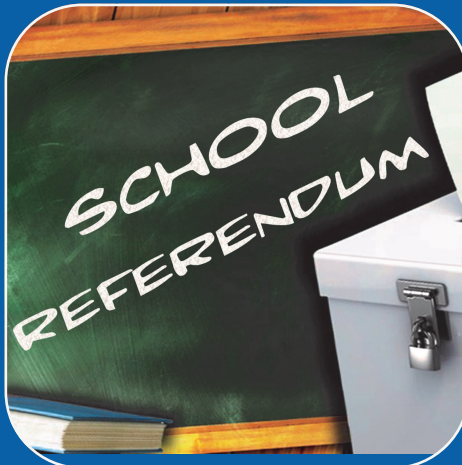
A large, high-resolution photograph of Donald Trump in profile, facing left. He is wearing a dark suit jacket, a white dress shirt, and a red tie with thin white and blue diagonal stripes. A small American flag pin is visible on his lapel. The background is a solid blue color.

**What will
Trump
presidency
mean
for public
schools?**

In this month's issue



Evanston superintendent's post-election message to high school students goes viral P. 8



Illinois School Referenda Election Results P. 15



The ABCs of TIFs: How they affect school districts P. 16



"Just put that in my 'to do' pile."

Mindfulness can be great stress reliever P. 12

Additional Items

- ◆ Thanks to our 2016 annual conference supporters P. 10
- ◆ Call for Presentations P. 11
- ◆ ISBE begins new ESSA listening tour P.17
- ◆ School superintendent: Captain of the Ship P. 21
- ◆ Videos from the Districts P. 24
- ◆ IASA News in Brief P. 25
- ◆ What is your 'Mindset'? And do you have 'Grit'? P. 26

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Volume 4, Issue 10



What will Trump presidency mean for public schools????



Message from the Executive Director Dr. Brent Clark

The shockwaves of Donald Trump's victory have started to wear off and attention now turns to what a Trump presidency will mean. For public schools, that question mark is pretty big and perhaps even ominous.

The President-elect never went into great detail about his education plan, but he did express his support for school choice, vouchers and

expanded charter and magnet schools. His Thanksgiving eve selection of Betsy DeVos to be Secretary of Education underlines those themes.

In a September campaign speech in Cleveland, Trump said:

"As your President, I will be the nation's biggest cheerleader for school choice. I want every single inner city child in America who is today trapped in a failing school to have the freedom – the civil right – to attend the school of their choice. I

understand many stale old politicians will resist. But it's time for our country to start thinking big once again. We spend too much time quibbling over the smallest words, when we should spend our time dreaming about the great adventures that lie ahead."

Trump's vision for education, from his campaign website, includes:

- ◆ Immediately adding an additional federal

investment of \$20 billion towards school choice. This will be done by reprioritizing existing federal dollars.

- ◆ Giving states the option to allow these funds to follow the student to the public or private school they attend. Distribution of this grant will favor states that have private school choice, magnet schools and charter laws, encouraging them to participate.

- ◆ Establishing the national goal of providing school choice to every one of the 11 million school aged children living in poverty.

- ◆ Noting that if the states collectively contribute another \$110 billion of their own education budgets toward school choice, on top of the \$20 billion in federal dollars, that could provide \$12,000 in school choice funds to every K-12 student who today lives in poverty.

"As your President, I will be the nation's biggest cheerleader for school choice. I want every single inner city child in America who is today trapped in a failing school to have the freedom — the civil right — to attend the school of their choice."



— President-elect Donald Trump

Public money following students to private schools is not a new concept. There are programs around the country that Trump might choose to use as blueprints, including the Indiana program implemented by his choice for Vice President, former Indiana Governor Mike Pence.

Pence, as governor, oversaw a dramatic increase of vouchers in Indiana. Nearly 33,000 students participated last school year compared to nearly 4,000 in 2011-12.

The vouchers are awarded on a sliding scale based on income and family size. For 2015-2016, the top voucher averaged nearly \$5,500 for a high school student in Indiana.

In Florida, private companies are given tax credits if they donate to a fund that provides scholarships for low-income students to attend private schools and some observers believe Trump might want to implement a similar federal program.



Billionaire school choice advocate Betsy DeVos is President-elect Donald Trump's choice to become Secretary of Education.

The first private school voucher program funded by the federal government is the Opportunity Scholarship Program in Washington, D.C. that was created in 2004. Last year, the program gave vouchers to 1,200 low-income students. The vouchers are capped at \$8,452 for K-8 students and \$12,679 for high schoolers. Chelsea Clinton and the Obama girls attended schools that are part of this program.

Gerard Robinson, a fellow at the conservative American Enterprise Institute and a former state schools chief in Florida and Virginia, is an education advisor to Trump's transition team. Robinson told CBS News that restoring funding to the D.C. program would "be a good place to start." The funding has been stalled in the Senate.

Robinson told The Associated Press "I think what you're going to hear from (Trump) is a shift from the term school choice to parental choice."

On the same day Trump was elected, voters in Massachusetts and Georgia overwhelmingly defeated proposals that would have expanded charter schools. In those two states, voters by a more than 2-to-1 margin seemed to be saying not to fund charters at the expense of public schools.

The Washington Post recently ran a story about what the Trump presidency might mean for public

schools. The story specifically mentioned the downsizing or abolishment of the U.S. Department of Education, the dismantling of the Common Core Standards and how the new administration will view and implement the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

A spokesperson for Tennessee Senator Lamar Alexander, chair of the Senate Education Committee, issued a statement that said: "The Trump Administration has a prime opportunity to significantly reduce the intrusion of the Education Department into our local schools and classrooms. When the Trump Administration enforces the Every Student Succeeds Act as written, the size of the Education Department will be necessarily and appropriately diminished."

Getting rid of the Department of Education may not be as easy as the President-elect might think. Those around in 1980 might remember that Ronald Reagan ran on a platform of abolishing the Department of Education, which his opponent, President Jimmy Carter, had founded. But Reagan could not get a Democrat Congress to agree and, in 1983, Reagan's Department of Education issued the infamous "A Nation at Risk" report.

The left-leaning Center for American Progress Action Fund in September issued a report that estimated the elimination of the Department of

“I assume (Trump) wants to turn Title I into a block grant to the states for charters, vouchers, or even public schools. That’s the \$20 billion he promised to redirect to choice. A report on the issue released from the U.S. Government Accountability Office found that the private school choice programs may indeed prevent equitable services from being provided to all students...In a curious twist, the salvation of public education may be the Every Student Succeeds Act, which devolved greater discretion to states.”

— Diane Ravitch, noted public education advocate



Education would result in the loss of 490,000 teaching positions, or about 14 percent of the nation’s K-12 teachers. The potential negative impact on the economy has been cited by historians as one reason Reagan did not follow through on his pledge to eliminate the department.

DeVos, Trump’s choice to be Secretary of Education, has no professional experience in schools and neither she nor her four children have attended public schools. She attended a private high school in Michigan and she graduated from Calvin College, a private college in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration and Political Science.

