



IASA Executive Director Dr. Brent Clark talks about Vision 20/20 during a press conference in the State Capitol. Other Vision 20/20 partners at the press conference from left are IPA Executive Director Jason Leahy, IASBO Executive Director Dr. Michael Jacoby, IASB Executive Director Roger Eddy, Superintendents' Commission for the Study of Demographics and Diversity President Dr. Creg Williams, and Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools President Patricia Dal Santo.

From Vision to Action!

Two years in the making, Vision 20/20 has been unveiled publicly and the stage has been set for the most important phase of the initiative: Going from Vision to Action!

"We always have been good about knowing what we were opposed to in public education, but now we have a plan that clearly outlines what we are for, what we think will provide the very best educational opportunities for the more than 2 million schoolchildren in Illinois," said Dr. Brent Clark, Executive Director of IASA. "Our motto is 'Fulfilling the Promise of Public Education' and to do that we now have to spread the word and turn this vision into a movement."

A coalition of six statewide education organizations have joined forces behind Vision 20/20, including IASA, the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB), the Illinois Principals Association (IPA), the Illinois Association of School Business Officials (IASBO), the Superintendents' Commission for the Study of Demographics and Diversity (SCSDD), and the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools (IARSS). Vision 20/20 also has been endorsed by the Illinois PTA, the

Ounce of Prevention Fund and the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability.

The facts that Vision 20/20 is gaining momentum and strength was not lost on Dr. Creg Williams, President of the SCSDD.

"Vision 20/20 is gaining power. The power comes from the partnerships we have built. This is the first time that all of these education groups have come together behind one plan," said Williams, who also is Superintendent at Thornton Fractional Township High School District 215 in Calumet City. "This plan reflects the vision of educators in every part of the state. It has power and it is a promise to children in Illinois."

Elliot Regenstein, Senior Vice President for Advocacy and Policy at the Ounce of Prevention Fund, said it was "exciting to see Illinois school leaders putting forward a broad education agenda."

"There are many promising ideas in Vision 20/20," said Regenstein, whose organization is dedicated to providing the best care and education for children in poverty. "This report will definitely help shape policy conversations in the years ahead."

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Ralph Martire, Executive Director for the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability and an expert on funding in Illinois, has endorsed Vision 20/20.

“For decades, Illinois has failed to provide a meaningful educational opportunity to all children in the state – a failure that not only hurts kids, but also harms the economy,” Martire said. “While other factors have played roles, there’s no question that the core driver of this failure has been the lack of political will to reform the state’s school funding system, which is both inadequate and inequitable. This proposal, which suggests a rational, evidence-based approach to funding our schools fairly and adequately, has the potential to overcome the political gridlock that has prevented meaningful reform to date.”

Charlie Rose, the former General Counsel for the U.S. Department of Education, applauded the Vision

20/20 team for exercising leadership and filling a void.

“In my many years of involvement in the field of education, this kind of management-led collaboration and policy-driven document is unprecedented in Illinois,” Rose said. “There are 2 million children in our state whose voices and futures need to be addressed. This is a positive start in the right direction.”

The Vision 20/20 plan includes four main pillars, each with a several policy recommendations. The topics on which the plan focuses came from a statewide survey that included 661 current and former school superintendents and approximately 3,400 people. The recommendations are research-based and were developed over the course of almost two years by a group of nearly 70 superintendents, administrators, principals, school board members and others in the field of education.

Highly Effective Educators

The quality of teachers and school leaders is the greatest predictor of student achievement schools can influence. By attracting, developing and retaining our state's best educators, we can have a profound impact on student learning.



Under this pillar, the policy recommendations include:

-  Expanding education licensure reciprocity agreements to ensure Illinois school districts have access to the best quality candidates regardless of the state in which they received their initial license
-  Expanding alternative teaching licensure programs
-  Providing teacher student loan forgiveness so minority teachers at all districts can benefit, and expanding the program to include teachers in underserved content areas such as math, science and special education and those willing to serve in underserved parts of the state
-  Establishing partnerships with higher education to establish consistent admission and program criteria as well as classroom experience requirements
-  Fully funding mentoring for new educators
-  Expanding educator collaboration opportunities by providing sufficient time for collaboration during the educators' workday
-  Enhancing the ROE's/ISC's ability to function as regional centers for professional learning and innovation

21st Century Learning

For success in life, students need more than knowledge of math and reading. It is time to expand the definition of student learning, commit to the development of the "whole child," and invest in policies proven to link all schools to 21st century learning tools.



-  Aligning social and emotional standards with the new Illinois Learning Standards
-  Supporting student creativity and innovation
-  Promoting individualized learning through individualized learning plans because children learn in different ways and at different speeds
-  Engaging parents, families and communities
-  Developing a balanced state assessment system that would meet the needs of local districts to inform instruction and allow local districts to forgo local assessments decrease the amount of time spent administering standardized assessments
-  Offering incentives for expanding preschool and full-day kindergarten education
-  Promoting partnerships with post-secondary institutions
-  Encouraging career exploration by increasing graduation requirement flexibility for students who participate in internships or apprenticeships
-  Providing high-speed Internet connectivity to every school and community to ensure adequacy and equity
-  Incorporating technology in state learning standards

Shared Accountability



A quality education for all Illinois students cannot be ensured without the collaboration, compromise and hard work of both educators and legislators. With that in mind, it is necessary to expand educator responsibility in the legislative process, create a shared accountability model, and restructure mandates to allow more district flexibility.

-  Allowing current educators representation on the Illinois State Board of Education
-  Adopting a differentiated accountability model that allows local flexibility and gives credit to districts for programs and achievements outside what normally is used to assess schools if those programs or achievements provide a benefit that is important to that particular school district and its students, parents and taxpayers
-  Distinguishing between essential and discretionary regulations, with essential being defined as those that are fully funded, federal or having to do with student safety or civil rights
-  Allowing districts that forego state funding to opt out of state mandates and regulations, consistent with existing policies and the original intent of charter schools

Equitable and Adequate Funding



All students in Illinois are entitled to a quality education. It is our duty to ensure our students have access to all necessary resources by improving equity in the funding model, appropriating adequate dollars for education, and allowing local school districts the autonomy needed to increase efficiency.

-  Adopting an evidence-based funding model such as the model developed as part of the Illinois School Finance Adequacy Study. This study takes into account the actual cost to provide an adequate education in each school district in the state and is tied to research identifying those things, such as low class size in K-2, that have proven to have a positive impact on educational outcomes
-  Enhancing state spending through stability of state funding as well as continued efforts to pursue efficiencies at the local level, including but not limited to shared service agreements and other cooperative agreements
-  Restructuring state revenues to match the 21st century economy
-  Creating a two-year funding cycle with year-ahead budgeting for schools, such as a number of states currently do. This would alleviate the current situation in Illinois in which school districts have to make expenditure decisions before state funding decisions are final