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Area Schools Hold Press Conference on Funding Reform

While many Illinois school children may benefit from the recently passed Illinois school funding reform legislation, many other students, particularly high school students in the South Suburban region, could stand to lose funding for their educations. This was the primary concern of many who spoke at a press conference held in the Hall of Governors at Governors State University on December 1, one day before the Illinois State Legislature passed a school funding bill which is projected to provide millions of dollars for public education in the state.

"How ironic that the South Suburbs, which led the charge for funding reform, could potentially be the biggest losers in this new bill," noted State Senator Debbie Halvorson (D-40) during her remarks at the conference.

The new school funding legislation, which was signed into law by Governor Jim Edgar later that week, levies "sin" taxes on cigarette sales and gambling revenues, as well as taxes on selected telephone services, to generate $474 million in new funds to be directed towards public education. This new money is earmarked to increase the minimum amount of money each school district is able to spend per student to $4,225.

Of concern to area school superintendents, however, are the proposed changes to the formula which determines how much money each school district will receive from the state. This formula takes into account how much local property tax revenue is available to a community for public schools and adjusts the state's share accordingly, assuring that all school districts are able to provide a minimum or "foundation level" of resources for every student. The state applies the funding formula to the total number of students enrolled in a school district.

Before the new legislation, high school students were "weighted" to account for the higher cost associated with high school education. The new legislation does away with this weighting, which could significantly impact the amount of money high school districts which rely heavily on the state will receive.

Advocates for state.

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Advocates for
School Funding Reform Press Conference

continued from page 1

that many other schools will experience as a result of the new legislation.

The press conference was moderated by GSU professor of education Ken Peterson and District 149 Superintendent James Cunnec of Calumet City who is also an adjunct professor at GSU. Other area superintendents who spoke during the press conference included William Small of Elementary District 143 in Midlothian, Gary Catalani of Thornton High School District 205, Ron Patton of Bloom High School District 206 and Brian Knutson of Rich High School District 227. John Blakey, the business manager of Bremen High School District 228, and Halvorson also presented at the conference.

Small highlighted the benefits the new legislation will have on elementary school districts such as his own. "While I realize that the bill is not perfect," noted Small, "I certainly feel I must support legislation which will increase my budget by a projected $1 million."

Halvorson also noted the benefits to elementary schools, but was concerned that these benefits were at the expense of other students. "It's very frustrating to think that while most of the state will be celebrating increased budgets and resources, we will be happy if we don't LOSE money."

Peterson pointed out that this new legislation was clearly a step in the right direction, but it was merely a first step. "While many Illinois school children will clearly benefit from this bill, there is concern that passage of this legislation will kill the momentum and take the pressure off of legislators to finish the job and enact a new funding formula that does not so heavily rely on local property taxes which result in inherent discrepancies based solely on geography," Peterson noted.

The press conference was part of a full evening of activity at GSU regarding the funding of public education in Illinois. In the adjacent Engbreton Hall, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) held it public hearings on the proposed 1998-99 education budget, the first time such a hearing has been held in the south suburban region.

Sharon Gist-Gilliam of the ISBE addressed an audience of several area school officials and staff, community activists, education experts and concerned parents on the financial plans for public education in Illinois for the upcoming school year. In an interesting twist, the proposed budget being discussed during the public hearing assumed passage of the very legislation which was being debated simultaneously at the press conference just outside the doors of Engbreton Hall.

"The south suburban region is being heard clearly on education issues; we must continue to speak and be heard," said Dr. Larry McClellan, executive director of the South Metropolitan Regional Leadership Center, who coordinated the public hearing at GSU and also participated in the planning of the press conference. "GSU will continue to be a forum where ideas can be exchanged on this most important of subjects."

Corrections

Two headlines in the October issue of @govst.edu were incorrect.

Ying Liang was identified as the October Employee of the Month by the headline of an article which correctly indicated that Ms. Liang was selected as September Employee of the Month.

Also, the article which profiled Dr. Russell E. Carter, the recently appointed director of the Physical Therapy program was preceded by a headline which mistakenly identified Dr. Carter as the director of the OT/PT program.

The staff of @govst.edu apologizes for the mistakes and any inconvenience or misunderstanding these errors may have caused.
'Tis the Season at GSU!

