



01/12/2015

## **Rauner's transition report cites Vision 20/20**

*Rev. Meeks, former state senator, named to chair ISBE*

Saying that a high-quality education is “the key to bringing back the American dream for every family in Illinois,” Bruce Rauner was sworn in as Illinois’ new governor today.

“In everything we do, we must ask ourselves, what does this mean for the next generation? For in order to thrive, we must prepare the next generation for success,” Rauner said in his inaugural speech. “From cradle to career, the people of Illinois deserve world-class opportunities. From early childhood and K through 12 schools, to vocational and technical training, to community colleges and higher ed, we need to invest adequately in every neighborhood.”

Some of Governor Rauner’s plan for education started to surface over the weekend when he named the Rev. James Meeks, a former state senator, as chairman of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), and he also released his [transition report](#) (Education on pages 43-50) in which Vision 20/20 was acknowledged.

One of the immediate actions recommended in the report is to “Review recommendations of councils and statewide organizations such as the P-20 Council and Vision 20/20 to determine which recommendations are low cost and high impact.”

The report noted “A key tenet of Vision 20/20 is the provision of connectivity to every school and community” and again cited Vision 20/20 when referencing mandates by saying “The shared accountability recommendations of Vision 20/20 can help the state distinguish between essential and discretionary regulations.” Vision 20/20 recommends that mandates that are not funded, exceed federal regulations, and do not involve student safety or civil rights should be left up to local school boards to decide whether to implement.

In his inaugural speech, Rauner said “Next to being a mother or a father, teaching is the most important job in the world, and we must support our many good teachers. That means putting more directly into the classrooms, reforming the education bureaucracy, rolling back costly mandates and giving more students access to great schools.”

The transition report prepared for Rauner by his team of 28 transition co-chairs – including Meeks and current ISBE Board member Andrea Brown – identified challenges by saying:

*“While there is much for which Illinois can be proud, the educational experience of Illinois students varies greatly across the state. Successful programs have not been brought to scale and are often unavailable to children who live in isolated or impoverished regions. Insufficient infrastructure and dated technology make it almost impossible for teachers and school leaders to monitor students’ performance in a way where instructional changes can improve learning outcomes. Administrative decisions and the implementation of high-impact practices are derailed by a complex school code and statewide bureaucracy. School districts lack the flexibility, tools, and resources to create positive learning environments, track student achievement longitudinally, or implement innovative programs. School boards lack the data and authority to hold administrators and teachers accountable for improved student performance. Most importantly, the lack of quality school options forces families to send their children to schools that are failing.”*

Other immediate actions called for in the report include:

- Begin an effort to identify mandates and rules that have highest priority for implementation and those for which schools and districts would most likely seek relief
- Launch and coordinate regular meetings between board leadership, agency heads, and the governor's office
- Begin to identify and publicize quality education options from cradle to career in every region of the state
- Identify and assess critical technologies and current state investments, such as broadband, the Illinois Shared Learning Environment, and shared cloud infrastructure (IlliniCloud), to ensure that all areas of the state have the infrastructure for 21st-century classroom learning technologies, improved professional development, distance learning to improve access to advanced coursework for high-school students, data sharing and analysis, and required local and national assessments
- Identify, study, and begin plans to replicate the most successful public-private partnerships for workforce readiness
- Institute cross-functional teams at natural student transition points to begin aligning goals, data systems, and communication strategies necessary to help ensure that students make key transitions successfully within and between systems
- Begin work on a multipronged strategy for improving college access and affordability, including replicating successful college and university initiatives that have contained costs while improving outcomes, as well as programs that enable students to earn college credits while in high school
- Begin to study how differences in instructional time across Illinois districts impacts student achievement and social-emotional development; these analyses should include the effects of access to preschool, all-day kindergarten, and out-of-school programming
- Evaluate alignment between new Illinois learning standards (Common Core) and a national 21st-century assessment approach, district-by-district readiness for these learning standards, the relationship of assessments to college and postsecondary access, and readiness of districts to implement statewide assessments
- Assess potential improvements to Illinois' teacher recruitment practices, including streamlined licensing processes, improved and diverse preparation programs, and differentiated compensation structures
- Assess areas of funding imbalance and sufficiency, from pre-K through postsecondary, across the entire system, and determine an appropriate formula that rebalances the system
- Identify pilot turnaround schools and school districts that would benefit from more rigorous turnaround programming, while applying best practices from effective turnaround efforts in Tennessee, Louisiana, Chicago, and Memphis

Meeks, who served in the Illinois Senate for 10 years and was Chairman of the Senate’s Education Committee, is pastor at the 15,000-member Salem Baptist Church in Chicago. A Democrat, Meeks backed Rauner in the gubernatorial campaign and previously had expressed support for increasing public school funding and, like Rauner, has expressed his support for school choice.