chicago, she has completed a bachelor’s degree in history education and political science and a master’s degree in education administration at Elmhurst College.

ROBERT LEE
Robert Lee is executive director of downtown urban programs and partnerships at Illinois State University and founding director of the Teacher Education Pipeline. He has developed partnerships involving the university’s teacher-training programs, school districts throughout Illinois, and community-based organizations. These partnerships aim to improve culturally responsive and relevant teachers for urban schools and communities. The United States Department of Education has called the Teacher Education Pipeline an “outstanding demonstration education model.” Lee’s writings on community-minded teacher preparation and related subjects have been published in journals and books. He has received awards from national organizations, including the Leadership Academy Award from the Association of Association of Teachers of America and Provost Prentice, a graduate of Providence University, for his advanced degrees from Harvard and DePaul Universities.

ANDY MANAR
Born and raised in Monroe County, State Senator Andy Manar holds a bachelor of Arts degree in history from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. He also maintains Illinois teacher certification and belongs to numerous civic and educational organizations. Before becoming a member of the General Assembly, Senator Manar served as a Village Trustee in的数量, mayor of number and eventually Mascouton County Board chairman. He was encouraged and inspired to enter public service by his late Senator Vince Ryan. At the current State Senator representing the 49th District in the General Assembly, Senator Manar is looking forward in the state’s school funding formula, sponsoring a bipartisan legislative to make sure every child has access to a quality education regardless of their ZIP code.

FRED SPANNAUS
Fred Spannaus is a member of the Decatur District 61 School Board, having served since 2013. In private life, he is an independent consultant with a practice that focuses on two areas: assisting local communities in responding to homelessness and protecting human rights in the workplace. Prior to winning the district election nearly 20 years ago, he was an executive in the nonprofit sector. Fred has a bachelor’s degree from Illinois Wesleyan and a master’s degree from the University of Illinois at Springfield. He has also taken post-graduate courses at DePaul University.

LYNNE HAEFFELE
Lynne Haefele’s background spans the education spectrum. As a high school science teacher and department chair, she won numerous local, state, and national educator awards and taught teacher preparation courses at Illinois State University (ISU). She then served the Illinois State Board of Education for fourteen years in various administrative roles and ultimately as Chief Deputy Superintendent. Dr. Haefele joined ISU in 2005 as a senior education researcher. She served as Senior Policy Director for Education Docent and Undergraduate Student Media from 2011 to 2015 and now directs the Center for the Study of Education Policy in the ISU College of Education. Her research projects and published works include studies of high-poverty/high-achievement schools, college readiness and completion, teacher distribution, college student transfer, and school/university partnerships.

HANNAN LYSBAGER
Hannah Lysbager is a lifelong resident of Monroe County, graduating from Ill. Dist. High School in 2004. From there she attended Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, where she earned her Associate of Science before transferring to Millikin University where she graduated with a Bachelor of Science in mathematics with a certificate in secondary mathematics. More recently, Mrs. Lysbager has received her master’s degree in teacher leadership from Eastern Illinois University. She has taught since January 1999 at both Mahomet and Somonauk High Schools. She has been Department chair at Somonauk High School for 5 years where she also teaches mathematics ranging from Algebra 1 to Honors Pre-Calculus. When Mrs. Lysbager is not teaching math or watching her children play sports, she enjoys singing and play the banjo at church.

SHANNON MITTELMAN
Shannon Mittelman directs the Doctoral Teacher Education Program affiliated with Illinois State University. The program represents a partnership among the University, the Education College of Monroe County, and Decatur public schools. She works to cultivate innovative, relevant, and effective educators for schools in Decatur. Originally from Oklahoma, she and her family have called Decatur home for over two decades. She is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma, the University of Illinois, and the American College of Education and is now pursuing a doctorate in teaching and learning from Illinois State University.
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THE SERIES

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GRAND VICTORIA FOUNDATION

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