



illinoiseducationroundtable

2009 Legislative
Priorities & Policy
Briefs

February
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The Illinois Education Roundtable is an organization committed to unifying the voice of educational organizations and consists of representatives from 18 school leadership associations and organizations representing more than 6000 school board members, over 7000 school leaders and in excess of 230,000 teachers and other school personnel.

The Illinois Education Roundtable supports and/or recommends the following policy positions for legislative action:

(Please refer to the following 2009 ILERT Policy Briefs for more information)

1. Special Education Funding

State of Illinois funding for Special Education Personnel should be established and sustained at 33% of the average Illinois teacher salary. In addition, non-certificated reimbursement should be linked to average teacher salary.

2. Foundation Level Funding (Adequacy)

The Education Funding Advisory Board (EFAB) should be convened on an annual basis and that adequate resources be allocated in a long-term funding solution to fully support an EFAB recommended Foundation Level by 2010.

3. Mandated Categorical Funding

Sufficient funds must be annually appropriated to fully fund current categorical programs. Further, any new mandates must be fully funded by new revenues from State of Illinois sources.

4. School Construction

The General Assembly must establish a continuous program for school construction and maintenance funding.

5. Student Assessment

A system of quality student assessment must be developed that includes:

Regular review of student learning standards,

Alignment of assessment to standards,

Assessment that measures student academic growth over time and provides timely feedback to teachers,

Advanced data systems that contribute to longitudinal student assessment.

6. Early Childhood

Funding and policy focus toward the development and implementation of quality preschool programs.

7. State-Wide System of Support

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) should develop a state-wide system of support and funding of initiatives to advance local school district intervention strategies to improve student academic success.

8. Professional Development

State funding and policies should contribute to comprehensive high quality mentoring, professional development and leadership development programs for all educators.

9. State Board of Education (ISBE)

State budget support of ISBE staffing requests related to current program support and future staffing and support for initiatives supported or recommended by the Illinois Education Roundtable.

10. No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Reauthorization of NCLB should include significant revisions to:

Shift from applying sanctions for failing to raise test scores to holding states and localities accountable for making the systemic changes that improve student achievement.

Allow states to measure progress by using students' growth in achievement across multiple indicators of student achievement in addition to standardized tests.

Fully fund compliance with the provisions of the law at the federal level without reducing expenditures for other education programs at the state and local level

For more information, contact Dr. Michael A. Jacoby, Chair of the Illinois Education Roundtable at: Illinois ASBO, NIU (IA-103) 108 Carroll Ave., DeKalb, IL 60115, 815-753-9369, mjacoby@niu.edu

Special Education Funding

State of Illinois funding for Special Education Personnel should be established and sustained at 33% of the average Illinois teacher salary. In addition, non-certificated reimbursement should be linked to average teacher salary

Statement of the Problem:

Districts receive partial reimbursement for certified and non-certified staff that work with Special Education students.

In 1977, districts received \$6,250 for each certified Special Education staff member, which comprised 50% of the average teacher salary. In 1985, the rate increased to \$8,000 for certified personnel and \$2,800 for non-certified personnel. These rates contributed 35% of the average teacher salary. This appropriation did not increase for twenty two years.

In 2007, the General Assembly increased the reimbursement to \$9,000/\$3,500 for certified/non-certified staff. This contributes approximately 16% of the average salary.

Program costs continue to rise and reimbursement has failed to keep pace. If adjusted for inflation, districts should receive over \$17,000 per certified staff using the Employment Cost Index, based on the 1985 funding level.

Preferred Solution:

Increase personnel reimbursement for certified/non-certified staff to \$19,765/\$6,918 (previously proposed in SB 2288), approximately 33% of the average teacher salary.

