

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Fund Schools in FY25 to Mitigate ‘the Bloodletting’	1	IL’s First State Literacy Plan	3
Dual Credit Quality Act Updates Needed	2	Crossword Puzzle: A Capitol Idea	4
Chicago Voters: Families Should Choose the Best Public School for Their Children	2	Meet the Staff: Mea Anderson	4
		About Stand	4

FUND SCHOOLS IN FY25 TO MITIGATE ‘THE BLOODLETTING’

FY25 will be a “perfect storm for public education finances,” according to national education finance expert Marguerite Rosa from the Georgetown Edunomics Lab. With the impending fiscal cliff as pandemic funding dries up, combined with high inflation rates and decreasing student enrollments, Rosa says the 2024-2025 school year “looks to be ‘the bloodletting.’”

... the 2024-2025 school year “looks to be ‘the bloodletting.’”

The importance of state funding for public education this year cannot be overstated. This is a critical year to step up for our schools. For FY25, Stand for Children is calling for targeted education investments to help schools and communities meet the growing needs of students and families.

INCREASE EVIDENCE-BASED FUNDING MORE THAN THE \$350M MINIMUM

Once again, Stand is joining the Funding Illinois’ Future (FIF) Coalition to call on the General Assembly to invest an added \$550 million in Evidence-Based Funding. At the rate of \$350 million per year, it will take two more decades to fully fund our schools compared to \$550 million, which would get us there in half the time. New funding is heavily targeted to the most underfunded districts. And **this** is the year state investment **really** matters: Schools continue to address the impact of the pandemic on student learning and welcome migrant students, but they are facing a fiscal cliff as federal funds must be allocated by September 2024. If you support investing ‘more than the minimum’ increase of \$350 million and want to be a part of a long-term solution to reaching full funding, we invite you to [sign the pledge](#) to fully fund public schools!

ESTABLISH A \$3M LITERACY LINE ITEM TO IMPLEMENT ISBE’S BRAND NEW STATE LITERACY PLAN

Last year, the General Assembly passed landmark legislation directing ISBE to create the State’s first ever comprehensive literacy plan. After a year of collecting feedback and refining the plan with stakeholders, ISBE approved a final plan early this year and recommended \$3 million in the budget for implementation. The plan puts forth a statewide literacy vision that is research-aligned, student-centered, and educator-led. A \$3 million investment from the legislature could mean the difference between aligned supports for educators and teacher preparation programs, communication with families and communities, and leadership to drive literacy achievement across the state, versus a plan that sits on a shelf collecting dust.

INVEST AN ADDITIONAL \$10M IN CTE TO MODERNIZE CAREER PATHWAY OPPORTUNITIES

State funding for secondary career and technical education (CTE) was stagnant for well over a decade. In 2020, there was a small increase of \$5 million dollars, bringing the state appropriation for secondary CTE to \$43 million. The state maintained that funding level until this year, when a \$4.6 million increase brought the state’s total investment in secondary CTE to \$47 million. If state investments had kept up with inflation, the state appropriation would be over \$80 million. Meanwhile, CTE enrollments continue to grow, increasing by 14,000 from 2017 to 2023. This leaves districts doing more with less funding. A \$10 million increase in CTE would support the increase in enrollments and new equity-driven CTE policies.

ADD \$75M TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Boosting access to high-quality preschool and birth-to-three home visiting programs has a significant and long-lasting impact on students’ social-emotional learning and gives preschoolers the skills they need to enter kindergarten ready to learn. Stand supports ISBE’s proposal to add \$75 million to the Early Childhood Block Grant, which will also further Illinois’ commitment to early literacy by providing early access to developmentally-appropriate exposure to oral language development, phonemic awareness, alphabet knowledge, and vocabulary growth.