Revelers dance to the accordion stylings of CHP dean Dr. Cecilia Rokusek at the Pre-Thanksgiving Diversity celebration.

GSU President Dr. Paula Wolff recruits a potential future student at the Learning In Context Program Christmas celebration in Ford Heights.

Students from Crete Monee High School perform at the annual Civil Service Day program.

State Senator Debbie Halvoson with CBPA Dean Bill Nowlin and a festively dressed Kathy Murphy at the Institute for Public Policy & Administration's annual Irish coffee holiday celebration.

How Are We Doing?

Dear Reader,
@govst.edu has been in publication for more than a year now. We invite your comments and suggestions as part of our process to improve the publication. Please take a few minutes to tell us what you think of your newsletter in the following areas:

1. Format
2. Story coverage
3. Usefulness

Please send all replies via campus mail to the Public Affairs Office. Anyone off campus can mail replies to @govst.edu, Public Affairs, Governors State University, University Park, IL 60466. All suggestions will be considered. Thank you for taking time to help us refine your @govst.edu.
Cochrane Named Project Manager for Regional Airport

Christine Cochrane of Crete, director of the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Governors State University since 1984, has accepted a position as project manager for the South Suburban Airport.

Dr. William Nowlin, recently appointed dean of the College of Business and Public Administration, said “When I first visited here, I was immediately impressed with the center and surprised that it was such a secret. It is one of the most successful centers of which I am aware that is attached to a business school. . . The success is because of Chris Cochrane, and I applaud her for all that she has done.”

In her 14 years as director of the SBDC, Cochrane said, many initiatives have been implemented. Those she is most proud of include growing the SBDC into a regional resource for small business financing by adding a certified development company, South Towns Business Growth Corporation, to the already existing SBDC service. The center serves more than 500 clients each year and has assisted in providing approximately $30 million in small business loans in the last five years alone.

Cochrane received a B.A. in 1970 from the University of Wisconsin and an M.B.A. from GSU in 1975.

As project manager for the South Suburban Airport, Cochrane will be reporting to Governor Edgar. Her responsibilities will include marketing the airport to the airlines, assembling the investment package for private investors and assisting in solving the “regional consensus” issue for the “Third Airport.”

Cochrane’s resignation from the SBDC was effective November 30, 1997.

CATEE Gets Grant for Fifth Consecutive Year

For the fifth consecutive year CATEE, The Center for Addictions, Technology, Education and Evaluation, at Governors State University has received a grant through the Department of Health and Human Services: Center for Substance Abuse Treatment in Washington, D.C.

CATEE is one of only 11 centers established by the grant to increase the number of new addictions treatment professionals and to enhance the competencies of existing addictions treatment professionals.

The $1,081,999 per year grant is used by CATEE in conjunction with other organizations in a consortium to promote training and education in addictions studies for health and human services and justice professionals and students. Other organizations in the consortium, said Dr. Cheryl Mejta, executive director of CATEE, include Interventions, Cook County Hospital, the Center for Family Health, the Illinois Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse and Treatment Alternatives for Special Clients (TASC).

“We know treatment works. More and more research supports positive outcomes with treatment. . . For every dollar spent on treatment, we save seven dollars in the cost of crime, lost productivity and health consequences of substance abuse,” Mejta said.

For further information on CATEE and its programs, contact Dr. Cheryl Mejta at (708) 534-4386.

Learning In Context Program Receives Grant

Brandon Senter, CEO of the Governors State University Foundation, received confirmation that the Learning In Context Program (LIC) at GSU received a $5,000 grant from the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Chicago (JCCC).

The purpose of the LIC program is to help Ford Heights children aspire to and prepare for college and ultimately contribute to the growth and stability of a financially depressed region. Ford Heights is one of the poorest communities in the nation.

The educational grants made by JCCC fund a wide range of programs, including math, computers, literacy, foreign language, music, mentoring, college preparation and work skills training. GSU was one of only 29 organizations to receive a grant out of 114 requests made to the JCCC.

Shigeaki Tsutsumi, secretary of the JCCC Foundation said, "The members of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Chicago formed the foundation to provide a means for the Chicago area Japanese business community to come together and support local education, arts and culture and to express our appreciation to the people of Chicago."