Resources Required:

The increased funding would cost approximately \$500 million. (previously proposed in SB2288)

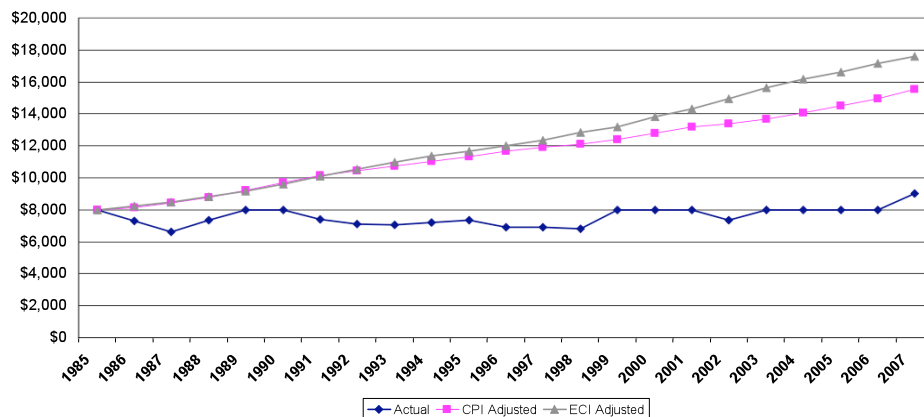
Additional Implications, Resources, or Issues:

All school funding should increase by the Employment Cost Index (ECI) annually.

Additional revenue may be phased in over several years.

Legislation should allow districts to levy for the shortfall of Special Education costs outside of the tax cap and should allow non-PTELL districts to levy actual Special Education costs instead of being restricted by the limiting rate.

Special Ed Personnel Reimbursement Annual reimbursement compared to ECI/CPI



Foundation Level Funding (Adequacy)

The Education Funding Advisory Board (EFAB) be convened on an annual basis and that adequate resources be allocated in a long-term funding solution to fully support an EFAB recommended Foundation Level by 2010.

3

Statement of the Problem:

The Illinois Constitution affirms “The State has the primary responsibility for financing the system of public education”. The state does not provide an adequate foundation level funding source.

The Education Funding Advisory Board (EFAB) was legislatively convened in 1997. Its mission is to biennially recommend a minimum per-pupil foundation level based on a methodology which incorporates the basic education expenditures of low-spending schools exhibiting high academic performance. EFAB defined “adequate” to mean the actual cost of an academic curriculum of sufficient quality to permit an efficiently operated school district to obtain the result of having two-thirds of its students pass the Illinois standardized tests. EFAB contracted with

Augenblick & Myers for a replicable methodology to produce an adequate funding level. Their foundation level recommendations produced by the adequacy model have never been implemented.

Preferred Solution:

The current recommendation for FY2009 from the EFAB model would provide a foundation level of \$7,388/student (based on ECI). The current FY2009 foundation level funding from the state is \$5,959...a difference of \$1,429/student for just this year. That difference equates to approximately \$2.15 billion a year.

Resources Required:

\$2.15 billion per year confirms Illinois needs school funding reform. In order for reform to be maintained over time, reform should include, but not be limited to the following:

- Reconstitute EFAB in accordance with current statutes;
- Increase the income tax rate;
- Expand the sales tax base.

Additional Implications, Resources and Issues:

The white paper of September 2008, “Money Matters: How the Illinois School Funding System Creates Significant Educational Inequities that Impact Most Students in the State” from the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, clearly shows the huge funding gaps of the state help sustain the huge achievement gaps in the state. As the cry for more academic accountability increases so must the realization that to reach that goal requires sufficient funds.

An adequate foundation level is only one piece of the funding reform puzzle. It is imperative that Illinois look at the structural deficit that is comprised of other growing needs of the state with a stagnant or diminishing revenue stream. Pensions, health care issues, construction, etc. are an integral part of a funding reform package: adequate school funding reform cannot stand alone.

Growing towards a 21st century world Illinois needs to address adequacy in education funding and seek funding reform now. Data shows that revenue reform can help provide an adequate education for all kids in Illinois.

Mandated Categorical Funding

Sufficient funds must be annually appropriated to fully fund current categorical programs. Further, any new mandates must be fully funded by new revenues from State of Illinois sources.

Statement of the Problem:

Mandated Categorical (MCAT) funding provides partial reimbursement for nine programs required by the state. Even MCATs that are fully funded leave a significant portion of Special Education programs under funded, forcing schools to assume responsibility for the shortfall, taking money away from other programs and services.

For eleven of the past fifteen years, three of the six Special Education MCATs were prorated as low as 86%.

Costs continue to increase:

- The cost of transporting a Special Education student is 80% higher than a general education student, which is compounded by the dramatic

increase of general transportation costs.

- The number of students requiring special education services has steadily increased. The cost of educating a student with a severe disability or multiple disabilities can exceed \$30,000. This leaves a growing shortfall between costs and reimbursement.