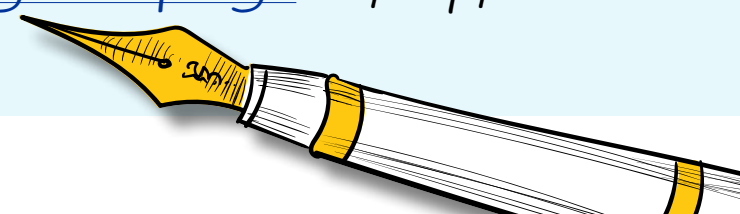
CONTINUE FUNDING THE MINORITY TEACHERS OF ILLINOIS (MTI) SCHOLARSHIPS AT \$8M

In Illinois, students of color make up 54% of the student population while teachers of color make up only 18% of the teacher workforce. Increases in student diversity are outpacing increases in teacher diversity. MTI offers \$7,500 in tuition support for future teachers, and prioritizes those who need it most, helping to close gaps in teacher diversity. An \$8 million appropriation will allow Illinois to continue to serve almost three times the number of teacher candidates of color than it did in FY21.

MAINTAIN ICCB’S \$3M FOR DUAL CREDIT GRANTS

Last year, the General Assembly directed \$3 million to the ICCB to support the State’s first-ever Dual Credit grants. This investment will help districts grow their Dual Credit programs and provide ICCB with much-needed resources to support Dual Credit programs across the state. Dual Credit courses are often students’ first experience with college-level coursework and successful completion can give many students the confidence boost needed to continue their studies after high school. But opportunity gaps persist for low-income students, students with IEPs, Black, and Latino/a students, who remain underrepresented in DC programs. These funds will help districts expand equitable access and connect more students to these game-changing courses. [Read about](#) Stand’s efforts to strengthen the Dual Credit Quality Act to afford more opportunities to underserved students later in this edition of the Newsstand.

If you support investing ‘more than the minimum’ increase of \$350 million and want to be a part of a long-term solution to reaching full funding, we invite you to [sign the pledge](#) to fully fund public schools!



DUAL CREDIT QUALITY ACT UPDATES NEEDED

The overarching educational goal that Illinois' P-20 Council adopted for the state in 2009, which has been supported and amplified by all Illinois' education agencies and three gubernatorial administrations, is: by 2025, 60% of Illinois adults will hold a high-

quality degree or credential. For 15 years, policymakers have fought to break down barriers among siloed systems to improve equitable, affordable access to post-secondary education. Dual Credit access is a central lever that Illinois has employed

to advance the "60 by 25" goal. Since 2016, enrollment in DC courses has grown significantly as demand and opportunities for DC has increased, and as Illinois has used multiple policy levers to embed DC into high schools. Still, [just 14%](#) of Illinois high

school students are enrolled in DC courses. **Despite the progress expanding access, opportunity gaps persist for low-income students, students with IEPs, Black, and Latino/a students, who remain underrepresented in DC programs.**

2022 ENROLLMENT NUMBERS	% DUAL CREDIT ENROLLMENT	% OF ALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS	DUAL CREDIT ENROLLMENT GAP
WHITE	60	46	+14
AFRICAN AMERICAN	11	16	-5
HISPANIC	20	27	-7
ASIAN	6	5	+1
IEP	7	16	-9
LOW INCOME	30	46	-16

Inequitable participation in Dual Credit is especially problematic as Illinois works to close degree achievement and pay gaps. Dual Credit courses are often students' first experience with college-level coursework and successful completion can give many students the confidence boost needed to continue their studies after high school. For other students, the low price-tag of a Dual Credit course is an excellent way to explore career pathways or get a jump start on the general education credits required for a postsecondary degree.

A [2023 ICCB Dual Credit Report](#) found the "advancement rate" (that is, the percentage of students who either graduated, transferred, or were still enrolled) was 13 percentage points higher for students who had completed

at least one Dual Credit course in high school. The higher advancement rate was found among all demographic groups, ranging from 9 to 18 percentage

The graduation rate for first-time, full-time students at IL Community Colleges was 18% higher.

points higher than their non-DC-taking peers. The same report found that the graduation rate for first-time, full-time students at Illinois Community Colleges was 18% higher for students who had completed DC coursework in high school than those students that did not enroll in Dual Credit.

A new bill, HB5020, sponsored by Rep. Blair-Sherlock, amends the Dual Credit Quality Act (DCQA) to address inequitable access with three educator-driver solutions:

1. **Engage more students through multiple eligibility avenues and better communication with families.**

The proposed amendment brings Dual Credit placement measures into alignment with the Developmental Education Reform Act to recognize a broader array of student achievement. High school districts will also be required to establish a communications plan for notifying students and families of the multiple measures criteria and clearly designate Dual Credit course offerings in course catalogs to ensure all students can work towards Dual Credit opportunities.