Senter said that "The grant will be used to support free tutorial services, the use of technology for teaching and learning, entrepreneurial and teacher training, mentoring opportunities and increased parental involvement in School District 169.”
Sherry Kohl
Employee of the Year

Sherry Kohl, word processing operator in the dean's office in the College of Education, has been voted Employee of the Year for 1997. She was the April employee of the month.

Kohl was nominated for Employee of the Year because of her "tremendous dedication to her work and GSU," one nominator said. "She is very helpful in assisting students and faculty and helped organize the college's support for the Alumni Association phonathon." She also helped organize the materials for the facilitators to use in security meetings.

One nominator had this to say about Sherry: "She always goes the extra mile in providing service to faculty, staff and students. Her cheerfulness and willingness to help others is greatly appreciated."

Kohl is commended for volunteering to stay late and come in early even in very bad weather to get things done. "She is professional, efficient and a team player. She truly extends herself for the benefit of GSU," added a nominator.

As winner of this award, Kohl receives $500, a plaque and is automatically established as a new member on the employee of the month committee. She also received two tickets to a Chicago Bulls basketball game as a gift from GSU President Wolff.

Sherry Kohl and her husband live in Peotone. They have two children.

Loretta Haddox
November Employee of the Month

Loretta Haddox, who works in the office of the dean of Student Affairs and Services (SAS), at GSU has been selected as November's Employee of the Month.

The university community has nominated her because of her exemplary work performance. One nominator said, "There has never been a time that she was so busy that she couldn't help." Another said, "When called upon for help, Loretta goes out of her way to make sure that our projects are complete and thorough, always following up."

Loretta said she was sincerely surprised, and was very grateful and appreciative to the people who nominated her for the award. "I was ecstatic when I first found out; it's nice to be recognized by your colleagues and peers."

The Employee of the Month receives $150, a preferred parking spot for the month, two free tickets to a show at The Center for Performing Arts and eligibility for the Employee of the Year award. Loretta has been working at GSU since May 1995. She and her husband reside in Calumet City and have three sons.

Martha Hellman
December Employee of the Month

Martha Hellman, secretary IV in the College of Education, Psychology and Counseling Division, has been selected as GSU's December Employee of the Month.

Hellman has worked at GSU since October '95, starting in the College of Arts and Sciences and transferring to her current position in February '96. Hellman lives in Frankfort with her husband of six years and 17-year-old step-son. Hellman also has a daughter who is a sophomore at the University of Illinois-Champaign.

"From day one I have worked with really wonderful people at the university. I really appreciate the guidance and time that everyone has given me," she said. "I've received a lot of help from people along the way."

Hellman was nominated by employees of the Psychology and Counseling Division for her good-tempered and courteous nature, as well as her exemplary skills. The nominators said that Hellman's workload is "incredible," but Hellman handles it with a smile and a positive outlook.
A Great 1998 Ahead for Center

The coming year promises to be one of continued success and growth for The Center for Performing Arts at Governors State University. The Center will embark upon the 1998 portion of its most successful season yet with several internationally acclaimed acts, featuring the very best in music, dance, comedy and children’s theater.

Some of the exciting acts scheduled to come to the Center’s Stage in 1998 include Quebec’s dazzling Cirque Eloize, Israel’s most acclaimed modern dance troupe the Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Ensemble, the thrilling entourage of The Second City, the comedy troupe which spawned such comedy legends as John Candy, Bill Murray and Julia Louis-Dreyfus, and the American Repertory Ballet Company with a stunning rendition of Maurice Sendak’s well known children’s storybook Where the Wild Things Are.

The month of February promises to be particularly exciting, with scheduled performances by the Coasters, the Drifters and the Platters, Great Britain’s Chamber duo Double Exposure, and the Irish Rovers in a pre-St. Patrick’s Day celebration. Also in February, the Chicago Tribune will sponsor an essay contest for children, grades 5 through 9 throughout the Chicagoland area, on “Racial Healing, Now More Than Ever” in conjunction with the sold-out performance of South Africa’s Ladysmith Black Mambazo February 22. 160 winning essayists will receive preferred seating for the concert as well as a complementary lunch and lecture by members of the singing group on pre- and post-apartheid South Africa, courtesy of the Chicago Tribune.

For information on the essay contest or any of the upcoming performances at The Center for Performing Arts, call The Center box office at 708/235-2222.

GSU Gets Student Services Grant

Governors State University has been awarded a Student Support Service Grant from the U.S. Department of Education in the amount of $180,000 per year for four years.

