

School Referenda Results – March 17 Primary Election

Written by; Jason Nevel for IASA and Distributed via IASA Email Listserv

Keeping members informed is one of the many ways IASA provides support to school administrators. After every election, we compile results on referendums that impact public schools throughout the state.

The following are unofficial results from the March 17, 2026, Primary Election pertaining to public education.

Key Findings

- 0 of 2 counties approved 1 cent countywide sales tax to fund school construction. Randolph and Livingston counties approved expanding the use of sales tax to mental health services.
- 5 of 7 (71%) local bond referendums passed.
- 4 of 6 (66%) local tax rate increase referendums passed.
- Voters in La Moille CUSD 303 approved a nonbinding question about deactivation of the district's high school and negotiating enrollment agreements with one or more neighboring high school districts.
- Statewide totals for non-binding question on school vouchers were not yet available.

The results below are grouped into four categories: Local Bond Issues, Tax Rates, 1% Countywide Sales Tax Propositions and School Deactivation. The results are based on unofficial tallies gathered by IASA and internet research.

IASA will continue to update this document if more information becomes available. Please contact [Jason Nevel](#), IASA Director of Communications, if any information needs corrected/updated.

VOTE Illinois Local Bond Issues VOTE Illinois

Ball Chatham CUSD #5 (Abe Lincoln) — A \$110 million bond to fund alterations, repairs, and upgrades to school buildings and facilities.

- Yes: 2,967
- No: 2,631

Shelbyville CUSD #4 (Abe Lincoln) A \$40 million bond to construct and equip a new elementary school while renovating and upgrading portions of existing district facilities.

- Yes: 1,346
- No: 787

Sunset Ridge SD #29 (Cook North) A \$23.5 million bond to repair, replace, and upgrade a school building, with a focus on safety, security, and expanding student access to educational and outdoor spaces.

- Yes: 869
- No: 436

Pennoyer SD #79 (Cook West) A \$14 million bond to renovate the existing school building, covering safety improvements, playground updates, and kitchen and cafeteria upgrades.

- Yes: 304
- No: 584

Deerfield SD #109 (Lake) An \$87.78 million bond to construct and equip additions to several district buildings.

- Yes: 3,597
- No: 2,095

Pontiac-William Holliday SD #105 (Southwestern) A \$75.1 million bond to build a new school facility complete with classrooms, STEM labs, a cafeteria, gymnasium, and library/media center.

- Yes: 744
- No: 500

Yorkville CUSD #115 (Three Rivers) A \$275.1 million bond to construct two new school buildings and add onto Yorkville High School.

- Yes: 2,512
- No: 5,136

VOTE Illinois **Tax Rates** VOTE Illinois

Greenview CUSD #200 (Abe Lincoln) — Increase the district's debt service extension base under PTELL.

- Yes: 145
- No: 123

PORTA CUSD #202 (Abe Lincoln) — Raise the Education Fund's maximum tax rate from 2.48 to 3.80 to shore up district finances and preserve educational programming.

- Yes: 1,454
- No: 390

Cornell CCSD #426 (Corn Belt) — Set the PTELL limiting rate for bond principal and interest payments at \$500,000 for the 2026 levy year and beyond.

- Yes: 174
- No: 147

SD #45 DuPage County (DuPage) — Increase the PTELL limiting rate by 0.276% above the 2024 levy year rate.

- Yes: 3,468
- No: 3,715

Thomasboro CCSD #130 (Illini) — Increase the PTELL limiting rate by 1.000% above the 2024 levy year rate.

- Yes: 103
- No: 138

Pearl City CUSD #200 (Northwest) — Increase the PTELL limiting rate by 1.28% above the 2024 levy year rate.

- Yes: 586
- No: 341

VOTE Illinois **1% Countywide Sales Tax Propositions** VOTE Illinois

Shall a sales tax be imposed at a rate of 1% to be used exclusively for school facility purposes, school resource officers and mental health professionals?

X Winnebago County (Kishwaukee)

- o Yes: 6,151
- o No: 12,461

X Crawford County (Wabash Valley)

- Yes: 1,872
- No: 2,303

Should countywide 1% increase be used to also authorize use of the revenues for school resource officers and mental health professionals?