In spring 2008, ISBE estimated the shortfall between special education expenditures and reimbursement was over \$900 million. Since Special Education services are mandated by the state and federal government, local taxpayers are responsible for the shortfall.

Preferred Solution:

Fully fund Mandated Categorical programs.

Resources Required:

Full funding of MCATs is estimated to require an increase of \$145 million for FY2010.

Additional Implications, Resources, or Issues:

Consider streamlining the funding of special education categorical programs. For example, there is a proposal that would eliminate the Special Education Extraordinary categorical and add the additional funding to the Special Education personnel reimbursement categorical.

Legislation should allow districts to levy for the shortfall of Special Education costs outside of the tax cap and should allow non-PTELL districts to levy actual Special Education costs instead of being restricted by the limiting rate.

School Construction

The General Assembly must establish a continuous program for school construction and maintenance funding.

Statement of Problem:

Illinois school districts continue to be confronted with the issue of providing safe, appropriate instructional facilities for the students of Illinois. For some districts, this is manifested in ever-increasing enrollment that requires new construction on an annual basis. For others, enrollment may be stagnant and there is no need for additional facilities, but the condition of existing facilities requires extensive maintenance efforts or replacement of facilities that have exceeded their useful life. The ability to provide instructional technology enhancements in older school

buildings is often hampered by the inability of districts to afford necessary facility renovations.

The 2008 ISBE Capital Needs Assessment Survey identified \$7.8 billion in identified construction needs in 456 Illinois school districts. Due to lack of funding, there are 370 temporary classrooms reported in operation and a need for 1,106 additional classrooms for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classrooms. Following are summary data from the study:

\$1.7 billion to build 116 school buildings,

\$1 billion to build 214 building additions

\$5 billion for general repair and remodeling of aging schools

- o \$3.1 billion required for compliance under the Health/Life Safety codes

Currently, the entire cost of any new facility construction, existing facility renovation/maintenance or any facility upgrade currently falls entirely upon local district taxpayers.

Preferred Solution:

General Assembly shall establish a continuous program for funding school construction and maintenance in Illinois public schools. Program should continue to include a process/formula by which districts are ranked based on need.

Amend existing legislation to make the 1% County Sales Tax for school construction/maintenance binding if approved by voters.

Amend school code to increase bonding limits for elementary, high school and unit districts.

Resources Required:

\$7.8 billion in state and local funds for school construction and maintenance.

The Education Roundtable recommends:

- o \$50 million in annual state funds dedicated to a maintenance matching fund for districts.
- o \$150 million in one-time funding for entitlements granted in 2002.
- o \$1.5 billion in annual state funds to support the School Construction Grant Program (Public Act 90-548)

Additional Implications, Resources or Issues

Long-term dependence solely on local funding or the 1% county sales tax will result in growing inequity among school district facilities.

Student Assessment

A system of quality student assessment must be developed that includes:

Regular review of student learning standards,

Alignment of assessment to standards,

Assessment that measures student academic growth over time and provides timely feedback to teachers,

Advanced data systems that contribute to longitudinal student assessment

Statement of the Problem:

NCLB is focused too heavily on assessment for accountability purposes with little consideration for the need to use multiple assessment measures.

Little opportunity to be acknowledged for individual student growth.

Cost of assessments continue to increase each year.

Preferred Solution:

The federal government should collaborate with states and allow for growth models that hold state's accountable for student achievement but focus on a more realistic expectation other than all students meeting and exceeding state standards by 2014.

The state should support and promote the use of formative assessments to inform instruction and interventions.

The state should support the development of a longitudinal data system to provide for the collection and analysis of student performance data, Pre-K to 20.

The state should continue efforts to provide appropriate assessments to all students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

Efforts should continue to bring coherence among standards, curriculum, assessments and college entry requirements through state membership in the

American Diploma Project.

Resources Required:

Funding to support the revision process for standards and assessments - \$1 million. (source: Illinois State Board of Education)

Funding to support the creation and maintenance of a statewide longitudinal data system – \$9,000,000 is needed for ISBE over 4 years. (source: Illinois State Board of Education)

See also ISBE staffing recommendations (pg 11).

Additional Implications, Resources or Issues

Support legislation to create a longitudinal data system.