Dr. Peggy Woodard, director of Student Development, said “This is a pretty big deal, and we are really excited about receiving the grant.” Many institutions applied for grants, but GSU was one of only 128 to have new programs funded.

The function of the grant is to target college students who are first generation, low-income and/or disabled, provide support services to ensure that they matriculate into the university through graduation and into careers or graduate school.

First generation college students, said Woodard, generally do not have support systems in place to help them get through college. Consequently, this group has a very high drop-out rate. The grant will provide the funds to hire personnel who will support these students, so that they don’t get frustrated and quit.

“We will help at every juncture,” Woodard said. These students will be supported by a special project manager and counselors devoted specifically to helping them through registration, academic and personal counseling, tutoring, career services and anything else that might be a stumbling block for them. “We will connect them with financial aid and career services. We’ll take field trips to make them aware of careers and graduate programs, if they want to continue their education from here. We’ll connect them with student life and diversity programs, as well as offer them leadership opportunities,” Woodard said.

The program will be implemented in January 1998. One hundred fifty students fitting the criteria will be identified each year through GSU’s financial aid office and through the undergraduate orientation program. In addition, some community colleges have implemented a similar program and connections will be made to transition those students into GSU and continue their support.

Woodard said that if there are more than 150 students fitting the criteria, the first 150 identified will be placed in the support program, but the others would not be “thrown to the wind.” They will receive support through other avenues until they can be initiated into the program next year.

For more information on the Student Support Service Program, contact Dr. Peggy Woodard at (708) 235-3961.
Participants in the seminar on "Small Businesses and the World Wide Web" (WWW) held at Governors State University on December 4 had high praise for the event.

Instructors Dr. Suzanne Prescott, director of Technology Planning for Lincoln Networks at GSU, and Larry Palmer, owner of Presto Graphics in Richton Park, have been underestimated the enthusiasm and curiosity of seminar participants when they planned the hour-and-a-half event. Participant Steve Weber, owner of a custom display business in Tinley Park, felt that more time was needed, saying, "An hour and a half is too short."

Palmer and Prescott have been planning the seminars since last summer. "We felt that small business owners were curious to find out how the WWW can improve the profitability of their businesses but were at the same time concerned by the misinformation and suspicion that exists," said Palmer.

Prescott added, "The explosion of business on the WWW or Internet is staggering. It would be unfortunate if the south suburban area were left out of what is becoming the most rapidly growing marketing and sales development of the decade."

As a result of the event, most seminar participants are thinking about establishing a site for their business on the WWW. Interest in the seminars has spawned a series for 1998. The January seminar is already filled, but anyone interested in attending the free seminar in February should call (708) 534-4509 or (708) 748-8855. Prescott can also be reached by e-mail at persephone@metnet.com. Palmer's e-mail address is Larry@prestonet.com.

Small business owners who are seeking more information about electronic commerce are invited to visit the new business marketplace on the Web at www.lincolnnet.net/business. The marketplace gives more information about electronic commerce and business seminar opportunities and is sponsored by the South Metropolitan Regional Leadership Center at GSU.

Loony Tunes Are More Than Exotic

Most people are very familiar with the calls of common loons without ever realizing it. These exotic, distinctive, even haunting calls are popular as background sounds for TV and movies. Though in real life loons are heard only on northern lakes, the imaginary world of movies places them in deserts, tropical rain forests, and even on the open ocean. While such non-authentic uses of animal calls tend to make biologists wince, the practice is understandable. Loon calls have an unmistakably pure, natural quality which seems to symbolize the essence of wildness.

Dr. Ed Miller, professor in environmental biology at Governors State University, has discovered that one of this bird's calls, the yodel, may be distinctive of the loons as well. Looking for a way to tell individual male loons apart without having to capture and mark them, Miller tape-recorded yodels from males on many different northern lakes across a five-year period. Statistical tests showed that each male's call was highly individual, even over many years, and could be used like "voice prints."

A paper detailing this discovery, which has been sent to the British journal Bioacoustics, will help biologists identify and track specific individual male loons. This is important, Miller said, for many types of research needed to protect loon populations, which are decreasing in Michigan and elsewhere. In addition, the findings suggest that loons should be able to identify one another over long distances by sound alone, reinforcing the idea that the human capacity to recognize specific individuals by voice is shared by other species.