2. **Help more educators become fully qualified Dual Credit instructors.** New guidance, issued jointly by ISBE and ICCB, would respond to recent policy changes from the Higher Learning Commission and incorporate updates to the Dual Credit Quality Act (DCQA) with the goal of providing uniform statewide credentialing information and direction to secondary and postsecondary districts. The opportunity to enter into Professional Development Plans would continue, providing an innovative solution to allow

more teachers to teach Dual Credit while they pursue the necessary credentials to become fully qualified.

3. **Empower districts to use multiple higher learning partners to offer in-demand coursework.** High school districts and their local community college would still be compelled to attempt to partner with each other first, but high schools would be able to partner with an alternative higher learning institution for a particular course if the high school and community college cannot reach agreement on course documentation or instructor approval.

These ideas were developed through extensive discussions with secondary and postsecondary educators, including both faculty and administrators. Rooted in research, the proposed DCQA amendment continues to honor the DCQA's original balance between rigor and access while elevating nationally recognized best practices, though negotiations are ongoing as we work to ensure the best solution.

The advancement rate is 13 points higher for Dual Credit students.

CHICAGO VOTERS: PARENTS SHOULD CHOOSE THE BEST PUBLIC SCHOOL FOR THEIR CHILDREN

In a December 2023 resolution, the Chicago Board of Education passed a resolution highlighting its values for strategic planning, including a vision to "transition away from" selective enrollment, magnet, and charter public schools. But in a deeply segregated city where less than half of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) students attend their neighborhood school, is this reflective of the will of Chicagoans? Last month, Stand commissioned a poll of 500 Chicago voters to see how they feel about the

City's school choice system. Our results found that Chicagoans overwhelmingly believe they should be able to choose the public school that best meets their student's needs and that eliminating this system would ultimately increase school segregation.

What are CPS public school options?

Chicago Public Schools (CPS), more than any other Illinois school district, offers a variety of diverse public school options for students. Families in CPS can

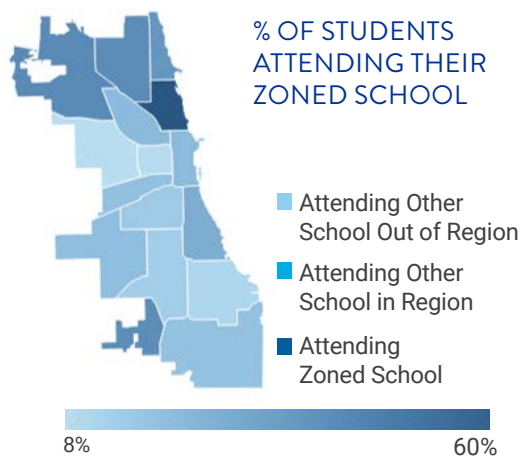
send their student to their zoned neighborhood school, or they can apply to attend a different school that better meets their student's individual needs, including other neighborhood, selective enrollment, magnet, or charter schools.

Selective enrollment schools are merit-based and accept students based on their grades and test scores, while magnet schools accept students based on a lottery system. Many selective and magnet schools were created

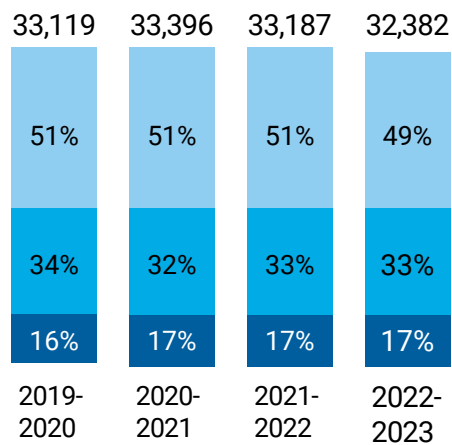
after a [desegregation decree was established in Chicago](#) to integrate public schools in 1980. Charter schools are publicly-funded, independently-run schools governed under a partnership agreement with the district; they also accept their students based on a lottery system.