She is the former chairperson of the Michigan Republican Party and her billionaire husband, Amway heir Dick DeVos Jr., ran for governor in that state in 2006. She is a director of the All Children Matter, Inc., a political action organization she and her husband founded in 2003 with the mission of training and funding candidates nationwide who promote school vouchers. ACM, Inc. has been bankrolled by, among others, the late Walmart heir John Walton and the Koch brothers.

A recent New York Times editorial noted that Betsy DeVos was one of the architects of the charter school system in Detroit that “even charter advocates acknowledge is the biggest school reform disaster in the country.”

Interestingly, she initially was not a supporter of Trump’s candidacy, choosing instead to donate to and support Senator Marco Rubio in the Republican primary. Last March, she told the Washington Examiner that Trump was an “interloper who does not represent the Republican Party.” But after being selected by Trump she tweeted “I am honored to work with the President-elect to make American education

great again. Together we can work to make transformational change to ensure every student has the opportunity to fulfill his or her highest potential.”

Diane Ravitch, a defender of public schools, correctly predicted that Trump would not name an educator to head the Department of Education. She told TakePart, a social action digital magazine, that school choice might actually widen instead of close the education gap.

“I assume (Trump) wants to turn Title I into a block grant to the states for charters, vouchers, or even public schools. That’s the \$20 billion he promised to redirect to choice,” Ravitch wrote, noting that Title I provides funding to local districts to improve achievement of students from low-income families. “A report on the issue released from the U.S. Government Accountability Office found that the private school choice programs may indeed prevent equitable services from being provided to all students.”

While all of Trump’s campaign rhetoric and his selection of DeVos certainly seem to place public education in the political crosshairs, education is not mentioned in the U.S. Constitution, leaving implementation of education policy up to individual states.

ESSA, which passed Congress with huge bipartisan support after three years of wrangling, gives states lots of autonomy and authority. Ravitch said that ironically ESSA might end up protecting public education in the current political environment.

Wrote Ravitch: “In a curious twist, the salvation of public education may be the Every Student Succeeds Act, which devolved greater discretion to states.”

Brent

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Evanston superintendent's post-election message to high school students goes viral

By Heidi Stevens
Chicago Tribune
(Reprinted with permission
of the Chicago Tribune)

People were ready for Eric Witherspoon's message.

The superintendent of Evanston Township High School walked into his office Wednesday and sensed it was time to speak up for unity.

"There was a lot of confusion and even anxiety among the students that morning," Witherspoon told me. "Whatever their politics, however they felt about the outcome of the election, it was widespread. And I wanted them to feel safe and loved."

He quickly typed up a message to read during the 10 a.m. announcements.

"Once in a while it's important that we pause and reflect on who we are and reaffirm our appreciation for one another," he began. "This morning I want to remind all of you that ETHS is a safe and welcoming place for you. You attend a school where we not only respect differences, we embrace our diversity."

ETHS is made up of around 3,300 students — 43 percent of them are white, 30 percent are black, 17 percent are Hispanic, 5 percent are Asian and 3 percent identify as two or more races, according to the Illinois State Board of Education.

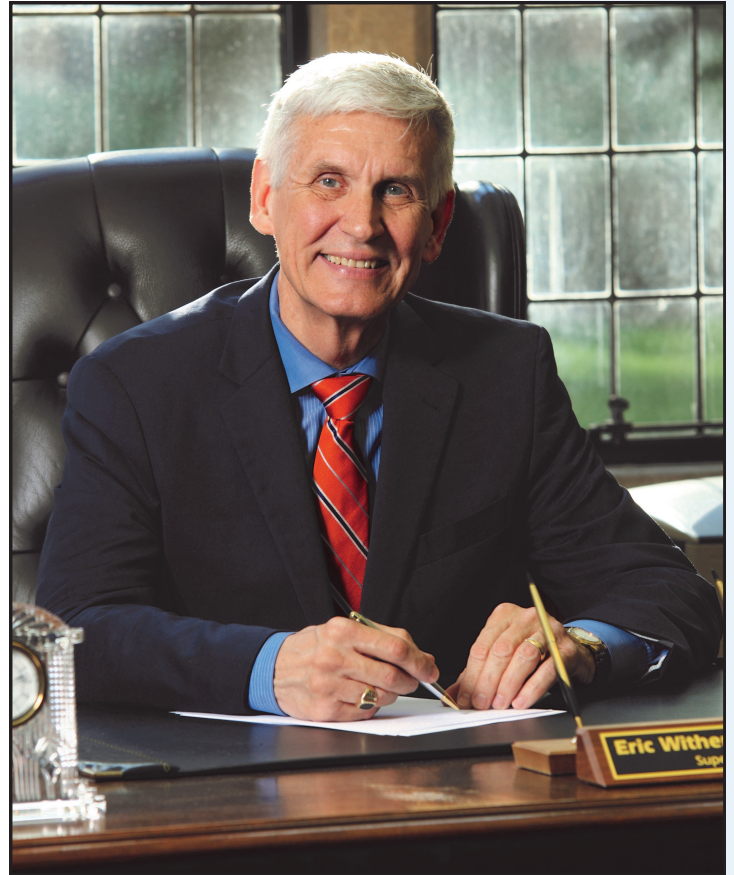
"We embrace one another's race and ethnicity," Witherspoon's address continued. "We embrace one another's family background, heritage, language and culture. We embrace one another's religion and your right to your own personal customs and beliefs. We embrace your sexual orientation and your gender identity. We embrace your special needs. We embrace you and value you as individual human beings."

"I didn't want to focus on the election," Witherspoon told me. "I wanted to focus on the kids — on how they could process things and remember what they have here and what this school is all about."

Within minutes, students were approaching Witherspoon's office asking for a copy. Parents started calling and emailing, saying their kids had texted home about it.

By Saturday, when I talked to Witherspoon, he had heard from hundreds of parents and educators around the country — some asking to borrow his message, others letting him know they already had.

"I can't keep up with my email," he said. "The feed-



Evanston Superintendent Dr. Eric Witherspoon

back isn't political. It's about the human spirit. This transcends politics. All of us, as Americans, know that's who we really are, and it's so important that we don't lose sight of it."

Nina Kavin, an Evanston resident whose son attends ETHS, shared Witherspoon's note on her Dear Evanston Facebook page, a group she set up last year to address gun violence in Evanston.

"I thought his words were so powerful and so beautiful and kind and necessary," Kavin told me. "I thought they needed to be heard by everybody."

Her post has reached more than 60,000 people.

"The comments are from New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Florida, Michigan, Nebraska, Ohio," she said. "Obviously it went far beyond what my page stands for. People really needed to hear it."

Witherspoon implored students to be kind to one another.

"Redouble your support for one another," he said in his message. "And even though we cannot always control what is going on in the larger world around us,

Text of Dr. Witherspoon's message the day after the election

Good morning, E-Town -

This is Dr. Witherspoon.

