



## NSSEO Governing Board Brief

November 6, 2019

### NSSEO November Bridge Builder Award - Senator Ann Gillespie and Rep. Mark Walker:



Aligned to NSSEO's vision of *Building a Promising Future for Students*, Senator Gillespie and Representative Walker are our esteemed NSSEO 2019 Bridge-Builder Award Honorees. Their passion, ideas, collective efforts and tremendous influence continues to contribute to the important linkages and changes critical for future career and life planning for our students. Senator Gillespie and Representative Walker have been influential legislators on educational issues, small businesses, vocational programs and community partnerships and serve as models to

working collaboratively to focus on important issues that impact school systems.

It is our honor at NSSEO to recognize Senator Gillespie and Representative Walker for opening the door of possibilities for NSSEO through the customized Inclusive Accessible Playground Project for Miner School. Their incredible efforts led to NSSEO becoming one of the recipients of one of the Illinois Community Economic Development Grants from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity totaling \$410,497.

The customized design of the Miner School playground will expand opportunities, not only for the students at Miner School, but will also provide community-wide benefits. Children, families and community members with disabilities will be able to actively participate in recreational play, educational experiences, and socialization with friends, community visitors, and family members. What will make this specially designed playground stand out beyond other accessible playgrounds is that it will incorporate unique equipment, communication and sensory options that exceed the scope and impact of other accessible playgrounds, providing enjoyable educational and recreational experiences for students, friends, families and community members.

This special recognition of the significant contributions of Senator Gillespie and Representative Walker as NSSEO 2019 Bridge Builders emphasizes the impact their efforts have on our students. We know this influence will continue, not only through the construction of this incredible

playground but in their tireless commitment to supporting “ Building a promising future” for our students.

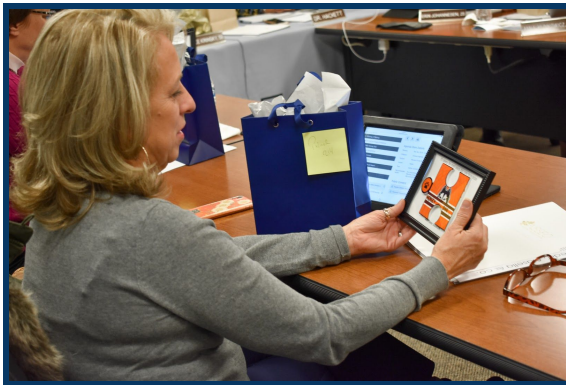
A video was created by the students of Miner School as a way to say “thank you” to our Bridge Builders. Click [here](#) to view the video.

### Governing School Board Member Appreciation Day:



School Board Members' Day offers an opportunity to recognize the leadership provided by local boards of education and to build a stronger relationship between school board members, the community, faculty, and parents. At this month's Governing Board meeting, we had students throughout the cooperative design a one-of-a-kind puzzle piece to represent their member district's connection to NSSEO.

We are fortunate to have a supportive Governing Board that always puts the needs of children first and supports us by “connecting the pieces” to impact our NSSEO community. Thank you for your relentless efforts and dedication to NSSEO. #ThankABoardMember



### Federal and State Updates: Dr. Judy Hackett

#### Federal Update

Federal priorities at the present continue to challenge the likelihood of any increase to educational funding, based on the debates over Defense spending and the discrepancy between the House Bill that allocated 1 billion in additional funding to support a ramp towards IDEA full funding and the Senate Bill on level funding. It continues to be a focus for campaigning but it seems unlikely that we will see any significant increase.

## State Highlights

### Fall Veto Session

The past several weeks, considerable efforts and collaboration to mitigate the impact of HB3586, now known as SB460 and the extensive expectations for districts associated with it, as well as the lack of clarity in the language on the requirements for districts. The efforts resulted in delaying the implementation to July, 2020 and the opportunity to work with other educational groups and ISBE to provide greater clarity, guidance and operational definitions that reflect a collaborative approach with families and engagement in the IEP process and associated details. SB460 and the House version passed last week.

Another important bill, SB10 addresses the challenge created that impacted several ESP candidates at NSSEO who needed to complete the paraprofessional test prior to starting employment. This was an unintended consequence of the elimination of the basic skills tests for teachers and required some creative efforts with our ESP candidates and ISBE to expedite opportunities to hire candidates during a time when every position is invaluable to our work.

HB3897, referred to as the Transition bill, has been delayed until the Spring session. The current law reflects the requirement to provide educational services as delineated in an IEP for students up until their 22nd birthday. This Bill proposed an extension to the end of a student's 22nd year. There are several issues associated with the Bill and it is our hope that this provides us as an opportunity to work with sponsors and other legislators to gain greater understanding of the issues associated with transitioning into post-secondary adult services in Illinois.