Support funding to support the availability of formative classroom assessments and end of course exams.

Early Childhood

Funding and policy focus toward the development and implementation of quality preschool programs.

Statement of the Problem:

Growth of new Early Childhood program funding focuses too heavily on program expansion without adequate funding to maintain existing programs and retain quality personnel.

ISBE does not have adequate staff to provide needed technical assistance and monitor for quality assurance.

Preferred Solution:

Early childhood programs should be adequately funded to ensure that existing programs can be sustained and cost of living increases provided to program personnel.

Adequate and sustained funding to support personnel and administrative costs at ISBE.

Identify the cost of full implementation of the Illinois Early Learning Council recommendations.

Develop a time-line for full implementation.

Resources Required:

FY 2010 - \$12.5 million (source: *Illinois State Board of Education*)

See also ISBE staffing recommendations (pg 11).

Additional Implications, Resources or Issues

Policy is driven by the Illinois Early Learning Council and supported by ISBE and the educational community.

State-Wide System of Support

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) should develop a state-wide system of support and funding of initiatives that advance local school district intervention strategies to improve student academic success.

Statement of the Problem

Currently, there is a patchwork quilt of over 900 districts, 45 elected ROE's, special education cooperatives, a severely understaffed ISBE, myriad private providers of various types, and many public and private colleges and universities, all providing professional development programs. This quilt has plenty of holes and extremely uneven quality.

The net result is that districts that have sufficient size and/or resources have high quality professional development and support. Without such resources, many districts and schools lack high quality professional development and support.

A menu of interventions from the state are needed, such as Response to Intervention (RtI), which provide timely interventions for students when they

need it and a support school wide use of data in decision making.

The Illinois RtI definition, reflected in the state RtI plan presented in January, 2008, emphasizes the ongoing process of using student performance and related data to guide instructional and intervention decisions for all students. As each district was required to submit a district RtI plan by 1/2009, the need for state coordination is essential for statewide implementation. A system-wide process of this complexity and duration with the goal of improved outcomes for students requires integrated and ongoing professional development and technical supports. A state-wide system of support would provide a comprehensive framework for the many organizations across IL to collaborate on effective strategies for effective implementation that promotes continuous student improvement.

Preferred Solution

Illinois would have a unified, integrated, comprehensive, high quality system of support for districts and schools to build the capacity of educators to help students meet the Illinois learning standards.

The system of support should include, but not be limited to such statewide efforts as Response to Intervention, assistance to teachers in using learning standards, and Positive Behavior Intervention Supports.

Resources Required

The Education Roundtable recommends a state-wide study of total resources currently being spent through local and state funds on intervention strategies.

Recommendations should be developed regarding the reallocation of existing resources toward more effective and efficient strategies.

See also ISBE staffing recommendations (pg 11).

Additional Implications, Resources, or Issues

Illinois will need strong leadership at the state level, beginning with the office of the Governor, to convene all key stakeholders to collaboratively design and implement such a high quality system of support.

Professional Development

State funding and policies should contribute to comprehensive high quality mentoring, professional development and leadership development programs for all educators.

Statement of the Problem

Ongoing research (Leithwood, Wallace, etc.) continues to indicate that the two strongest influences to improve student achievement are the quality of teachers and leaders.

Other states have articulated, funded, and supported a comprehensive professional development model that defines the continuum of professional growth over the course of educators' career. Data indicate that achievement of students in Illinois requires additional support. Rather than an isolated model, it is incumbent to define a research-based, comprehensive professional development framework based upon standards.

Preferred Solution

Provide high-quality data to inform learning.

Develop high-quality evaluation systems that are standards-based, provide feedback, support, and opportunities for development.

Analyze existing professional development practice and resources in the state and explore the re-allocation of resources in support of student achievement.

Create a structure for delivery that connects large unit districts, surrounding suburban and rural districts to universities.

Access national partners with available resources.

Create incentives for teachers to improve their practice without leaving classroom instruction.

Create opportunities for communities of learning for all educators.

Create time in the school day or incentives beyond the school day for educators to become continuous adult learners.

Support Human Resource strategies that recruit and retain the best candidates

Create state and locally funded professional development systems for all educators that provides mentors, coaches, team participation, and builds a community of learners.