Once in a while it's important that we pause and reflect on who we are and reaffirm our appreciation for one another.

This morning I want to remind all of you that ETHS is a safe and welcoming place for you. You attend a school where we not only respect differences, we embrace our diversity.

We embrace one another's race and ethnicity. We embrace one another's family background, heritage, language and culture.

We embrace one another's religion and your right to your own personal customs and beliefs.

We embrace your sexual orientation and your gender identity.

We embrace your special needs.

We embrace you and value you as individual human beings.

Never forget: you belong here at ETHS — each and every one of you.

Today, I urge you to be kind and caring to one another. Redouble your support for one another. And even though we cannot always control what is going on in the larger world around us, we can define our own school, our own community.

Let's make this school year a year of strengthening our sense of community here at ETHS, and let's reaffirm a community legacy for all the students today and for those who will follow you at ETHS.

The sun is shining today. Your school is a nurturing place for you to learn and grow. Your futures are bright.

Let's protect and take care of each other. Everything is going to be okay.

I love all of you. Fill your hearts with love for each other. And no matter what, remember, even today, that it is a great day to be a Wildkit.

we can define our own school, our own community.

Let's make this school year a year of strengthening our sense of community here at ETHS, and let's reaffirm a community legacy for all the students today and for those who will follow you at ETHS."

Kavin's son told her the school erupted in applause when Witherspoon finished talking.

"It reminds you that we have power in our own communities," she said. "We need to look to each other and make our own communities stronger. We have our own work to do right here in Evanston, so let's do it."

On Friday, Witherspoon was reading through National Connection, a daily summary of stories about

education around the country.

"The top story was, 'Students responding to wave of bullying and fear after the election,'" he said. "We're seeing a lot of reports of confrontations on both sides of the political spectrum. My students' well-being was my motivation, but looking back, it was also an intervention. It was a way to say, 'That's not what we're about.'"

And it was a road map, when so many were desperate for one.

"It was a very divisive election — you'd have to have your head buried in the sand not to know that," Witherspoon said. "I just wanted to help my students move forward into a period of healing and taking care of one another."



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Mindfulness can be great stress reliever for teachers and administrators



Dr. Jill Gildea, left, is Superintendent and Dr. Elizabeth Freeman is Director of Innovative Learning, Teaching and Technologies for Fremont District 79

Demands on leaders in education are multiplying at a dizzying rate. As districts continue to do more with less, each leader is stretched to their capacity.

School events, meetings, deadlines, email, conferences, and graduate classes all add to the already full work day. While we all understand that we didn't sign up for a 40-hour week or a 9 to 5 job, the expanding expectations of work can take a toll on our effectiveness.

One way to do more by doing less is to practice mindfulness. What is mindfulness? How can it benefit you as a leader? This article will share the research on the benefits of mindfulness along with some simple tips for mindfulness practices that you can start today.

Mindfulness may sound complex, but it is really quite simple. Dr. Ellen Langer, a Harvard professor, is a leading researcher on mindfulness. She has been researching the topic for more than three decades, has written eleven books on mindfulness, and has been called "the mother of mindfulness." Langer suggests that mindfulness is simply the practice of actively noticing new things, which helps you become present.

Another leading mindfulness researcher is Jon Kabat-Zim. With a Ph.D. in molecular biology, Dr. Kabat-Zim's research focus is on mindfulness. Dr. Kabat-Zim states, "Mindfulness is awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally." Easier said than done for some leaders in education! With hectic schedules, back-to-back meetings and a long work day, "being present"

"Every one of us already has the seed of mindfulness. The practice is to cultivate it."

-- Thich Nhat Hanh, Buddhist Monk

may be the last thing on your "to do" list.

You may be more likely to consider integrating mindfulness into your work practices if you knew the powerful benefits of this skill. Study after study has supported that mindfulness increases:

- ◆ innovation
- ◆ productivity
- ◆ attention
- ◆ learning
- ◆ self-esteem
- ◆ and memory

Practicing mindfulness can also decrease undesirable conditions such as job burnout, stress, and feelings of anxiousness. Can you think of any other elixir, magic potion or snake oil that can make the same claims? Mindfulness is the real deal.

Other fields and industries are also tapping into mindfulness practices. Google offers a seven week course on mindfulness. TIME magazine featured mindfulness on its cover. Anderson Cooper participated in a mindfulness retreat for a special segment on 60 Minutes. Sports figures are also catching the mindfulness wave and they are using mindfulness as a means of all-natural performance enhancement.

How can leaders in education begin to practice mindfulness? Start small and allow yourself to adjust to the idea of being mindful. Focus and awareness are two primary areas to

consider as you apply mindfulness practices to your daily routine. You may need to set a regular reminder to practice this new skill. Pause at the end of the day to reflect on how mindful you have been. Set mindfulness goals for yourself and reward yourself when you reach them.

Below you will find some simple mindfulness tips compiled from our research. Select one or two that you will try this week!

Practice breathing. Just breathing. When your mind wanders away from focusing on breathing, simply redirect yourself back to focusing on your breath.

Recognize that you don't know everything about a situation. See it from a different perspective and be open to the possibilities it presents.

Use empathetic listening. This is when you listen with the goal of connecting deeply with the speaker. Ask questions so that you can better understand the other person's point of view.

Use the Appreciative Inquiry model when working on school improvement and district improvement plans. Dream big. Design your future. Make it your destiny!

Approach everyday routines with curiosity. Embrace vulnerability in yourself and others. Choose to start your day rather than letting your day start you.

Nourish yourself.



Practice single-tasking rather than multi-tasking.

The only way to get more done in your day is to be more effective when you do it. The decisions we make as educational leaders have a tremendous impact on student achievement, staff morale and community support. It is imperative that we optimize our effectiveness during our busy days.

Mindfulness is one strategy for doing so. Start today. Listen carefully. See situations from new vantage points. Ask questions from a different perspective. Be generous with yourself and you will be able to accomplish more than you thought possible. Practice mindfulness.

“The most precious gift we can offer others is our presence. When mindfulness embraces those we love, they will bloom like flowers.”