☑ Livingston County (Corn Belt)

- o Yes: 3,354
- o No: 2,023

☑ Randolph County (Southwestern)

- o Yes: 2,925
- o No: 1,022

VOTE School Deactivation VOTE

☑ Voters in La Moille CUSD 303 approved a nonbinding question about whether the district should deactivate its high school and pursue enrollment agreements with nearby high school districts.

- Yes: 321
- No: 100

Pritzker: School boards 'didn't take the hint' on property taxes – March 30, 2026

Written by: Brenden Moore in Capitol News Insider and Distributed Online by IASA through Eye on Education Email Listserv at; <https://capitolnewsillinois.com/news/pritzker-school-boards-didnt-take-the-hint-on-property-taxes/>

Governor says property tax issue needs to be addressed from several angles

MOORE'S SUMMARY: Responding to a report from Cook County Treasurer Maria Pappas titled "How State Laws Failed to Stop Decades of Skyrocketing Property Taxes," Gov. JB Pritzker on Monday laid blame at the feet of local school districts.

IN A NUTSHELL: The report found that property taxes in Cook County increased at double the rate of inflation and well above the rate of wage growth during the past 30 years. And while property taxes are imposed at the local level, the report concluded that loopholes in state law made it easier for local officials to impose property tax increases.

The report suggested that "the time may be ripe for the General Assembly to finally provide property tax relief to Illinois residents and businesses."

'DIDN'T TAKE THE HINT': Pritzker was quick to point out the well-known reason why the state's property taxes rank as the highest in the nation: years of state underfunding of K-12 schools. In total, school districts make up about half of an Illinois property tax bill.

The state has been chipping away at it since the evidence-based funding formula was signed into law by then-Gov. Bruce Rauner in 2017. In that time, state lawmakers have increased annual K-12 funding by more than \$2.5 billion. More state funding should mean easing the burden locally, Pritzker said.

"But you know what? School boards didn't take the hint," Pritzker told reporters Monday in Chicago. "And so they've continued to ratchet up property taxes over and over and over again, and that has led to a continued very high property tax burden on homeowners across the state."

MILLIONAIRE'S TAX? House Speaker Emanuel "Chris Welch, D-Hillside; former Gov. Pat Quinn, and some outside groups are pushing to place for a constitutional amendment on the ballot this November that would allow for a "millionaire's tax" on top of the state's flat income tax. Part of the revenue generated would go toward property tax relief.

Pritzker said "it could" alleviate some of the burden but wouldn't do much on its own.

"Just like in dealing with pensions, you have to go at it from three or four or five or six angles in order to try to reduce the burden of local property taxes," Pritzker said. "Look at this point, if we could just keep property tax(es) from going up, that would be (a) huge benefit to people across the state."

CUTTING TO THE CHASE: Property taxes are determined at the local level, but it doesn't happen in a vacuum. State policies have a significant impact on what local governments ultimately levy. Of course, there's state funding levels for schools — the largest driver of local property taxes.

There's also the need for local governments to keep up with increasing pension obligations. Just as the state increases its pension payments each year, local governments have been upping their payments into public safety pensions.

Local governments for years have complained of increased state mandates even as their cut of the state's income tax has been reduced.

There have been proposals seeking to address the issue over the years. Perhaps most famously, Gov. Jim Edgar in the 1990s proposed a swap — increase the income tax in exchange for a reduction in property taxes. But it went nowhere in the legislature.

The bottom line: There are no easy solutions to alleviate the state's property tax burden, especially with pensions expected to take up a large chunk of the state's budget over the next two decades and the lack of political will to impose an income tax increase or broaden the state's relatively narrow sales tax to capture more services.

LOOKING FORWARD: The Illinois Department of Revenue is also completing its own study of the state's property tax system. It's due by the end of July.

Property taxes, driven by TIF districts and school funds, outpace inflation and wages: county treasurer study – March 30, 2026

Written By Nicole Jeanine Johnson and Violet Miller for WBEX Chicago and Distributed Online by IASA through Eye on Education Email Listserv at: <https://www.wbez.org/news/2026/03/30/property-taxes-cook-county-treasurer-study>

The county's property tax levy has increased from \$6.8 billion in 1995 to \$19.2 billion in 2024, or twice the rate of inflation, according to a new report from Cook County Treasurer Maria Pappas' office. If it had remained on track with inflation, it would be closer to \$10.1 billion.