Dr. Miller has studied loons since the 1970s and offers a graduate level field course in upper Michigan each spring.

GSU/Alumni News

Peggy Collier Awarded Turner Scholarship

Peggy Collier of Robbins has been awarded the Ralph Turner Scholarship. This scholarship was established by the residents of Robbins and other south suburban communities in honor of the late Ralph Turner, who completed both bachelor's and master's degrees at Governors State University when in his 60s. The scholarship is designed to assist returning students, who might otherwise not have the financial ability to continue their education. The Turner scholarship recipient is selected by Ralph Turner's widow.

Collier said she saw the scholarship advertised on television and, though she did not think she had a chance at winning, she applied anyway. "I had the desire to go back to school," Collier said, "but not the money. [The scholarship] is helping me make a dream come true."

Collier of Robbins, is personnel director and administrative assistant to the mayor of Robbins. Her goal is to earn a bachelor's degree in social science at GSU.

For the past four years Collier has volunteered her services as director of the homeless shelter in Robbins. "I've always been interested in social work," she said. "Working with the homeless allows me to do what I like. Getting this degree will help me out a lot."

The Ralph Turner Scholarship Foundation ordinarily receives all its funding from an annual dinner. However, Ameritech employee Dawn Williams of Crestwood supplemented the funding this year with a total of $1,500 from two other sources — a private fund-raiser she organized for the foundation which resulted in $500 in private donations, and a unique Ameritech employee program designed to increase support for volunteerism and community service which awarded an additional $1,000.

Williams directed her fundraising efforts towards this scholarship in honor of her late husband Emory, who was a musician in Robbins, and also a friend of the Turner family.
King Ceremony to Feature Well Known Speakers

The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Commemoration at Governors State University is scheduled for Thursday, January 15 from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in The Center for Performing Arts (CPA).

The 1998 theme for the commemoration is "Remember! Act! A Day On, Not a Day Off!" Keynote speakers will be Father George Clements, founder of the One Church One Addict program and similar programs and entertainer Aaron Freeman, host of television talk show "Talking with Aaron Freeman" on UPN - Channel 50.

Poet Leonard Lucas who writes about the African culture will also speak, and Lenore Jenkins-Allen, research associate in the Development Office at GSU will discuss the interview she had with Martin Luther King Jr. just four days before his assassination. In addition, GSU student and student representative to the GSU Board of Trustees Anna Stange will play the banjo and sing folk songs.

The commemoration also includes performances by the Najwa Dance Corps, and the Crete-Monee Middle School and Rich Central High School choirs. For more information call (708) 534-4132.

Meet... Kristi DeLaurentiis

"I consider myself to be community oriented," says GSU board member Kristi DeLaurentiis. This is quite evident in DeLaurentiis' varied activities on behalf of women throughout Illinois and the community at large through her involvement in grassroots Republican Party events. "There needs to be equity between men and women," says DeLaurentiis. "This is the only way we can meet the future."

Kristi DeLaurentiis has been active in the Republican Party for about ten years. She started as a door-to-door and phone bank volunteer and later became president of the South Suburban Republican Women (SSRW) in 1992. In 1993 she was appointed to the Citizens' Council on Women. The Council is a bipartisan, joint legislative agency that provides research on specific areas of public policy for the Illinois General Assembly. DeLaurentiis feels that being community oriented is a major part of being politically active.

DeLaurentiis' interest in toxins led her to her other life passion, the study of science. She entered the work force as a research assistant at Northwestern University's Department of Oral Biology/Pathology, and later moved to the department of Radiation Therapy at Rush Presbyterian - St. Luke's Medical Center. She has coauthored eight medical/scientific research abstracts and articles relating to the study of cancer and the effects of radiation and chemotherapies. She is presently studying environmental biology at Governors State University. She also serves on the Board of Directors of the American Cancer Society.

In the midst of this busy schedule, DeLaurentiis still makes time to spend with her family. She is an assistant coach of the Homewood/Flossmoor Soccer Club, a Girl Scout leader, a room mother in Flossmoor Elementary School District 161, and an "Art in the Classroom" volunteer.

DeLaurentiis believes that it is important for everyone to be active in their communities. "It is a personal obligation... my involvement is for the betterment of the community," she notes. "It is very rewarding knowing that you are helping others."