-- Thich Nhat Hanh, Buddhist Monk

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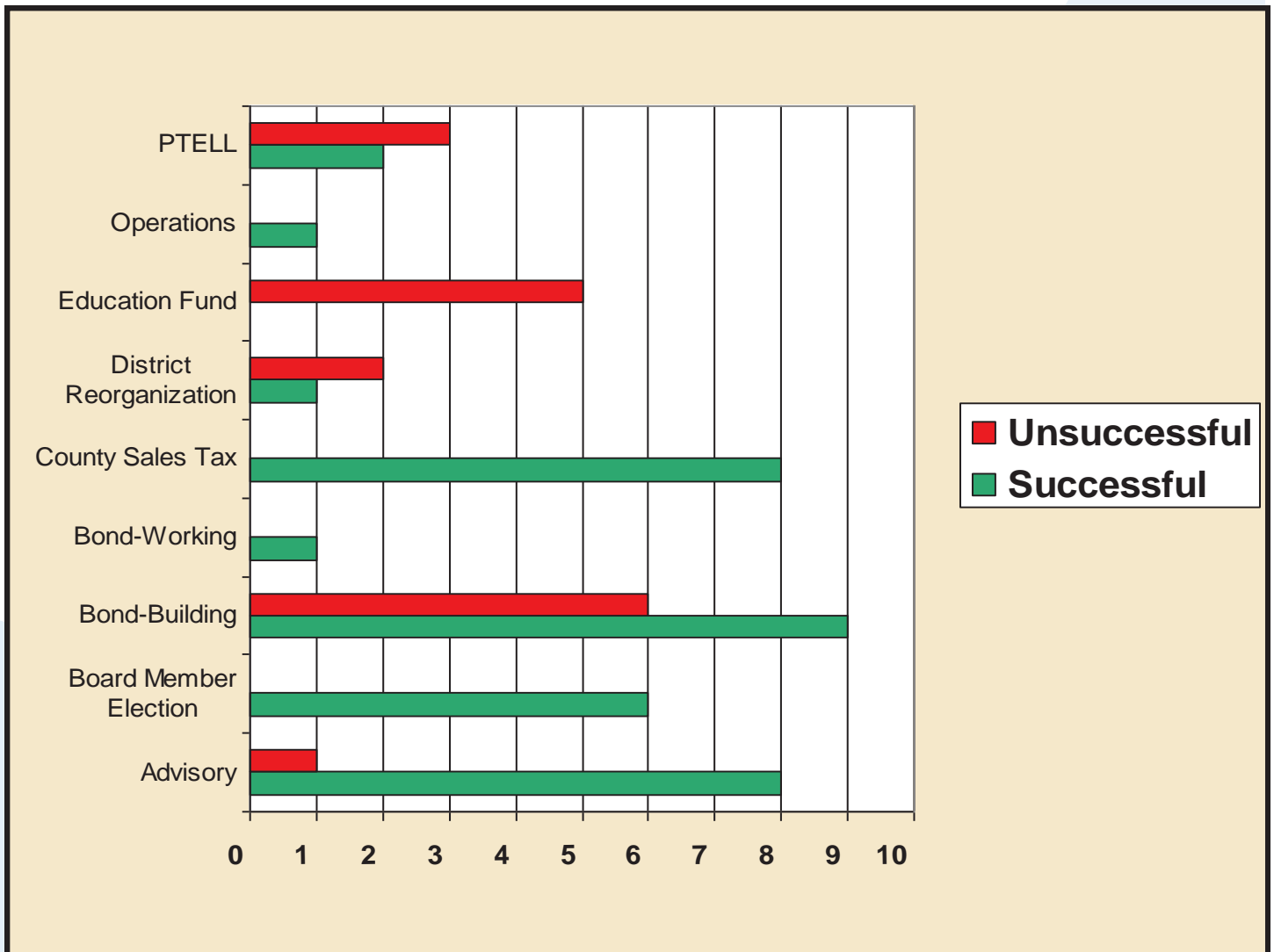
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Illinois School Referenda Election Results



Results of the November 8, 2016, referenda related to public school districts in Illinois reveal that 36 of the 53 questions were successful and 17 were defeated. In addition to questions to raise school district tax rates and to issue bonds, there were also questions on the ballot concerning Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL), District Reorganization, County Sales Tax and Board Member elections. The results of the tax referenda, based on unofficial tallies gathered by an IASA email survey and internet research, are reported in two sections: successful and unsuccessful. Click [here](#) to view the Results spreadsheet. Results can also be viewed on the IASA website under the Communications tab.

The ABCs of TIFs: How they affect school districts



Dr. Bill Phillips is an IASA Field Services Director. One of his major areas of expertise is school finance.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a program that allocates future increases in property taxes from a designated area, or TIF district, to pay for improvements within that area. In Illinois, the TIF district can remain in place for up to 23 years after its creation. The district can be extended for another 12 years but an extension requires an act of the state legislature. Just this past year, TIF districts were extended for Arcola, Paris, Ottawa, Crestwood, Rosemont and Granite City by the legislature.



For school districts, the meaning and result of these TIF districts can entail losing for 23 years of the value in property tax dollars of whatever improvements are made within the boundaries of the TIF district(s). Under TIF, the property taxes resulting from increased value due to new development, rehabilitation or improvements, or property appreciations are allocated to the city. Notwithstanding the school district, other jurisdictions are also receiving the same “base value of property within the TIF district.” As far as the city is concerned, their rationale is that only the city has the responsibility and authority to support redevelopment, therefore it is appropriate for the city to utilize “their taxes” to help pay for the costs.

Since 1977 more than 250 municipalities have created at least one TIF district. Of course, there is

the possibility of municipalities designating multiple TIF areas. Currently, there are more than 1,000 TIF districts in Illinois. These TIF funds are captured and put into a special TIF account by the city and used for city development at the discretion of the city. It seems that these TIF funds can be utilized in an infinite variety of ways by the city. During the recent strike talks in the City of Chicago, TIF funds were used to help defray the costs of the newly bargained agreement with the Chicago Teachers Union.



The City of Chicago recently used some \$88 million in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds to help pay a portion of the cost of the new contract with the Chicago Teachers Union.

The term “blighted” is often utilized to describe this land. That definition would include land that would not normally be developed or improved without funds dedicated to these improvements. However, the definition of “blighted” is fairly ambiguous and many times developed and undeveloped land is termed

“blighted” even when it is within highly valuable or desirable locations.

Essentially, these TIF determinations can be made by municipalities or even county governments in a unilateral fashion without the approval of the underlying taxing jurisdictions. There are many municipalities in Illinois where the entire boundary of a city has been placed within a TIF district. Ultimately, of

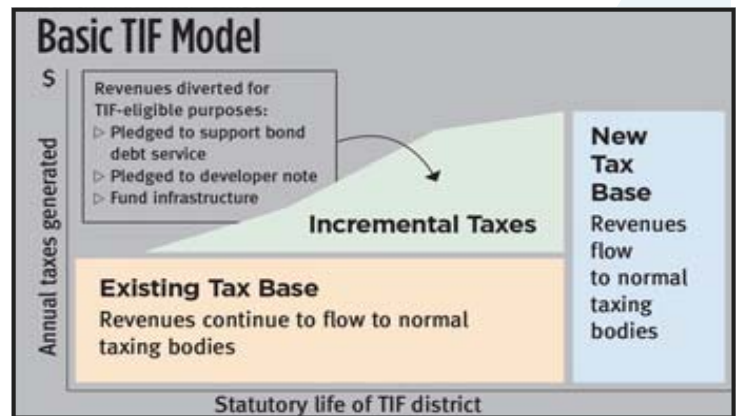
course, the school districts and other taxing jurisdictions will lose property taxing dollars over a period of 23 years.

