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**ILLINOIS
EDUCATION
ASSOCIATION**

Illinoisans strongly support public education, believe national money should not be used in school board elections

Illinois Education Association to release annual, bipartisan State of Education report

SPRINGFIELD — The Illinois Education Association (IEA) will release its seventh annual IEA State of Education report today, Wed., March 26. It's the only bipartisan poll monitoring Illinoisans' views on all aspects of public schools. The findings will be shared during a news conference at 10 a.m. today on Zoom.

The poll results show despite President Donald Trump's and United States Education Secretary Linda McMahon's continued efforts to dismantle and destroy the United States Department of Education (USED), Illinoisans believe all students have a right to a public education, support public schools and believe teachers and support staff should earn more money.

"Public education is the great equalizer. It's the key to the American Dream. It is the one thing our country does that levels the playing field for all children. Rural, suburban, urban, no matter who you are or where you come from, a good education can change your life," IEA President Al Llorens said. "We will continue to do whatever it takes to make sure our students have access to strong public schools. It's what Illinoisans want and it's what our students deserve."

The data show having high-quality public schools is more important than balancing the state's budget. However, Illinoisans also recognize our schools don't have enough funding, especially when they know 80% of the state's public schools are underfunded.

"The people of our great state strongly support public education and our students, so much so that they support fixing the funding issues facing our schools. They recognize teachers and staff are working harder than ever before and they also know our educators are not making enough money and don't have enough support in our schools," Llorens said.

When it comes to school board elections, the people of Illinois believe school board members should be most focused on student success, not taxpayers or politics. They also don't want national political groups involved in local school board elections.

Key data points from the IEA State of Education report include:

- 91% of Illinoisans believe that students have a right to a public education;
- 74% of people think teaching has become harder over the last few years;
- 78% of the public say they are very worried about the teacher shortage;
- 71% believe funding for public schools should increase;
- 62% support pension reform to allow those in the Tier 2 pension system to retire before the age of 67;
- 62% of the public believe adjuncts should be paid the same as tenured professors when they are teaching the same courses;
- 80% of Illinoisans are opposed to book bans;
- The vast majority believe we should be teaching racism (75%) and slavery (81%) in our public schools;
- 72% of Illinoisans believe national political groups should not be involved in local school board elections.

The poll, conducted by both a democrat polling firm, Normington Petts, and republican pollster, Next Generation Strategies, surveyed 1,000 Illinoisans Jan. 27-30. It has a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percent with 95 percent confidence.

“This poll gives us a unique vantage point, telling us what people might be thinking about any cuts to public education. It is an unbiased look at what the people of Illinois value, and clearly that’s students and access to a public education,” Pollster Jill Normington of Normington Petts said.

“Illinoisans continue to support public education in our state and value those who work in it, and they tell us so year after year,” Next Generation Strategies Pollster Pat Brady said.

To request the full poll and crosstabs, email bridget.shanahan@ieanea.org. There will be a press conference at 10 a.m. via Zoom. Click here to register. **For more information on this year’s results, as well as previous years, [click here.](#)**

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The 135,000 member Illinois Education Association (IEA-NEA) is the state’s largest education employee union. IEA represents preK-12 teachers outside of the city of Chicago and education support staff, higher education faculty, retired education employees and students preparing to become teachers, statewide.