Property taxes outpaced inflation and grew “well above wage growth” over the last 30 years, shooting up nearly 182%, according to a new report from the Cook County Treasurer’s office.

The county’s property tax levy has increased from \$6.8 billion in 1995 to \$19.2 billion in 2024, or twice the rate of inflation, according to Pappas. If it had remained on track with inflation, per Treasurer’s office calculations, it would be closer to \$10.1 billion.

Pappas blames loopholes in the state Property Tax Extension Limitation Law, or PTELL, which was designed to limit tax increases to the rate of inflation or 5%, whichever is less.

But “local officials took advantage of that law’s loopholes to enact tax increases that substantially exceeded that limit,” and 94 of the county’s 135 municipalities aren’t bound by the law, the report says.

“The biggest culprit is what we call the levy,” Pappas said in an interview with WBEZ. “Locally, we have to cut down how much we’re spending.”

Predominantly Black neighborhoods on the South and West sides were hit hardest by the impact.

The Oakland neighborhood, just north of Kenwood, saw a 636.22% increase in property tax bills between 1995 and 2024 while East Garfield Park saw a 447.22% increase, per treasurer’s office data. The Lower West Side, West Garfield Park and North Lawndale all saw increases over 200%.

In the suburbs, the closest comparison was in unincorporated Riverside, which saw bills shoot up about 235% in that same time frame; Phoenix, Illinois saw an increase of 192.73%.

Map of Median Residential Property Tax Bill %Change 1995 to 2024 can be found:
<https://www.wbez.org/news/2026/03/30/property-taxes-cook-county-treasurer-study>

In an email, Illinois Department of Revenue Director David Harris said the agency “continues to make progress on the property tax study required [by law],” which directs it and other state agencies to evaluate the state’s property tax system and recommend possible improvements to its associated processes.

There are a number of other places to put the blame, as well, according to the report, though schools and tax increment financing (TIF) districts top the list.

Schools countywide, which account for about 50% of the total tax bill, also have seen tax demands skyrocket 189%, or \$6.9 billion.

Taxes imposed by Chicago Public Schools and other city governments rose from about \$2.9 billion in 1995 to nearly \$8.9 billion in 2024, in large part due to public pension funding mandates, the report said. Suburban municipalities added about \$6.3 billion for the funds.

CPS has demanded even more money because of pension costs, which now total about \$662 million a year. The city district is on the hook for 65% of its own pension costs, while suburban school districts pay 2% because the state picks up the rest for them.

And Illinois already covers a little less than a quarter of its schools’ funds, the lowest of any state.

“The schools have to make it up with property taxes,” said Hal Dardick, director of research for the treasurer’s office. “It may require some sort of alternate method by the state of funding schools.”

In 2017, state lawmakers set a 2027 goal to fund at least 90% of each school's state funding needs, though it's \$5 billion short with just a year to go. At the current rate, it will take until at least 2037 to reach the level mandated by the original bill, closing a \$3.3 billion gap, according to the Center on Tax and Budget Accountability.

Last month, state Sen. Graciela Guzmán, D-Chicago, and state Rep. Will Davis, D-Hazel Crest, introduced bills that would fulfill the funding, albeit without a plan in the legislation. Guzmán suggested a millionaire's tax, which former Illinois governor and treasurer Pat Quinn has also endorsed.

This is while tax increases in TIF districts — which also aren't subject to PTELL — exploded, demanding \$1.3 billion more in the city and \$372 million in the suburbs, an eleven-times increase, per the report. They now account for about 10% of the county's property tax burden, up from 2.5% in 1995.

"[Legislators] need to really take a hard look at the entire tax system in the state of Illinois," Dardick said. "In its fairness and how it harms businesses and residents."

State superintendent all-in on evidence-based funding – April 7, 2026

Written By: Dave Dahl for Capital City Now and Distributed by IASA Online through Eye on Education Email Listserv at: <https://capitolcitynow.com/news/248842-state-superintendent-all-in-on-evidence-based-funding/>

Panel's top Republican wishes IL would allow tax breaks for donations to private schools.

Springfield, IL (CAPITOL CITY NOW) – Illinois' top K-12 educator is still carrying the banner for the state's new school funding formula.