To determine how much is being lost, you should determine the base year or beginning year of the TIF and its value and then each year make a *subsequent determination on the value of the land* within the TIF and translate that lost EAV to a dollar amount. Since local school districts are the largest recipient of local property tax dollars, they are ones that stand to lose the most in lost dollars.

Normally, these TIFs are in the form of commercial improvements but there are also residential TIFs in which newly constructed homes are with a TIF and not included on a district's tax rolls for 23 years. In this instance, districts are immediately presented with new students from this residential area with no property tax dollars to help defray the educational cost. In either case, a commercial or residential TIF can result in tax dollar stagnation and will probably entail additional costs for a school district.

In the recent past when residential properties were escalating in value more than the present, some residential TIFs included "impact fees." These fees were placed upon all newly constructed homes at the time of city permits were procured. These fee amounts -- or occasionally the dedication of land for the possible construction of a school -- are used sparingly now in the designation of residential TIF districts.

What are the options for school districts that face the possibility of TIF designation of school district property? Legally, there are no mechanisms to block these TIF designations. However, many districts in Illinois who face this reality will try to make an "intergovernmental agreement" with the city to receive



partial reimbursement for lost property taxes. These intergovernmental agreements should be a legal document binding the parties. If the district is successful in making an agreement, the funds are normally dispersed in the spring of the year with some listing of how these funds may be spent. These agreements are not standardized and may be individually tailored by the taxing bodies and the municipality.

It should also be recognized that during the term of the TIF, these properties are not included on the taxable EAV for a school district and thus artificially lower the EAV for General State Aid (GSA) purposes. Districts may receive some additional GSA dollars because of this effect, but due to the nearly decade long deficiency in paying the Foundation Level for GSA, these amounts are problematic at best.

The heavy reliance on local property tax for school funding has forced local school districts to compromise their primary source of revenue to another governmental body. This diversion of scarce resources inevitably affects a district's ability to accomplish its primary responsibility, providing public education to the children of Illinois.

ISBE begins new ESSA listening tour

The Illinois State Board of Education is beginning a third statewide listening tour to gather input and feedback regarding the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The tour will offer an overview of ESSA and allow for group discussion about the ESSA State Plan. The second draft of the state plan is posted at www.isbe.net/essa. Comments may be sent to essa@isbe.net. The meetings, which will run from 5-7 p.m., are:

- ◆ Thursday, Dec. 1: Indian Prairie Crouse, Education Center, 1780 Shoreline Dr., Aurora
- ◆ Monday, Dec. 5: Proviso Math and Science Academy, 8601 W. Roosevelt Rd., Forest Park
- ◆ Tuesday, Dec. 6: Austin Town Hall, 5610 W. Lake St., Chicago
- ◆ Wednesday, Dec. 7: Bernotas Middle School, 170 N. Oak St., Crystal Lake
- ◆ Wednesday, Dec. 7: Silas Willard Elementary School, 460 Fifer St., Galesburg
- ◆ Thursday, Dec. 8: Eisenhower High School, 1200 S. 16th St., Decatur

For more information, contact Amanda Elliott at aelliott@isbe.net.

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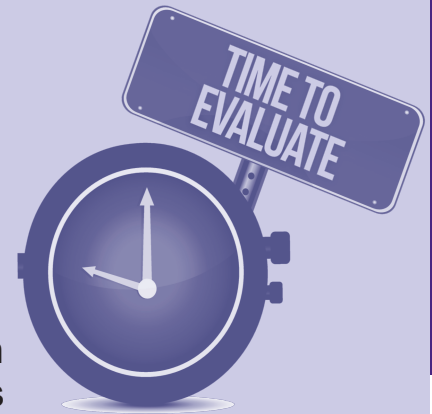
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2016-2017 Senate Bill 7 Performance Rankings Tool software available for purchase



All Illinois School Districts are working to comply with the requirements of education reforms. IASA has worked to provide support via the Senate Bill 7 Performance Rankings File. This program gives districts a method of managing district positions aligned to local qualifications, teacher's credentials, and performance ratings. The program compiles this local data and creates reports needed to comply with Senate Bill 7. The 2016-2017 file has been enhanced with several updates in response to user ideas. The new enhancements include:

- Four new podcasts - [overview](#), transition data, sorting data, and optional merge letter process.
- New method to filter teachers on or off the evaluation cycle.
- Expanded license endorsements and content specific endorsements.
- Ability for users to add license endorsements and content specific endorsements.
- Ability to sort lists of data within the program.
- Ability for districts to add data fields that can be used for inclusion in a merge process and/or for exporting data.
- New report for creating your own merged letters or exporting data for other purposes.
- Only one notification letter per teacher (rather than one for current and more for other eligible positions).
-

The 2016-2017 IASA Senate Bill 7 Performance Rankings File is ready for you to purchase and download. The access request form can be completed by visiting <http://www.iasasurveys.org>. The cost of using this software did not increase. As such, the annual licensing fee will be \$275 for members and \$550 for non-members.

Please note that previous versions of the IASA Senate Bill 7 Performance Rankings File are no longer supported. Also, the service method for the 2016-2017 software is via email only.

Developing your cabinet team members for breakthrough performance



Jill Pancoast, Vice President of The Breakthrough Coach, and Dr. Andy Johnsen, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services Lakeside (CA) Union School District, co-authored this column

Every superintendent knows that sinking feeling when the local paper calls for an interview about the latest crisis. Expired milk served at the middle school, a tire blowout on a bus carrying the high school band, a lawsuit filed against

the district for failing to follow special education timelines – all potentially avoidable public relations messes that will end up costing time and money to resolve.

Even when the media is not involved, superintendents of districts large and small are often frustrated with the time they spend aiding members of their management team as they mop up messes and correct mistakes - time superintendents would rather spend on district vision, strategy and execution.

A closer look at the source of typical district emergencies, inefficiencies and simple mistakes usually reveals gaps in skills and/or knowledge amongst the district's management team. "Incompetence" may sound harsh, but think about the last crisis you handled. Could it not have been avoided if the team member responsible for that area had been slightly more capable at their job? Take it a step further: If that person were consistently operating at a higher level of competence, how often would major problems arise from their schools, department or division?

And now to the heart of the matter. If a superintendent often struggles with administrators who are consistently not performing at their highest levels, those administrators may not be entirely to blame. It's more likely that the superintendent may have lost sight of one of their primary responsibilities as school district CEO. Let's take a closer look.

Adopting a training and development mindset

A school district is a complex system with many moving parts. Throughout the system, administrators are charged with overseeing their departments, schools and the people who work in them. The superintendent sits at the top of the system with a bird's-eye view of the entire operation.

Working with the board of trustees is one of the superintendent's primary responsibilities. Equally important, however, is the superintendent's responsibility to build the leadership capacity of his or her executive team. He does this by clearly defining expectations for group and individual performance, and putting in place structures for support so that team members can consistently meet those expectations. This is the key to running a highly competent organization. Unfortunately, it is precisely where many superintendents take their eye off the ball.

