

ED-RED REPRESENTATIVE BOARD NOTES

March 2020

The March edition of *From the Floor to Your Door* was shared last week. See below for a complete list of what was included however I do want to highlight two surveys both targeted for our special education staff and school business officials. The surveys are linked on the ED-RED member page so please encourage relevant staff to complete the surveys.

Thank you to those who attended our March Member Meeting last Friday. We had an exciting meeting of guest presenters Representative Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz and Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi. Representative Gong-Gershowitz spoke to the work of the property tax relief task force and budget negotiations. She eluded that we may not see any decisions by the General Assembly around a potential property tax freeze until mid-May. Be sure you are talking to your local elected officials on the impact a freeze would have on your school this year and planning for next year!

Just last week, ED-RED said good-bye to Executive Board Member Dr. Judy Hackett, superintendent of NSSEO. Judy has served on the ED-RED Executive Board since 2011 and has been an asset and supporter as ED-RED has evolved and grown. We will miss Judy but know that she and NSSEO will remain active members of ED-RED! As Dr. Hackett transitions off the Executive Board, we welcome new board member Dr. Mike Connelly of Wheeling 21! Dr. Connelly adds a wealth of knowledge and expertise to our already fabulous Executive Board! Please note that we will have two more openings for school administrators on the ED-RED Executive Board next month!

Finally, the House Elementary & Secondary Education Committee is hosting subject matter hearings over the next several weeks on the Governor's FY 21 recommended budget. The hearing on the recommended changes to the Evidence-Based Funding formula has been tentatively scheduled for the end of the month. As ED-RED prepares to testify at this hearing, **we ask that district leaders visit the discussion board on the ED-RED member page to respond to the question on how the Governor's proposed budget is impacting district finances and planning for next school year.** Any and all feedback is welcome!

As always, these notes are designed to assist our ED-RED representatives in reporting to their respective school boards on ED-RED's advocacy work at your monthly school board meetings. If you have any questions or need more information, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Best,
Sarah Hartwick
Executive Director, ED-RED

ED-RED Communications Committee Update

The ED-RED Communications Committee has held three meetings to-date to discuss ED-RED's

advocacy efforts and communication plans as legislative proposals move through the General Assembly. Look for the following items to roll out in the next several weeks:

- **Legislation and support around the coronavirus.** In response to the many inquiries we have received about possible expansion of e-learning days due to the coronavirus, the ED-RED Executive Board has directed staff to draft legislation to provide schools with flexibility within the current e-learning law. The draft legislation will expand e-learning opportunities for students and schools should districts be forced to close for long periods of time due to a coronavirus outbreak. Watch for legislation to be filed in the coming weeks.
- **“Soft” Advocacy Push for Senator Gillespie’s TIF bill.** In the coming week, ED-RED will be pushing out new advocacy tools to support Senator Gillespie’s TIF reform bill. The tools will include instructions on how to file a witness slip, scripts and talking points for calling local legislators, and establishing a ground game of support among ED-RED members. The roll out “soft push” will help guide future advocacy efforts that may be needed later in session.
- **Videos being added to our social media channels!** ED-RED staff is working to develop videos to educate and support ED-RED members based on ED-RED’s vision and mission statement. The videos will include a lesson on how to “advocate” and provide regular updates from Sarah, ED-RED’s Executive Director, on questions she is receiving from the field. Make sure you are subscribed to our YouTube channel as we work to add new content.

ED-RED March From the Floor to Your Door Highlights

What was included:

- **ED-RED Action Items**
- **School Construction Task Force Report Released**
- **Unfunded Mandates Legislative Discussion Update**
- **Governor’s Budget Address Follow-Up/ED-RED Discussion Board Request**
- **ED-RED HOT Bill Tracker**
- **ED-RED Monthly Member Meeting Schedule**

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION TASK FORCE REPORT RELEASED

The School Construction Task Force report was submitted on Friday, February 28th. The full report can be found [here](#) and we are also posting a copy of it on the members section of ED-RED’s website.