Continued legislative efforts as an engaged member of the Boards of IASA/IAASE/ED RED Board have been important during quite a veto session as we continue to address bills that positively or negatively impact needs of our districts and NSSEO. We are working diligently on collaboratively working on revised language and guidance, pushing for delays or more time to address bills this spring season and extend legislative conversations to provide further clarity, understanding and advocacy for issues that align to our guiding principles - supporting the needs of students with disabilities. Through upcoming budget testimony and coordinated state efforts we hope to focus on advocating for legislative changes that reflect the financial supports for districts for students with more significant needs and costs and an opportunity to provide greater understanding of the associated needs during the transition period as students age out at 22 and the important bridge efforts to adult services.

ED RED has formed several member subcommittees to foster greater engagement and attention to several key areas. NSSEO Board President Janice Krinsky and Judy Hackett have joined the PLAT committee to serve in a role of monitoring legislation during the sessions, keep our district apprised and provide input when timely input is required.

### Building Bridges for Life Planning (IAASE Presentation)

Aligned with our CIP goal on collaborative partnerships, Stephanie Mathias, Kirk parent, Laura Fine, NSSEO Transition Specialist and Judy Hackett, NSSEO Superintendent, presented at the Fall IAASE conference on 10.18.19 for special education leaders across Illinois. Stephanie Mathias, our main speaker, described the parent role, emphasizing the importance of partnering with educational teams and other families to deepen understanding of parent empowerment and engagement, learning as much as possible regarding the complex aspects of transitioning and deepening understanding together. The team shared the important work at PERC, training and networking with parent teams as we collectively navigate the journey of transition.



### Miner/Kirk Redesign Update:

Our goal last year stated that beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, Kirk Campus would serve students in High School and through their transition years in the Connection Center. Miner School would serve students Early Childhood through Grade 8. Each school would continue to support students through a person-centered approach including high quality instruction, multidisciplinary teaming, and strong parent engagement.” The redesign of our program would enable us to systematically intensify our efforts for every student every day.

At the completion of the first quarter of serving students within our program redesign, we will continue to update NSSEO families from Miner and Kirk with monthly updates. The updates will focus on the following aspects of the program redesign: Instructional Design, Positive and Safe Learning Environment, Professional Learning, Facilities and Resources. Included in the Board meeting discussion were some of the associated challenges and important next steps identified through staff and parent input to address and advance the important work ahead. An action plan through a committee process and associated timelines to address priorities will guide the work in the next few months.

Please click [here](#) for entire quarterly update presented at the Board meeting.

### Continuous Improvement Goal Update: Innovative Learning Initiatives:

The NSSEO Continuous Improvement Plan for the 2019-2020 School Year includes a continued focus on building the capacity of our educators. Specifically, **Goal 3 Student-Centered Learning Environment** states that we will provide a supportive professional learning environment that promotes growth for all.

At the November 6th Board Meeting, Christy Crabtree, NSSEO Director of Innovative Learning and Technology, gave an update on the adoption, launch and implementation of our on-line learning platform, Canvas. Although this initiative is in the beginning stages of implementation, Christy shared the work that has been done and the vision for future use. Here are some highlights for next steps with Canvas:

- Diversify and deepen our Professional Learning options
- Provide an engaging platform for “just in time” and on-demand learning
- Expand application of existing workshop content
- Support onboarding and training of new staff (member district & NSSEO)
- Flexible scheduling for learning opportunities to accommodate member district and NSSEO program needs
- Parent training and networking with better accessibility to information given busy work/home schedules

In addition, Christy shared information about other initiatives within the Innovative Learning Department to enhance school to home communication and classroom instruction. The Innovative

Learning Department continues to lead the way with 21st century learning to enhance teaching and learning in NSSEO.

### **Professional Learning 2019-2020:**

NSSEO provides high-quality professional learning opportunities grounded in research and designed to facilitate changes in educator practices that will result in improved learning. These learning opportunities are open to all NSSEO staff and our member districts. Ms. Stacy Colgan, Professional Learning Coordinator highlighted several opportunities that await our staff this year. Executive Functioning, Facilitated IEP Training, customized Mental Health Series, and the Safe and Civil Schools Cohort are a few important and timely events taking place this fall. To view NSSEO's Professional Learning Calendar please click on this [link](#).

### **Upcoming NSSEO Events:**

**11/25 - Parent/Teacher Conferences 5:30pm to 8:30pm**

**11/26 - Student Non-Attendance Day; Parent/Teacher Conferences**

**11/27-11/29 - Thanksgiving Break**

**12/2 - School Resumes**

**12/2 - Kirk Science Week Begins**

**12/6 - Kirk Holiday Dance 7:00pm to 9:00pm**

**12/9 - Winter Assessment Window Begins @ Timber Ridge**

**12/10 - NSSEO Governing Board Meeting @ 7:00pm**

### **Making a Difference:**

NSSEO is continually looking for ways to expand partnerships with parents, district, community leaders and legislators to join together as a community committed to deepening understanding and making a positive impact for NSSEO students and families. To learn more about how to make a difference visit us at <http://www.nsseo.org/MAKEADIFFERENCE/> as well as on our social media platforms:

Twitter	@NSSEO_org
Facebook	@NSSEO
Instagram	NSSEO_org