Who will this change impact?

The Board says this decision is intended to "[disrupt] cycles of inequity," but a closer look at which communities will be most



% OF BLACK HIGH SCHOOLERS IN CPS ATTENDING THEIR ZONED SCHOOL, CPS ARA DASHBOARD



How do Chicagoans feel about this change?

Stand commissioned a poll of 500 Chicago voters asking them to weigh in on public option schools, and not only did their responses highlight the community's desire to maintain their ability to attend selective enrollment, magnet, and charter schools, the results also brought to light the reality of public school choice: eliminating families' options will not

heavily impacted by this decision suggests otherwise. Though the desegregation decree that initiated the rise in many public option schools was lifted in 2009, CPS and, even more so, the City of Chicago remains deeply segregated. Options schools are often among the most integrated schools in the district, and Black students, in particular, are the most likely to opt for another school than their neighborhood option. Just one-quarter of CPS high schoolers attend their neighborhood school, including just 17% of Black high schoolers.

- 86%** 82% of voters and 86% of parents believe families in CPS should be able to choose the public school that best meets their student's needs
- 64%** 64% of voters feel that eliminating school choice would limit opportunities and increase school segregation
- 50%** Half of the families in CPS who don't attend their neighborhood school said they would move if their neighborhood school was the only public option available
- 30%** Of the families that said they would move, 30% would opt to leave the City altogether

improve equity. Instead, it will encourage those with enough resources to move or choose a private school.

The Board says the resolution will guide its strategic planning, but it is clear that a move away from selective enrollment, magnet, and charter public schools would not be in line with the desires of voters or CPS parents. Most CPS families are already making the decision to

send their children to schools they feel best meet their needs. Public school choice will always exist for families that can afford to move and live where there is a high-quality school; dissolving public school choice would only take that decision away from Black and low-income families who have the least resources and for whom their zip code would truly dictate the quality of education their children can access.

ILLINOIS' FIRST EVER STATE LITERACY PLAN

A new state law enacted by SB 2243 (Lightford/Mayfield-Faver Dias) required the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to adopt a Comprehensive State Literacy Plan by January 2024, and we are thrilled to see this endeavor come to fruition! After almost a year of working groups, focus groups, lis-

tening tours, and public comments, the Board approved the plan at its January board meeting. Stand partners with dozens of parents, teachers, and organizations in the Illinois Early Literacy Coalition, which is committed to elevating equitable evidence-based literacy instruction for all Illinois students.

The plan contains no mandates, but it establishes a strong vision and outlines clear guidance about instructional practices that are and are not aligned with evidence. It clearly describes seven pillars of literacy that are critical: oracy, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehen-

sion, and writing; for each pillar, specific instructional practices are highlighted as aligned with evidence with others called out as *not aligned* with evidence.

For example, here are a few examples of the practices outlined in the plan:

