



2015-16 Legislative Priorities

Adopted by the Board of Education

Oct. 1, 2014

We support...

- ***equalizing the impact of state funding decisions.***

The state legislature should adjust school funding levels in an equitable and timely manner relative to the state law regarding staffing decisions. Recent funding decisions (e.g. transportation reductions) disproportionately and unfairly impact Barrington 220 taxpayers. Barrington 220 supports the review of the formulas used to determine General State Aid (GSA) for fairness, but strongly believes every district in the state should receive funding from the GSA formulas. Accordingly, we support the continued use of the flat grant in the GSA formula. In addition, we support a more equitable formula to allocate the poverty and bi-lingual block grants to reflect the increasing number of eligible students in Barrington 220 and the suburbs. *Recommendation: We urge you to support the elimination of the PTELL adjustment, which has siphoned an increasing amount of funds from the GSA.*

- ***modification of the transportation mandate to better utilize bus services.***

The current state mandate requiring free bus transportation is not consistent among school districts in the state. While the intent of the mandate is good, school districts could improve the efficiency of transportation expenditures if the mandate allowed flexibility, such as allowing students who do not ride the bus to opt out of service.

- ***legislation that allows school districts to “under levy while retaining the ability for future boards to recapture the “under levy” in subsequent years.***

The current PTELL legislation does not allow school boards to re-capture any revenue that is levied below the tax cap limit specified in the law. Providing this flexibility in the law may allow school boards the ability to restrict its tax levy in a particular year without being concerned about the future impact of such an action. This would benefit both schools and taxpayers by allowing tax levies to be responsive to economic cycles.

- ***stronger reciprocal reporting laws between districts and local law enforcement.***

Legislation recently passed (Public Act 97-1104) encourages law enforcement agencies to enter into reciprocal reporting agreement with school districts regarding information concerning students' activities. We believe this bill would be improved if such agreements were required. Our experience with the Village of Barrington has shown us that such an agreement is vital in managing the safety and security of our students and staff. However, when reciprocal reporting agreements are encouraged but not required, inconsistencies can result in response to student disciplinary matters.

We oppose...

- ***shifting funding for the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) to local districts.***

While Barrington 220 supports efforts to modify the funding of TRS benefits to create a long-term sustainable solution that ensures the stability of TRS benefits, we oppose increasing the funding requirements of local school districts. The burden created by such increases will be difficult for many school districts to absorb during a period when budgets are already stressed by costs associated with the state's new performance evaluation system, implementation of the Common Core standards, and the need to purchase new instructional technology for classrooms.

We also believe...

- ***adopting capital expenditures legislation would improve school security and student safety.***

We propose the legislature consider programs to encourage school districts to invest in capital projects that would improve school security and student safety. Such projects could carry a state designation similar to existing Life/Safety projects. Providing financial incentives (e.g. partial state reimbursement, additional levy capacity) will allow schools to respond to their community's desire for increased school security and student safety.

- ***speed zones and traffic control devices should be allowed on heavily trafficked thoroughfares and rail crossings near schools even if pedestrians are not present.***

The state regulation [IDOT 39-2.09(a) *School area signs*] regarding school speed zones primarily protects pedestrians. School properties adjacent to state and county highways where the speed limit exceeds 45 mph should qualify for speed zones and flashing traffic controls even if students do not walk to that school. The safety of pedestrians aside, school buses and other vehicles that transport students may be imperiled by fast moving traffic when using that route to enter or exit school property without the aid of a traffic control device or a de/acceleration lane. Barrington 220 currently assumes financial responsibility for maintaining existing traffic control devices. The presence of stoplights and/or crossing signals also should not negate the need for visible "School Crossing" signs. Additionally, rail crossings that are utilized by student pedestrians should be required to have automated safety guards to restrict pedestrian traffic similar to the guards in place to restrict vehicle traffic. Legislative action would ensure proper instruction to IDOT and rail carriers.

- ***changes are necessary to federal No Child Left Behind testing requirements.***

Recognizing many of the accountability benefits intended by the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, Barrington 220 believes measures to determine Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) should be revised to measures of an *individual student's progress*. Whether or not Congress reauthorizes the law, Barrington 220 believes additional accommodations should be adopted for the testing of English Language Learners (ELL) and students with special needs. Until these changes occur, Barrington 220 supports the NCLB waiver submitted by the State of Illinois.

- ***mitigation is needed to lessen impacts of increased freight traffic by the CN Railway.***

The rising volume of freight traffic on the Canadian National (CN) railway creates serious safety concerns at rail crossings, increases the amount of time children spend on buses, and compromises the safety of students, staff and residents. This escalation of rail congestion will have a dramatic and negative impact on the quality of life in communities within our boundaries. Barrington 220 supports complete mitigation of all impacts throughout the Barrington area.