Malachi Pancoast, President of The Breakthrough Coach, asserts that the highest performing districts are led by superintendents who have adopted a *training and development* mindset. These superintendents focus relentlessly on building the capacity of their executive team members, principals and other district managers so that these school leaders

consistently can perform at high levels with minimal interference from the superintendent. When mistakes, inefficiencies and missteps occur, the superintendent with a training and development mindset may have to step in to help solve the immediate problem, but he will always ask himself: “What do I need to do to build this manager’s capacity so that this breakdown never happens again? How do I need to train and develop this employee so that they learn to solve these kinds of problems without my direct involvement?”

Enter the Captain of the Ship

The well-known movie *Master and Commander* offers a backdrop and model of the complexities involved in leading large groups of people with a specific mission to accomplish. Cannonballs and scurvy aside, leading school districts and commanding sailing ships can be quite similar, and embracing a mental model of the superintendent as “Captain of the Ship” can give district leaders a clear vision of how they can best serve their organizations.

Nineteenth century sailing vessels were busy, complex operations. Hundreds of seamen had to work together to operate sails, yardarms and rudders to effectively navigate. Cargo had to be stored, meals had to be prepared, and the sick or injured required treatment. The crew included gunners, sail makers, coopers, and carpenters – each with specific technical skills and tasks to accomplish. Sometimes these were experienced seamen who knew their jobs well. Other times, crews were outfitted with whoever was available and “newbies” received on-the-job training. However, in order to reach their destination and accomplish their mission, every crew member needed to properly complete his task at the right time. Failure to do so put everyone at risk. As it was in the nineteenth century, so it is today.

Sailing vessels, both historical and modern, carry hundreds of crewmembers, each responsible for performing a specific job. But each ship has only *one* captain and his job is qualitatively different from the rest of the crew. The captain has two primary responsibilities: 1) keep an eye out to sea to insure the ship

remains on course, and 2) keep an eye on the crew to make sure their work is coordinated and executed well. That’s it.

Keeping an eye out to sea involves maintaining a proper course towards the intended destination, speeding up or slowing down when appropriate, navigating safely through storms, and getting back on course after the tempests have passed. No one but the captain has this responsibility.

Keeping an eye on the crew is just as important. Each crewmember is a specialist who labors at a particular task and relies on others in their respective roles to do the same. Crewmembers haul the ship’s lines, trim its sails and grind its winches. The captain observes his team’s work and has the unique job of insuring that each crewmember performs well by providing training, oversight, acknowledgement and corrective feedback. But the captain does not do any manual labor himself to enable the ship to move.

A ship captain earns his position by moving up through the ranks. He may know how to trim sails, haul lines, and grind winches – all skills he acquired earlier in his career. He most likely served as a junior officer and managed a portion of the ship’s crew. However, the moment he is commissioned as “Captain,” he must let go of performing these tasks and take up the business of leading and managing the entire operation. In the words of Pancoast: “He must stop working *in the system* and instead, start working *on the system*.”

Superintendent as Captain

The parallel to the superintendency is clear. A superintendent’s role in a school district is the same as that of the captain’s: (1) attend to the district’s mission, vision and direction; (2) insure that each manager, director and senior administrator has the training and development needed to do his or her work well with minimal supervision, and (3) make sure that each manager is providing appropriate training and development to those who serve under them.

What often causes many district inefficiencies is that the superintendent has lost sight of his

“A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.”

-- John C. Maxwell

training and development responsibilities. Sometimes it is his impatience – the job has to get done, the superintendent knows how to do it, so he steps in to “help” by doing the task himself.

Sometimes it’s his desire for control – the superintendent believes a project should be done in the exact same manner as he would do it (or used to do it when he had that responsibility). So the superintendent micro-manages his executive team members and misses opportunities to support their growth and development.

And, if we’re honest, sometimes it’s plain ego. Some superintendents simply can’t bear to admit that their executive team members can do their jobs better than he can. In these cases, a superintendent will perform everyone’s job for them and never share the spotlight.

The irony is, the less the superintendent does and the more they focus on increasing the capacity of their executive team, the better for everyone in the organization. Operating in this manner creates more capable and competent administrators throughout the entire district.

Tom Rooney, Superintendent of the Lindsay Unified School District in Lindsay, California, understands this well. “I constantly ask myself what I need to do to help the executives in my district perform their jobs 99% of the time without my supervision. That’s my focus. When I train and develop my administrators and their performance improves, the whole system runs more smoothly. In fact, I was recently away from the district for an entire week. I didn’t have to call in once, my phone never rang, and everything went just fine without me. That was a huge indicator to me that I’m doing my job well.”

Superintendents steer successes

If you’re a superintendent who is frustrated, (and perhaps exhausted), because you have

been doing captain and crewmember’s work for far too long, here are four actions you can take to stop working *in the system* and start working *on the system*:

Shift your perspective. Begin looking at your district through the eyes of a captain. What do you need to let go of doing in order to focus on “captain-only” work?

Take stock of the training and development needs of your top-level executives. Begin with your cabinet members and ask yourself, “What would masterful performance look like for each individual on this team? What training, development and practice would each executive need in order to perform their respective roles at the highest level?” Then commit to, and co-create, a professional growth plan with each one that will get them there.

Build this same mindset in your middle managers. How do you want them spending their professional time so that the people who work for them are continually performing at *their* highest levels? Make this expectation clear to middle managers, hold them accountable for the growth of their direct reports, and give them what they need to support their people.

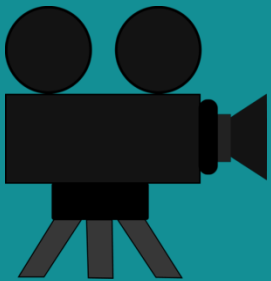
Make this a standing agenda item for your cabinet meetings. If you are going to focus your energy on the ongoing growth and development of your top level executives, then you must monitor and support these efforts. Each cabinet member should regularly report out on their own growth and development journey, and talk about the actions they are taking to grow and develop those who work underneath them.

Cultivating a *training and development* mindset takes patience and practice, but it is well worth the effort. It is the most effective way for district superintendents to insure that all district employees are performing at their highest level. Then it’s smooth sailing ahead!

Videos from the Districts



Mahomet-Seymour Community Unit 3 — Rick Johnston, Supt.



Send your school videos to mchamness@iasaedu.org. We want to highlight what's going on in your school districts.