"Evidence-based funding," enacted in 2017, "remains the principal funding source for Illinois schools," said Illinois State Board of Education superintendent Tony Sanders (pictured). "In FY 2027, ISBE recommends an increase of \$350 million, which includes \$300 million in tier funding to school districts, and up to \$50 million for the property tax relief grant, as required by statute."

Speaking to a House committee Tuesday, Sanders maintained he's a fan. "EBF has transformed districts for the better and is most likely the reason why our pandemic recovery has been faster and stronger than other states."

The \$10.9 billion ask, said Sanders, "represents a net increase of approximately \$469.7 million in education funding. We are very conscious of the state's tight fiscal environment, and so we prioritized the most crucial funding streams and those investments that will have the most direct impact on student success."

The committee's top Republican, State Rep. Blaine Wilhour (R-Beecher City), said the budget request should be less, seeing as how ISBE is offloading some functions onto a new agency, the Illinois Department of Early Childhood. What's more, Wilhour said Illinoisans should be eligible for tax breaks for donations to private schools. When Sanders said he awaits federal rules on the program, Wilhour dismissed that as an excuse.

"When this governor wants something, he generally gets it," Wilhour said. "So I just don't think that this is something that you guys want to do, I don't think it's something you want to advocate for, clearly, and it's not something the governor wants to advocate for."

Trump's FY 2027 budget would slash \$8.5B from selected K-12 programs - April 3, 2026

Written by; Naaz Modan for K-12 DIVE and Distributed Online by IASA through Eye on Education Email Listserv at: <https://www.k12dive.com/news/trumps-fy-2027-budget-would-slash-85b-from-selected-k-12-programs/816654/>

The request spares Title I and special education but targets a range of K-12 programs including English Language Acquisition.

The U.S. Department of Education would face a 3% cut in funding under President Donald Trump's fiscal year 2027 budget request, including \$8.5 billion in eliminations and consolidations for selected K-12 programs. It would also legislate the transfer of some responsibilities out of the agency.

"The Budget puts the Department of Education (ED), which has failed the Nation's children, teachers, and families, on a path to elimination," the budget proposal said.

The proposed budget requests \$76.5 billion for the Education Department for FY 2027, compared to an FY 2026 funding level of \$79 billion. It would maintain Title I at \$18.4 billion and increase special education funding by \$539 million, but — similar to the president's FY 2026 request — it calls for the elimination of some existing grants while consolidating others into single funding streams for states to distribute at their own discretion.

For example, it proposes consolidating 17 K-12 grant funding streams worth \$6.5 billion into a single grant, which the administration said would allow states to spend "based on their needs without Federal prescription."

It would cut 12 other programs, totaling \$2.1 billion, including:

- All \$70 million for Teacher Quality Partnership grants, often used to diversify the teacher workforce.
- All \$7 million for Equity Assistance Centers, established as part of desegregation efforts.
- All \$890 million for English Language Acquisition, which helped districts support English language learners and which the budget said would "encourage bilingualism."
- All \$50 million for the Comprehensive Centers program, which is authorized under ESEA and provides assistance to states and districts on improving instruction and closing achievement gaps.
- A \$428 million cut to Migrant Education and Special Programs for Migrant Students, which supports immigrant students.

Many of the proposed cuts and consolidations were similar to those contained in the president's budget request for FY 2026, much of which Congress ultimately scrapped.

The proposal would also solidify into legislation the Education Department's efforts to shift career and technical education programs and responsibilities to the U.S. Department of Labor. While the Education Department has already entered an interagency agreement that would do so, the budget request would officially move those programs under the Labor Department's wing.

Opposition trickles in

The FY 2027 budget request would continue many of the efforts the administration has already spearheaded through other means.

For example, its proposed elimination of the Teacher Quality Partnership grants and Equity Assistance Centers was preceded by efforts at the Education Department last year to close the Equity Assistance Centers — a move that was partially successfully challenged in court — and end the grants that the agency said were "divisive."

The administration has also repeatedly, and relatively unsuccessfully, asked Congress to consolidate and cut K-12 funding while eliminating the Education Department entirely — a task that only the legislative branch has the legal authority to do.

Economic News Briefs...