Provide programs focused on curricular content, pedagogy, and teachers' continued growth

Provide opportunities for career ladder growth for all educators.

Create opportunities for education groups to collaborate.

Resources Required

Re-allocation of existing federal, state and local resources.

Allocate specific state funding for mentoring and coaching of all educators (teachers, principals, business officials, central office personnel, and superintendents).

Provide targeted state financial support for additional professional development at the local level.

Additional Implications, Resources, Issues

Differentiation on Salary Schedules for professional development that results in improved student achievement rather than movement towards administrative credentials.

ROE professional development to be aligned with district and state initiatives.

Develop strategies that meet the needs of diverse districts throughout Illinois.

State Board of Education **(ISBE)**

State budget support of ISBE staffing requests related to current program support and future staffing and support for initiatives supported or recommended by the Illinois Education Roundtable.

Statement of the Problem

The mission of the Illinois State Board of Education is to provide leadership, assistance, resources and advocacy so that every student is prepared to succeed in careers and postsecondary education, and share accountability for doing so with districts and Schools.

ISBE relied heavily on input from stakeholders in developing the fiscal year 2010 budget and attempted to recommend funding areas that would provide the most equitable benefit to all Illinois schools. Last year ISBE requested 25 new positions. The General Assembly passed the requested increases for FY 2009, however, ISBE staffing additions and increases in personal services were later vetoed by the Governor.

ISBE balanced the need for new positions with the need to control costs. Positions were prioritized by senior staff. The following represents only the most

critical positions requested by ISBE for FY2010.

- Data Systems Application Support (6)
- Early Childhood Program Monitors (5)
- Teacher Certification (4)
- English Language Learning Compliance Monitors (4)
- Data Stewards (3)
- Grants and Programs System of Support (3)
- External Assurance Auditors (2)
- Educator and School Development Internal Consultants (1)
- School Business Services internal financial consultants to districts (1)
- Governmental relations aide (1)
- Data Researcher (1)

Preferred Solution:

The Illinois Education Roundtable (ILERT) recommends full support of ISBE staffing request related to current and future programs and the development of advanced data systems that contribute to longitudinal student assessment and district resource management.

ILERT supports the ISBE staffing expansions of trained professionals to perform and maintain the work required as the educational environment becomes more complex. ISBE needs adequate staff to develop and implement data systems necessary to assist with compliance of state and federal laws and program demands.

Resources Required

These 32 new positions in GRF would cost an additional \$1.9 million and bring the agency headcount to 535.

No Child Left Behind **(NCLB)**

Reauthorization of NCLB should include significant revisions to:

Shift from applying sanctions for failing to raise test scores to holding states and localities accountable for making the systemic changes that improve student achievement.

Allow states to measure progress by using students' growth in achievement across multiple indicators of student achievement in addition to standardized tests.

Fully fund compliance with the provisions of the law at the federal level without reducing expenditures for other education programs at the state and local level.

Statement of the Problem:

The goal of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), to ensure that all students are learning, is commendable and aligned with educational efforts across Illinois. We take this responsibility very seriously. While the goal is commended, the implementation of NCLB has resulted in significant barriers to improved educational opportunity across the state.

The rules and regulations associated with NCLB create three major problems that negatively impact the work done in school and districts across the state:

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) – AYP progress for each school and district is determined by all subgroups, at all grades, and in all subjects tested, scoring at a specified performance level. If one subgroup at one grade, in one subject does not perform at the specified level, the entire school or district is defined as not making adequate year progress.

Assessments and Accountability – ISAT and ACT measures are used as an annual snapshot in time for all students. These tests were never designed or intended to be used with special student populations (IEP and ELL subgroups). Illinois, under the NCLB require all students, other than a very small percentage of the student population who have demonstrated significant handicapping conditions, to be tested at grade level using these tests.

Sanctions in NCLB – The sanctions defined under NCLB are punitive and restrictive. Rather than helping schools, that need the most support, the sanctions are applied to the whole school regardless of the needs of specific student populations. These sanctions generally redirect the problem rather than address the root causes of low student achievement.

Preferred Solution:

In determining AYP designations:

- Groups being compared over the two year interval should be the same group of students in the same subject, not one year's group of third grade students compared to the next year's group of third graders.
- For IEP and ELL students, progress should be monitored based on growth over time, not against simple grade level performance standards.