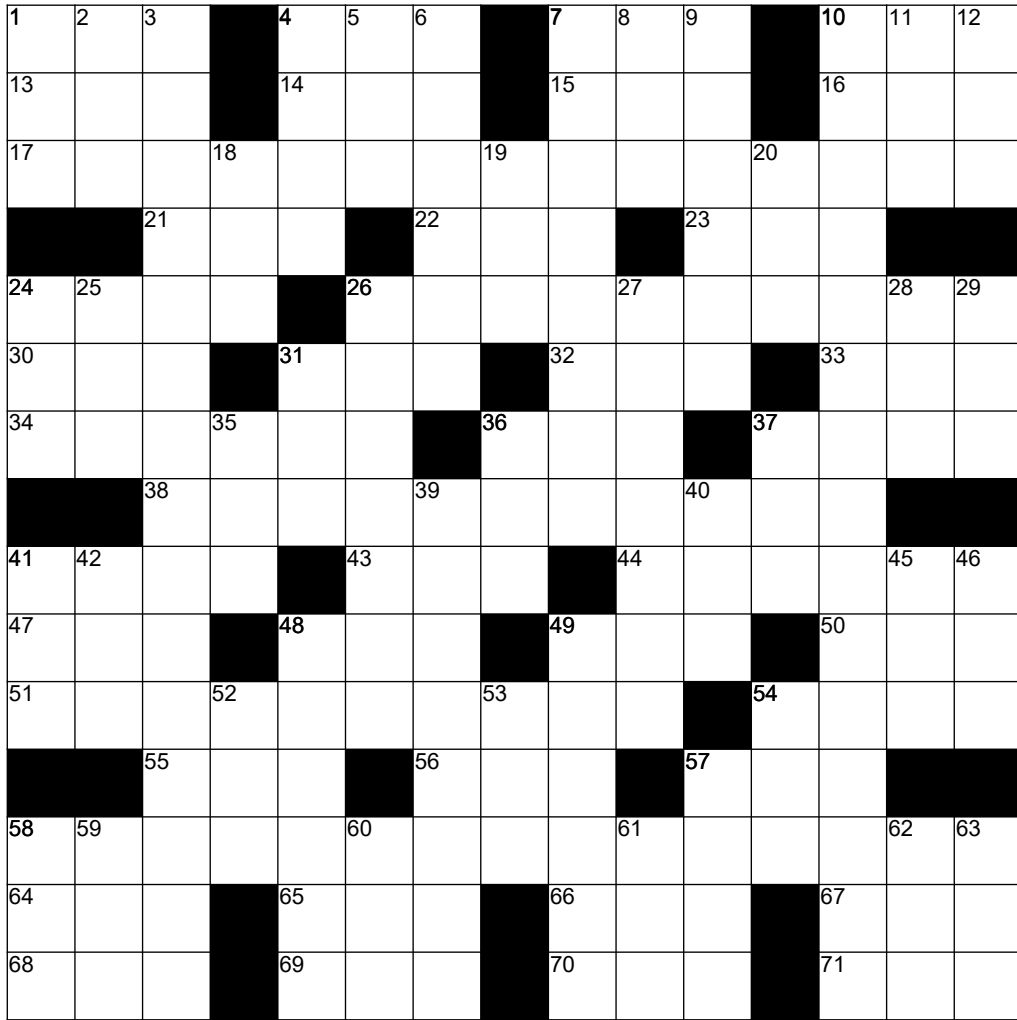
LITERACY PILLAR	ALIGNED WITH EVIDENCE	NOT ALIGNED WITH EVIDENCE
ORACY	Engage students in spoken language activities to Expand vocabulary, construct sentences, and improve grammar proficiency.	Emphasize rote memorization of vocabulary and grammar without meaningful spoken interaction.
PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS	Deliver explicit phonemic awareness instruction with a clear scope and sequence.	Focus on instruction limited to larger phonological units (syllables, rhyme, onset-rime) without progressing to phonemes.
WORD RECOGNITION	Teach phoneme-grapheme correspondence in words and syllables.	Emphasize memorization of whole words without focusing on phoneme/grapheme correspondence.
WORD RECOGNITION	Guide students to use phonetic decoding first, then context and pictures for comprehension.	Allow guessing words from context or pictures without phonetic decoding.
WORD RECOGNITION	Deliver explicit spelling instruction aligned with phonics.	Provide random, disconnected spelling lists and use non-phonics-based methods like "rainbow writing."
FLUENCY	Implement assisted-reading strategies for fluency practice and monitor independent reading.	Allow unstructured, unscaffolded silent reading.
VOCABULARY	Encourage contextual analysis for word meaning.	Rely solely on dictionary definitions.
COMPREHENSION	Expose students to texts across difficulties, disciplines, genres, and provide appropriate scaffolds.	Exclusively use leveled readers and frustration-level texts without supports.
COMPREHENSION	Build content area knowledge.	Omit instruction in social sciences in favor of literacy or teach primarily with stories, poems, and plays instead of diverse and authentic information texts.
WRITING	Provide varied writing opportunities; focus on planning, editing, revising.	Assign writing tasks without emphasis on the writing process.
WRITING	Write with multiple sources, evidence; support translanguaging for biliterate students.	Short-answer writing without text dependence.
WRITING	Instruct explicitly in handwriting, including cursive.	Eliminate explicit handwriting instruction, especially cursive, in lieu of practices such as keyboard only or at home only writing instruction.