- **Market and Economic Highlights:**
 - Fed's March meeting leaned hawkish with fewer officials expecting multiple cuts.
 - Chairman Powell noted further progress on inflation may be required for rate cuts.
 - Middle East conflict oil shock weighed heavily on stock and bond prices.
 - Treasury yields rose with markets pricing in a slower pace of Fed rate cuts.

- Stock prices fell, but displayed considerable resilience.

Source: FactSet

- **Supply Shock Drives Up Oil and Gas Prices:** The closing of the Strait of Hormuz has removed roughly 20 million barrels per day of crude and refined oil products from global trade. This supply shock has increased oil prices sharply to over \$100 per barrel with gas prices also rising above \$4.00 per gallon nationwide ahead of the summer travel season. This initial increase is likely to create nearterm price pressure as higher transportation and electricity costs flow through supply chains into other goods and services. The duration of the conflict and persistence of higher oil prices will be key factors in the months ahead. We are closely monitoring whether these pressures begin to weigh on broader consumption, and ultimately, employment and growth. Sources: Bloomberg, FactSet as of 3/31/26
Taken from the ISDLAF+ Market Update April 2026 prepared by PMA Asset Management, LLC

DPS Business Office Briefs:

- **ISIN Reserve Reimbursement:** The ISIN Board of Trustees meeting has an action item regarding the reimbursement of our self insured reserve. This amount is approximately \$700,000. We will make the Board aware of the ISIN vote.

Countywide Sales Tax

The District again continues to see strong CFST revenues. The table below represents strong receipts for December 2025. The CFST receipts are three months in arrears, so the funds received in February represent the taxes paid by consumers in December. The \$225,000 received is the highest monthly amount recorded and represents an eight-month stretch of the largest amounts received since the creation of the program and is a 12.0% increase over FY 25. December has traditionally been one of the higher months due to holiday spending. Also, it is important to remember that these funds cannot be spent on anything other than facilities improvement. The summary below outlines a summary of the receipts from FY 23 with a comparison of FY 25 vs. FY 26.

Countywide Sales Tax Revenues					
	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	Difference FY 25 v. 26
July	\$167,736.37	\$166,297.20	\$177,241.56	\$220,684.93	\$43,443.37
August	\$157,646.19	\$171,178.89	\$177,589.47	\$210,195.86	\$32,606.39
September	\$160,407.90	\$175,220.50	\$176,058.42	\$203,743.03	\$27,684.61
October	\$162,719.99	\$165,535.70	\$157,162.56	\$215,438.17	\$58,275.61
November	\$157,766.14	\$168,001.90	\$171,171.84	\$203,784.19	\$32,612.35
December	\$167,486.45	\$178,755.19	\$201,004.74	\$225,466.05	\$24,461.31
January	\$134,425.96	\$141,195.76	\$179,547.38	\$0.00	\$0.00
February	\$123,815.53	\$141,802.17	\$164,559.27	\$0.00	\$0.00
March	\$154,850.14	\$165,591.32	\$187,252.74	\$0.00	\$0.00
April	\$159,801.14	\$168,718.21	\$198,100.75	\$0.00	\$0.00
May	\$182,291.57	\$195,620.51	\$219,783.67	\$0.00	\$0.00
June	\$181,283.06	\$186,682.55	\$213,942.95	\$0.00	\$0.00
	\$1,910,230.44	\$2,024,599.90	\$2,223,415.35	\$1,279,312.23	\$219,083.64

The next payment obligation for 2018A & 2019A Alternate Revenue Bonds will be in July 2026 and this will be an interest payment. The payment will be allocated out of CFST receipts on a monthly basis to meet the obligation. Then in January 2027, a principal and interest payment will be made on the bonds. In general, the obligation amount is \$90,000/month. Any amount above this amount represents opportunity for future facility improvements.

Treasurer’s Report – March 2026

In your Board Packet, you will find the Treasurer’s Reports for March 2026. The summary graphs represent FY 26 fund balances through March 2026. Balances for the funds for the first two quarters of each year reach their highest balances due to property tax revenue receipts. During the second half of the year, cash flow and revenue are traditionally low, while expenses for salaries and basic operations remain consistent throughout the year. This month saw a total decrease in fund balances of \$1.76 million. The Business Office will continue to monitor cash flow throughout the year.



