

Legislative Update for Local 943
February 25th, 2025

Each year, the IFT introduces and advocates for legislation to ensure high-quality public services and public education for all Illinois residents and students. The IFT also opposes legislation that does NOT support public services and education. The IFT and positions are based on resolutions passed by elected delegates at the IFT convention.

Below is a list of IFT initiatives:

Topic	Bill Number	Sponsor(s)	Summary
Student Growth (negotiated with IEA and School Management)	SB 28	Sen Lightford/ Rep Faver Dias	Makes growth permissive for rating teacher performance, effective July 1, 2025, and only with agreement through the joint committee.
Induction and Mentoring As Supplement to the Evaluation of Non-Tenured Teachers	SB 1850	Sen. Mary Edly-Allen	Allow one formal, nonevaluative observation and feedback cycle to be conducted by a mentor as part of a formal induction and mentoring program, rather than an evaluator
Effective/ Ineffective Evaluation	HB 2793	Rep Nick Smith	Requires the State to transition from a four-rating system to a two-rating system (Ineffective/Effective)
Added component to teacher evaluation to protect BIPOC teachers	SB 2116	Sen. Willie Preston	Elevating the role of Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards in Teacher Evaluation
Danielson Resolution	SJR 19	Sen. Meg Loughran Cappel	Resolution calling for Review of the Danielson Framework
Assessment	HB 2574	Rep. Sue Scherer	Require ISBE to post, conspicuously on their website information about assessment contracts, costs and timelines. Mandate ISBE to work with stakeholders when making assessment decisions.
CTE Task Force	HB 3202	Rep. Mary Gill	Require ISBE to establish a Career and Technical Education Task Force to examine how to involve more students in technical education.
PSRP and Adjunct Faculty Unemployment Insurance	HB 3330	Rep. Jay Hoffman	Provides access to unemployment benefits to PSRP's and adjunct college faculty similar to benefits allowed during the pandemic

Protecting Students	SJR 11	Sen. Graciela Guzman	Encourages school boards to adopt a local resolution to implement policies that protect undocumented students and designate schools as safe places for students, school staff, parents and community members.
Higher Education Libraries	SJR 13	Sen Mike Halpin	Resolution requiring the study of university disinvestment in libraries and librarians

FY26 Budget

Governor JB Pritzker outlined his Fiscal Year 2026 budget proposal on February 19. Over the next eight weeks the House and Senate Appropriations Committees will take testimony on proposed budget items and begin the process of crafting the FY26 state budget.

Overview of Governor Pritzker’s Proposal:

The FY26 proposed spending plan is estimated to total \$55.234B, which is a 2.5% increase in state spending compared to the FY25 revised estimated spending plan.

The governor’s proposed FY26 budget allocates \$78 million as an additional contribution for adjusting the Social Security Wage Base for Tier 2 members.

The proposed budget includes continued, increased investments in early childhood, the K-12 evidence-based funding model, and colleges and universities. It also includes the full payment to the state’s pension systems.

The governor’s proposed budget is the starting point for budget negotiations with a final budget to be passed in late May. IFT will be advocating for our budget priorities throughout the spring in the House and Senate Appropriations committees. Below is a more detailed outline of the governor’s proposal.

Pensions

- Makes the full payment to the state’s pension systems including TRS, SURS, and SERS.
 - The total pension payment is \$10.6 billion or 19.7% of the state budget.

Education

- Early Childhood
 - Smart Start Illinois — continues investment in the Smart Start Illinois initiative for a third year to eliminate preschool desserts, stabilize the childcare workforce, expand the Early Intervention Program and Home Visiting programs, plus funding to begin the overhaul of the childcare payment management system.
 - Operational funding for the Illinois Department of Early Childhood - \$21.7 million.
 - Maintain investment in Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Early Childhood Block Grant Funding - \$748 million.

- K-12
 - Evidence Based Funding – \$350 million increase.
 - Brings EBF program to \$8.9 billion.
 - School Categorical Grants - \$19.9 million increase (\$1.2 billion)
 - Fully funds the Special Education-Orphanage Tuition and Regular Orphanage budget lines.
 - Teacher Vacancy Grant Pilot Program - \$45 million for Year 3 of the 3-year pilot.
 - State Literacy Plan implementation - \$3 million.
 - Career Technical Education Programs - \$1.3 million increase.
 - Computer Science Equity Grant Program - \$3 million.
 - Dolly Parton Imagination Library - \$3.3 million to continue expansion of Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library.
 - Today, more than 61,000 children under the age of five have been signed up to receive free books in the mail every month.
 - Special Education Transportation - \$30 million to account for increased claims by districts.
 - National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT) – level funded at FY25 level of \$4.5 million.

- **Health Insurance and Retiree Health Insurance**
 - Teachers’ Retirement Insurance Program fully funded.
 - College Insurance Program (CIP) fully funded.
 - State employee group health insurance fully funded.

March 4th Day of Action

March 4 will be a day of action in defense of public education. The Trump administration has made no secret of its plan to dismantle the Department of Education, putting at risk the federal funding lifeline that supports our students, educators, and communities.

Let’s stand up together for our students, educators, and communities we serve.

Thanks to all Local 943 members, including retirees, for creating a “Storm of Blue” by wearing union blue, and for calling & writing legislators, to help protect our kids and promote federal funding of public education

School Board Elections

The next consolidated school board election in Illinois is April 1, 2025.

Key Dates:

- Tuesday, March 4, 2025
 - Last day to register to vote or make an address change (excluding grace period – Online registration through State Board of Elections website will continue through March 16th)
- Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Last day for deputy registrars to return used and unused voter registrations to the Election Office

First day of grace period registration or change of address in the office of the election authority

First day of grace period voting at the election authority's office

- Sunday, March 16, 2025

Last day for voters to register to vote online through State Board of Elections website

- Tuesday, March 18, 2025

First day a voter admitted to hospital, nursing home or rehab center not more than 14 days before an election may apply for a vote by mail ballot by personal delivery

- Thursday, March 27, 2025

Last day to apply by mail for a vote by mail ballot

- Monday, March 31, 2025

Last day for early voting at the office of the election authority

- Tuesday, April 1, 2025 - CONSOLIDATED ELECTION DAY

Last day of grace period registration, change of address and grace period voting

If your Council has endorsed school board candidates, please let your field service director know as the IFT DPA has resources that can be shared with the Council and possibly candidates to support their election efforts.

Find the latest updates and helpful resources from IFT on our [website](#) and [Facebook/Bluesky/Instagram](#).