Multiple indicators of student learning should be used for accountability purposes. Measurements that acknowledge the complexity and subtlety of teaching and learning beyond measurements provided on standardized tests should be included.

A Growth Model of measuring real students over time, with defined targeted gains appropriate for their ability should be developed and used. Illinois will need time, expertise and other resources to develop a useful Growth Model, including adequate funding in order to support any and all additional assessments and accountability measurements. The use of a “three year trajectory” concept for students to attain the goals should be explored and developed.

States and localities should be held accountable for making the systemic changes that improve student achievement. An understanding and appreciation for individual differences should be considered – noting the need to assure student success, based on individual strengths and weaknesses. Resources should be devoted to helping staff members understand and use best practices in the area of curriculum and instruction.

Initiatives Required

The development and deployment of a new federal or state assessment system using both formative and summative assessments based on measuring individual student growth

A state-wide student data management system to track the performance of all students over time

The reauthorization and full funding of NCLB to refocus the legislation on overcoming the biggest obstacle to student learning – poverty

The collection and dissemination of best practice information to all schools and districts across the state

A system of support at the state level for schools and districts that demonstrate a repeated pattern of low student achievement

Additional Implications, Resources, or Issues:

NCLB has increased the demand for student achievement data. At the state and federal levels, the use of data is essential in efforts to increase student achievement. Therefore, lawmakers, in partnership with other education stakeholders, must work to improve and increase capacity for the collection and availability of high-quality student data systems.

ISBE needs to work with local school districts to completely overhaul our learning standards and assessment system if we are to insure that all students are learning and progressing.

ABOUT THE ILLINOIS EDUCATION ROUNDTABLE



The Illinois Education Roundtable, is an organization consisting of representatives from 18 school leadership associations and organizations. The Roundtable is dedicated to regularly and actively study, make recommendations and promote action on critical public policy issues relating to education.

Mission: To provide a unified voice for educational organizations advocating for excellence in Illinois public schools.

Activities: The Roundtable will regularly study, make recommendations and take action on critical public policy issues relating to education.

Guiding Principles:

All students must have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in the 21st century

All Illinois public schools must be adequately funded to insure Illinois has a world-class educational system.

All mandates must be fully funded.

All public policy decisions must be in the best interest of students and be research-based.

All Illinois public schools must be accountable based on multiple indicators of success.

All Illinois public school educators must be committed to continuous professional growth and the implementation of best practices in support of student achievement.

Roundtable snapshot:

Education Roundtable represents 870 school districts in Illinois.

Represents 6,104 board members;

Represents more than 7,000 professional leaders;

Represents more than 230,000 teachers and other school personnel;

Represents 2.1 million students.

Current Officers:

Chair	Dr. Michael A. Jacoby, Executive Director, Illinois Association of School Business Officials (IASBO)
Vice Chair	Jo Anderson, Executive Director, Illinois Education Association (IEA-NEA)
Secretary	Dr. Diane Rutledge, Executive Director, Large Unit District Association (LUDA)
Treasurer	Mark Jontry, Regional Superintendent of Schools, Region 17, Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools (IARSS)

Member Organizations: Membership on the Illinois Education Roundtable includes the presidents and executives of the following organizations:

Education, Research, Development (ED-RED)
Elementary District Organization (EDO)
High School District Organization (HSDO)
Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education (IAASE)
Illinois Association – Regional Superintendents of Schools (IARSS)
Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA)
Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB)
Illinois Association of School Business Officials (IASBO)
Illinois Association of School Personnel Administrators (IASPA)
Illinois Chapter of National School Public Relations Association (INSPRA)
Illinois Principals Association (IPA)
Illinois Education Association (IEA-NEA)
Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT-AFT)
Large Unit District Association (LUDA)
Legislative Education Network of DuPage (LEND)
Midwest Principals' Center (MPC)
South Cooperative Organization for Public Education (SCOPE)
Vision on Issues and Choices in Education (VOICE)

Advisory Member Organizations: The following organizations are invited to attend and advise The Illinois Education Roundtable in an ex-officio capacity.

Illinois Council of Professors of Educational Administration (ICPEA)
Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)

FURTHER INFORMATION:

For additional information please contact Dr. Michael A. Jacoby, Chairman of the Illinois Education Roundtable:

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