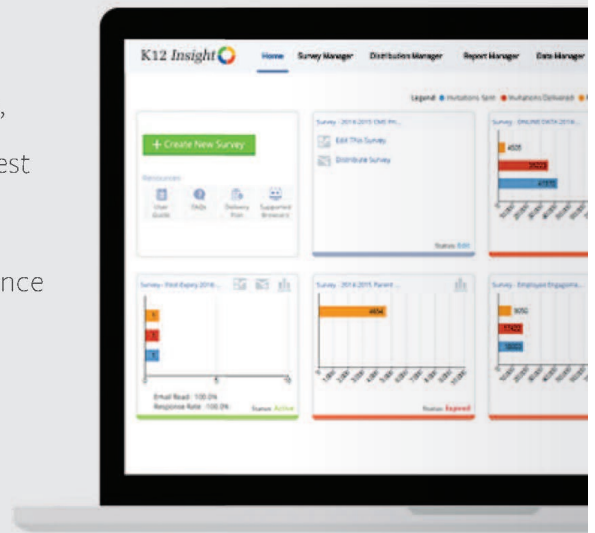
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DR. DANA BEDDEN,
SUPERINTENDENT,
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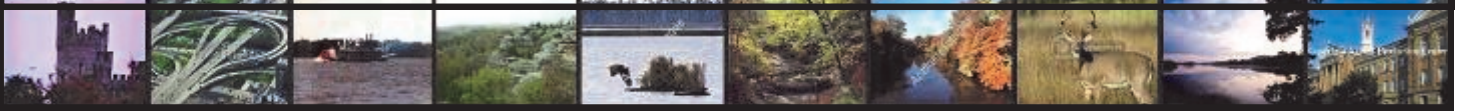


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IASA News in Brief



In Memoriam

James (Wade) Hudgens, former superintendent at Desoto, Jonesboro and Marion, died on September 21, 2016. Mr. Hudgens was an educator for more than 30 years, including teaching in Belleville, Marissa and Goreville and also serving as a principal in Goreville. Mr. Hudgens was 65 years old and is survived by his wife, Deanna, and three children.

Howard T. Jackson, an IASA Past President, passed away on October 31, 2016. Mr. Jackson served as IASA President in 1990 and retired as Superintendent of the Robinson School District.

'Lights in the Mirror' video helps students learn what to do during traffic stop



The FBI Springfield Division along with Illinois State Police and other law enforcement agencies have produced a 15-minute video titled "Lights in the Mirror" to help students learn what to do during a traffic stop.

The video is designed to help students understand police procedures as well as the students' rights during a stop. It highlights important safety considerations when being pulled over on an interstate, in a rural setting or in a city. It also emphasizes citizens' rights under the Fourth Amendment. The video is intended to be used in a variety of settings, such as driver's education classes, community forums and student orientation programs.

The video can be viewed by clicking on the screen shot on this page or by clicking [here](#). There also is a study guide that can be accessed [here](#).

Southern Illinois Law and Leadership Conference scheduled for March 29, 2017

The SIU Law and Labor Conference has combined with the Educational Leadership Conference to bring you one fabulous conference for the spring. The theme will be:

Eclipsing the Past: Charting the Future of Public Education on All Levels

Get ready for some new topics, new perspectives, and updates on issues affecting Illinois schools. Our complete program and registration will be available soon at conferenceservices.siu.edu or call 618-536-7751 for more information.

AASA National Conference on Education

The 2017 AASA National Conference on Education will be held in New Orleans on March 2-4, 2017. Registration and housing opened July 12, 2016. The preferred hotel for the Illinois delegation is the Westin New Orleans Canal Place. Go to <http://nce.aasa.org/> for additional information.

Superintendent of the Year Reception

A reception for the 2017 Illinois Superintendent of the Year is planned for Friday, March 3, 2017 from 5:30 to 7 p.m., at the Riverbend Terrace at The Westin New Orleans Canal Place.

What is your 'Mindset'?

And do you have 'Grit'?



By Dr. David E. Bartz,
Professor Emeritus
Department of Educational
Leadership
Eastern Illinois University

"Mindset: The New Psychology" by Dweck (2008) and "Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance" by Duckworth (2016) represent ideas for managing yourself personally and professionally as a school administrator to maximize your productivity and satisfaction. While school administrators

are a select group of leaders whose performance is constantly scrutinized by others who often provide them feedback on their performance, it is good to reflect from time-to-time in comparison to criteria and performance ideas of the so-called experts.

"Mindset" and "Grit" have considerable in common, such as the important role of effort and being positive. Also, both are considered part of the new "positive psychology" movement (the study of strengths that enable people to thrive and be their best). However, each has its own unique wrinkles on how to be a high achiever.

"Mindset" is based on the premise that people can choose to believe that factors such as intelligence and personality are unchangeable (fixed mindset) or believe that these factors can be nurtured and developed (growth mindset) for professional and personal enhancement. The

choice is yours. This represents the proverbial "Nature vs. Nurture" debate that has been discussed for centuries. In reality, we are impacted by both, but believing that nurturing can improve us -- growth mindset -- will likely enhance our expertise (knowledge and skills) and, thus, our performance as a school administrator.

Challenging yourself to develop existing attributes and being willing to put forth the effort to do so is key to the growth mindset and increasing productivity and satisfaction at work. Purposefully engaging in professional development is key to maximizing potential and enhancing achievements. It is important not to stereotype yourself in ways that deter motivation to improve. For example, if a school

administrator believes she/he has never been -- or can't ever be -- a good public speaker, there is likely little motivation to get better. Willpower is essential to overcoming setbacks and pursuing needed change for improved

"Grit is living life like it's a marathon, not a sprint."

~Angela Lee Duckworth

performance.

Focusing on the growth mindset leads to reviewing these important points:

- Have purpose drive your work;
- Deal head-on with deficiencies instead of hiding them;
- View setbacks as a learning opportunity for future success;
- View staff members as collaborators and stress the team approach;
- Nurture a burning desire to keep learning

new knowledge and skills;

Find inspiration from the successes of others and learn from them;

Understand that everyone can change and grow through passion, effort, application, and experience;

Be ready to take risks, confront challenges and keep working to get better even when feeling distressed; and

View as a learning experience and identify positive actions for future relationship-building when relationships with people in the work environment go wrong.

If a school administrator gleans just a couple of ideas from the growth mindset concept to better serve students, it should be worth the effort.

Grit is perseverance driven by passion. Passion includes interest, desire, enthusiasm, and devotion referenced to goals. Intrinsically enjoying what one does and feeling that it is purposeful and matters, flame passion. Connecting with people is often important to sustaining passion, as is having a job that is viewed as a “calling.” A futuristic vision and discovery of new information, knowledge and experiences help drive passion and develop new or enhanced skills.

Perseverance is composed of willpower, persistence, self-discipline, hope, and learned optimism. A high achievement drive, coupled with a belief in striving for continuous improvement, is indicative of perseverance. Stubbornness in the form of not giving up when obstacles occur is also important.

