

SEPTEMBER 22, 2025

SCOPE COUNCIL MEETING

VIA ZOOM

1:00 P.M.

PEG AGNOS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

JEN FIGURELLI
ASSOC. EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

SCOPE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Co-Chair:

Joe Zotto, Superintendent, Calumet City School District 155

Pamela Paris, Board President, Palos School District 118

Members:

Linda Peckham Dodge Board Member, Orland School District 135

Donna Leak, Superintendent, Community School District 168

Erica Millhouse-Pettis, Superintendent, Sunnybrook 171

Brad Sikora, Superintendent, Bremen High School 228

Angela Zajac, Executive Director, Eisenhower Cooperative

ISBE MANDATES REDUCTION COUNCIL

- **SCOPE thanks Dr. Dana Smith** for agreeing to serve on a council to evaluate and assess mandates in the School Code for the purposes of modifying, combining, and eliminating mandates that are outdated, duplicative, unnecessarily burdensome, or no longer necessary to providing an efficient system of high-quality public educational institutions and services.

MCATS

MCATS

- The continued proration of MCATs causes financial burdens on our districts in South Cook County.
- For both regular education and special education transportation programs has been underfunded for decades.
- School districts have had to pick up more and more of the cost for this rapidly growing service (from about 40% of the overall transportation costs in the late 1990's and early 2000's to about 60% of the overall costs during the past decade or two).
- Increased Transportation Fund property tax levies, or
 - In some cases to either eliminate or scale back the service
 - Pass the cost on to parents via a parent fee/parent pay model
- South Cook is a tax capped county, so to allocate more to the Transportation Levy means there is less money left for the Education Fund Levy.

MCAT LEGISLATION

- The following legislation will be filed and sponsored by Representative Costa Howard:
 - Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, the State of Illinois shall reimburse school districts at 100% of all actual and eligible costs incurred in providing transportation as required or permitted under this Article.

EBF

EVIDENCE BASED FUNDING

- EBF funding has increased the “floor” of funding in Illinois, but has not significantly increased funding for many South Cook Districts
 - Approximately 90% of new funding is directed to Tier 1 Districts
 - Funds for Tier 2 – Tier 4 districts have not kept up with inflation
 - Categorical payments (MCATs) have seen proration increase
- What is the target for adequately funding education?

Chicago Teachers Union President Stacy Davis Gates, speaking after dismissal at McCutcheon Elementary School in Uptown, called on state lawmakers to deliver more money for the school district, noting a recent assessment by the state that CPS needs nearly \$1.6 billion more each year to adequately fund its schools.

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES, AUGUST 19, 2025

EVIDENCE BASED FUNDING

- The EBF Target for a district to be adequately funded is 90%, not 100%.
- EBF does not factor in several revenue sources:
 - Federal aid
 - Student fees
 - Investment earnings
 - TIF Surplus payments or other local incentives
- Although these revenue sources vary by district, 10% appears to be a reasonable assumption
- Tier 1 Districts will generally receive more federal aid than Tier 2-Tier 4 districts

WORLD LANGUAGE

- Legislation may be drafted with targeted exceptions to the mandate, including a counselor-guided opt-out with parent/guardian consent and exemptions for English learners.
- SCOPE is part of a larger coalition of stakeholders that will work to advance the legislation.

SCHOOL CALENDAR 101

- In partnership with ISBE and other key stakeholders, we are developing a “School Calendar 101” guide to support legislators in making informed decisions about school calendar policies.

VETO SESSION

HB4098- McCombie

- The State Board of Education, in coordination with the Department of Revenue, shall establish and approve a list of scholarship granting organizations that meet the requirements of Section 70411 of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act to facilitate opting the State of Illinois into the school choice tax credit provisions of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

HB4099- McCombie

- The General Assembly elects the State to: (1) participate in the federal tax credit under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act for contributions to scholarship granting organizations; and (2) identify such organizations within Illinois. The State Board of Education is authorized to certify and submit a list of qualifying organizations to the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury. Beginning January 1, 2027, and annually thereafter, the Board must submit this list to the Secretary and publish it on its website.

Tier 2 Pension

- Provisions in the We are One Illinois Pension bill
 - Provided by Andrew Bodewes
- Funding stream identified. Will come from bonds that expire in 2030 and 2033, half will go to the pension deficit liability and half will go to tier 2.
- Retirement age:
 - 67-62 with 35 years
 - 65 with 20 years
 - 67 with 10 years
- 3% simple COLA
- Maximum pensionable salary is equal to the social security wage base in any given year
- Final average salary 6/10 instead of 8/10

*****We do NOT expect any movement on this in Veto*****

K-2 Suspension Expulsion

- **Final Changes We Agreed To:**

- The necessity of providing the superintendent up to three days to approve suspensions of longer than 3 days. The rationale is to ensure that the approval process does not impede the immediate removal of a student when necessary.
- Removing the definition of a weapon but clarifying that objects other than firearms would only be considered weapons if used to cause, or intended to cause, serious injury.

- **BIP language we offered and was accepted in the final hour of session:**

- For suspensions of longer than 3 days, unless a behavior plan is already in place for the student, the length of the suspension for any student in preschool shall not be for longer than the number of days required by the school district or early childhood program to develop and implement a behavior intervention plan or safety plan. A behavior plan may include a behavior intervention plan, a safety plan, or another plan developed by the school district to address the student's needs.

- If this comes back in Veto session and moves as is we **REMAIN NEUTRAL**

MEMBER PROGRAM PLANNING

JOE ZOTTO SCOPE CO-CHAIR

**SCOPE MEMBERS
ONLY PAGE**



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