Perhaps even more importantly than the plan itself, ISBE has lifted up the literacy plan in its strategic plan and recommended a small appropriation for implementation of the plan to ensure that

educators and communities know about the plan and have access to trainings and supports to amplify its impact in classrooms across the state.

We are extremely grateful to Sen. Lightford, Reps. Mayfield and Faver Dias, the many other legislative co-sponsors, and the ISBE Board, State Superintendent Sanders, and the Standards & Instruction staff, who dedicated many months to making this an inclusive endeavor.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE: A CAPITOL IDEA



DOWN

1. Paddle
2. Compete
3. Putting the Senators in order (Anderson, Aquino, Belt...)
4. Several
5. Transport
6. Debit's counter
7. Shiny
8. According to
9. Country
10. School boards and congress
11. Mimic
12. Bro's sibling
18. Stick up
19. None
20. Nest egg (abbrev.)
24. Pile on
25. Garden tool
26. Parade staples
27. Old Fashioned or Manhattan add-in
28. Point
29. Office no.
31. Kin to the lentil and peanut
35. Expert
36. Aficionado
37. Pond stock
39. Pacific Ocean below the equator
40. ____ and outs
41. MD's who deliver
42. Success
45. Clothing store section
46. Had
48. Donated
49. Sneers
52. Price indicator
53. I think (slang abbrev.)
54. Feathery accessory
57. Worry
58. Move through the air
59. Garland of flowers
60. It takes ____
61. Observe
62. Rhythmic musical style
63. Eye annoyance

ACROSS

1. Multiple eggs
4. Easy as 1-2-3
7. Dad or grandpa
10. Juice
13. Sicken
14. Hide
15. Test subj.
16. Nail salon brand
17. They fill the third floor South wing
21. Question beginner
22. Lunes or martes
23. Anger
24. Whaling captain
26. They might say "this is your sign"
30. Inquiry on job app or SSI form
31. Gentle touch
32. ____ Manuel Miranda
33. Negating word
34. Strengthen
36. Active
37. Idyllic childhood toy
38. Exchange of money for goods
41. "The heart of it all," it claims
43. Many years
44. Mystery
47. Industry (slang)
48. Impractical Jokers station
49. Dads of namesake sons
50. Ms. Pat Settles It station
51. A data nerd's discipline
54. A rib or femur
55. Permanent skin ink (slang)
56. Not a PPO
57. Landscaper's medium
58. Your pedometer might reflect lots of them after a long session day
64. A baby born in early August
65. Sheep
66. Payment
67. Consume
68. The negative one of two principles
69. An ER Dr. may proclaim it of an accident victim
70. Stitch
71. Look at covertly

MEET STAND STAFF: MEA ANDERSON, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER



Education: I have a Bachelor of Arts in African and African American Studies, Linguistics, and Spanish from Stanford University. My studies focused largely on the role of minoritized languages in education, cultural identity development, and justice movements.

What do you like to do for fun? I enjoy rewatching my favorite TV shows, crafting miniature homes, baking, and decorating my apartment.

What's your favorite local restaurant? My favorite local spot is a deli called Capriotti's. Their Hot Bobbie is my comfort food of choice.

Who was your favorite teacher? My favorite teacher was my *African American Vernacular English* professor, Dr. John R. Rickford! He inspired me to think more deeply about the transformative power of language and introduced me to numerous opportunities that shaped my academic and professional careers.

What do you enjoy about working with Stand? What I love about working with Stand is the ability to champion educational equity in Illinois by connecting with community members and amplifying the voices of local advocates. I'm especially grateful for the opportunity to work for an organization that prioritizes racial justice and is intentional about creating equitable academic opportunities for all students, regardless of their background.



ABOUT STAND FOR CHILDREN

Stand for Children is a unique catalyst for educational equity and racial justice to create a brighter future for us all.

STAND'S LEGISLATIVE TEAM

AIMEE GALVIN
agalvin@stand.org
(815) 341-3471

WILL COUSINEAU
wcousineau@cgagroup.com
(217) 836-9991

LIZ BROWN-REEVES
liz.brown@gmail.com
(217) 502-3703

- facebook.com/StandIllinois
- @IllinoisStand
- stand.org/Illinois