Impact of Task Force Recommendations:

- **Revise the state and local match using Evidence-Based Funding.”**
 - A district’s local match should range between 10 and 90 percent and be based on a district’s local capacity percentage that is calculated within the Evidence-Based Funding Formula.
- **Recommend a new process by which districts will be applying for school construction dollars.** An outline of the proposed new process can be found on page six of the report.

Please review the report and let us know any feedback you may have. We expect a bill to be filed in the coming weeks and will keep you updated and informed.

UNFUNDED MANDATES LEGISLATIVE DISCUSSION UPDATE

ED-RED local legislator Senator Ram Villivalam hosted a meeting with education stakeholders and the State Board of Education to discuss ways in which the state can provide mandate relief for unfunded mandates. Below are three mandate relief options that were discussed at the meeting:

1. Amend the Fiscal Note Act to require district-specific data to be shared with legislators before proposed unfunded mandates are passed by the General Assembly.
2. Create a commission to study the impact of unfunded mandates.
3. Providing flexibility in or expansion of the current waiver process.

IMPACT QUESTIONS ON THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET PROPOSAL

The Governor's proposed budget underfunds the Evidence-Based Funding Formula if the progressive tax is not adopted in November. It is clear that the School Code's EBF language prescribes a different method for distributing dollars if less than \$350 million is appropriated. However, our questions center around how that money will be appropriated and will the hold-harmless provisions of the EBF law hold true?

We are working with our ED-RED local legislators and the State Board of Education to understand the impact.

ED-RED HOT BILL TRACKER

Each week the ED-RED HOT Bill Tracker is updated to reflect committee action. To view this complete bill list, [log into our website](#) or click here for [ED-RED's HOT Bill Tracker](#).

Below are highlights of bills over the last month that we continue to negotiate:

- [SB 2315 \(Gillespie\)/HB 3975 \(Carroll\)](#) both make changes to school district and private facility use of seclusion and restraint methods on students with special needs. We are continuing to be involved in negotiations as they are continuing throughout the spring session.
- [SB 2281 \(Cunningham\)/HB 3897 \(Hurley\)](#) requires special education services for students with IEP's for the school year in which the student turns 22. An amendment was filed earlier this afternoon to address some of our concerns. [The amendment](#) instead requires those services until the end of the regular school term and delays the effective date until July 1, 2020 but does not address our funding concerns. We hope to have another meeting with the sponsor next week to understand next steps and feedback on the concerns that we shared with him and his staff two weeks ago.
- [HB 3973 \(Wheeler\)](#) allows special education private facilities to require full-tuition payments from school districts for students referred by the school district prior to providing services to those students. The bill also makes changes to how a district shall be refunded by the special education private facility if the district overpays. An identical bill ([SB 3388 by Senator Ellman](#)) has been filed in the Senate. ED-RED and IAASE have offered an amendment that would require school district approval before full-tuition payments can be required by the special education private facility.
- [HB 4406 \(Parkhurst\)](#) requires dyslexia screenings of all kindergarteners via ISBE Administrative Rule. This goes beyond what is currently provided by ISBE related to resources to assist teacher and parents in identifying dyslexia, which is identified as a specific learning disability under ISBE Administrative Rule. ED-RED is working to learn more about the intent and may be reaching out to ED-RED members in the coming weeks to ask for information on how dyslexia is identified and what services are provided after identification in ED-RED member districts. The current ISBE Guidance on dyslexia can be found [here](#).

- [HB 4703 \(Mayfield\)](#) creates the “K-3 Comprehension Reading and Math Intervention Act.” The Act recommends that school districts offer an evidence-based reading or math intervention program to each student in kindergarten through grade 3 who exhibits a reading or math deficiency. Among the other requirements for implementation, the language **requires a school to retain a student in third grade if the student is not reading at grade level.** ED-RED has significant concerns about state law requiring when students should be retained, a practice that is best left to local control.

ED-RED MONTHLY MEMBER MEETING SCHEDULE*

Friday, April 3	Member Meeting
Monday, May 4	Member Meeting (1:30-3) Guest program: Franczek on the seclusion/restraint legislative proposals
Friday, June 5	Member Meeting (1:30-3)

**All meetings take place the Maine 207 Administration Center (1177 S. Dee Road, Park Ridge) from 1:30-3pm unless otherwise noted.*