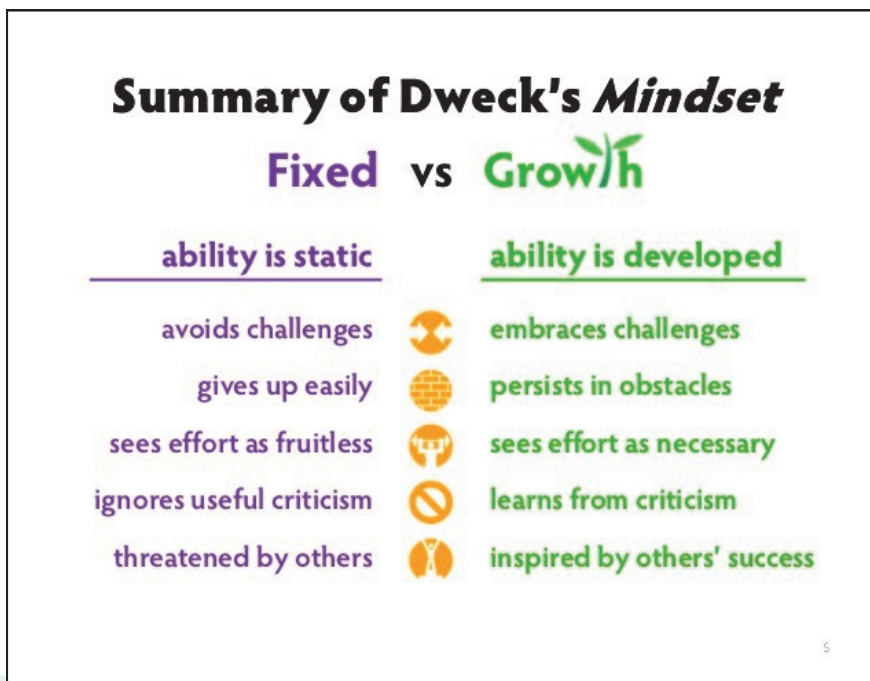
Effort is critical to perseverance and is an essential element of grit. Effort combined with talent leads to improved skills. Additional effort matched with these improved skills greatly enhances the probability of achieving the desired goal. Talent is important but often overrated, limiting what people believe they can achieve.

Talent is composed of intrinsic gifts, knowledge, intelligence, judgment, and the ability to learn.

Grit includes having a limited number of prioritized goals for a sustained time period that serve as a focus for a person’s energy and creates a “persistence of motive.” Grit can be grown. Four psychological aspects important to developing grit are: 1) interest that

intrinsically motivates what you do, 2) a purpose that is genuine and you feel really matters, 3) hope that prompts you to keep going even when doubts or difficulties arise, and 4) practice for “continuous improvement” that causes you to strive to do things better tomorrow and avoid complacency.

Lastly, individuals who possess grit hold fast to an important interest, are loyal and unwavering to a limited number of goals, are steadfastly persistent, ceaselessly strive for excellence, effectively control their emotions, are socially intelligent, and have positive “self-talk.”



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Duckworth, A. (2016) “Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance” New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc.

Dweck, C. (2006) “Mindset: The New Psychology of Success” New York: Ballantine Books.

Thaler, L. & Koval, R. (2015) “Grit to Great” New York: Crown Business.

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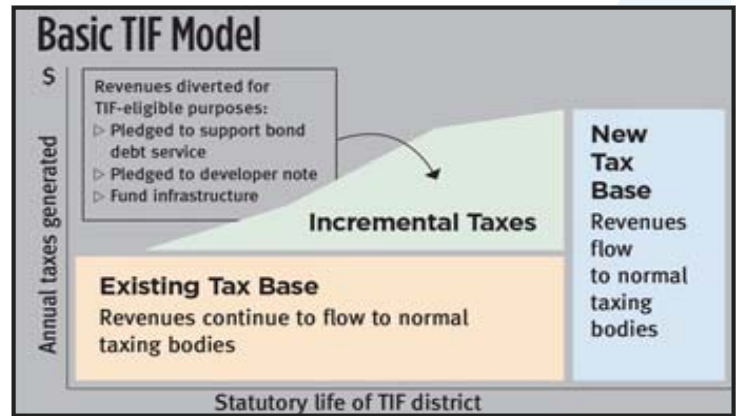
course, the school districts and other taxing jurisdictions will lose property taxing dollars over a period of 23 years.

To determine how much is being lost, you should determine the base year or beginning year of the TIF and its value and then each year make a *subsequent determination on the value of the land* within the TIF and translate that lost EAV to a dollar amount. Since local school districts are the largest recipient of local property tax dollars, they are ones that stand to lose the most in lost dollars.

Normally, these TIFs are in the form of commercial improvements but there are also residential TIFs in which newly constructed homes are with a TIF and not included on a district's tax rolls for 23 years. In this instance, districts are immediately presented with new students from this residential area with no property tax dollars to help defray the educational cost. In either case, a commercial or residential TIF can result in tax dollar stagnation and will probably entail additional costs for a school district.

In the recent past when residential properties were escalating in value more than the present, some residential TIFs included "impact fees." These fees were placed upon all newly constructed homes at the time of city permits were procured. These fee amounts -- or occasionally the dedication of land for the possible construction of a school -- are used sparingly now in the designation of residential TIF districts.

What are the options for school districts that face the possibility of TIF designation of school district property? Legally, there are no mechanisms to block these TIF designations. However, many districts in Illinois who face this reality will try to make an "intergovernmental agreement" with the city to receive



partial reimbursement for lost property taxes. These intergovernmental agreements should be a legal document binding the parties. If the district is successful in making an agreement, the funds are normally dispersed in the spring of the year with some listing of how these funds may be spent. These agreements are not standardized and may be individually tailored by the taxing bodies and the municipality.

It should also be recognized that during the term of the TIF, these properties are not included on the taxable EAV for a school district and thus artificially lower the EAV for General State Aid (GSA) purposes. Districts may receive some additional GSA dollars because of this effect, but due to the nearly decade long deficiency in paying the Foundation Level for GSA, these amounts are problematic at best.

The heavy reliance on local property tax for school funding has forced local school districts to compromise their primary source of revenue to another governmental body. This diversion of scarce resources inevitably affects a district's ability to accomplish its primary responsibility, providing public education to the children of Illinois.

ISBE begins new ESSA listening tour

The Illinois State Board of Education is beginning a third statewide listening tour to gather input and feedback regarding the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The tour will offer an overview of ESSA and allow for group discussion about the ESSA State Plan. The second draft of the state plan is posted at www.isbe.net/essa. Comments may be sent to essa@isbe.net. The meetings, which will run from 5-7 p.m., are:

- ◆ Thursday, Dec. 1: Indian Prairie Crouse, Education Center, 1780 Shoreline Dr., Aurora
- ◆ Monday, Dec. 5: Proviso Math and Science Academy, 8601 W. Roosevelt Rd., Forest Park
- ◆ Tuesday, Dec. 6: Austin Town Hall, 5610 W. Lake St., Chicago
- ◆ Wednesday, Dec. 7: Bernotas Middle School, 170 N. Oak St., Crystal Lake
- ◆ Wednesday, Dec. 7: Silas Willard Elementary School, 460 Fifer St., Galesburg
- ◆ Thursday, Dec. 8: Eisenhower High School, 1200 S. 16th St., Decatur

For more information, contact Amanda Elliott at aelliott@isbe.net.