



Unity's Baseball Team beat the hosting Monticello Sages with a score of 6-0 for the IHSA Class 2A Regional Championship. The Henry twins (planning to play baseball on a scholarship at Danville Area Community College) played well as Brayden had 2 hits on the day, including a 3 run homer in the 6th inning as Tyler had a hit and pitched 7 innings, giving up 1 hit, walking 3 and struck out 4. Beckham Brink, Ryan Cunningham, Tre Hoggard and Rylan Wolf also had hits with the Rockets record now standing at 24-8. Maroa Forsyth has 24 wins, 9 losses and a tie and will be the next opponent for Unity at 4:30pm on Wednesday, June 3rd in the Sectionals. The winner of that game will move on to the championship round against the winner of the St Joseph Ogden versus Tri Valley game at 2pm (also 6/3/26) in Monticello.



Riley Hogan, senior at the High School of Saint Thomas More, jumped 15' 7" (a personal PR and school record) (4.75 in meters) to win the 1A Boys Pole Vault State Championship at Eastern Illinois University on Saturday, May 30th 2026. He's the first individual state champion at STM and broke his own pole vault record (a feat he's accomplished every year). As an 8th grader, he won at the state competition, placed 8th his freshman year, 3rd his sophomore year, 2nd his junior year and now 1st as a senior. With no pole vault facilities at STM, Hogan has been training with the "Flying Dragons" club in Bloomington 3-4 times a week.

Hogan also competed in the 300 meter hurdles at state and medaled in 9th place, going to state his junior year and placing 8th. His school record is a time of 40.5 in the 300 meter hurdles. He plans to go to Hillsdale, Michigan and study international business and foreign language with his pole vault scholarship at Hillsdale College. Father Keith Walder acknowledged the young mans accomplishments to the parish at St. Mary's in Pesotum on Sunday, May 31st after mass with congratulatory applause from his faithful family and friends supporting him in his final stretch as a Saber.

Pritzker requested in his budget proposal, but slightly less than the agency had requested.

It's also about \$332 million less than the agency received last year. But that's because the state is shifting funding for early childhood education this year from ISBE to the new Department of Early Childhood.

In addition to the increase in EBF money, the budget includes increases in certain categories of transportation costs and other kinds of "mandated categorical" spending. It also nearly triples funding, to \$26 million, to help fund free breakfast and lunch programs.

Underfunding The Evidence-Based Funding system was signed into law in 2017 by then-Gov. Bruce Rauner, a Republican. It was intended to address the vast disparities in funding levels across more than 860 school districts in the state.

Under the formula, each district is assigned an "adequacy target," based on its size, demographic factors and regional cost-of-living factors. It also considers how much local revenue each district is capable of generating

to produce an estimate of how much state aid it needs to meet its adequacy target.

Under the law, the state is supposed to add at least \$300 million in new funding each year. All districts continued receiving at least as much state aid as they did before the formula was adopted, but the bulk of the new money was earmarked for districts furthest from their adequacy target.

In the system's first year, 657 of the state's 851 elementary, high school and unit districts were funded at less than 90% of their adequacy target, including 167 that were below 60% of adequacy.

This year, the ninth year of the formula, total EBF dollars in the budget — including the base funding districts were getting before the new formula took effect — stands at \$8.9 billion. All districts are now funded above 60% of adequacy, but there are

Schools

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still 48 districts below 70% of adequacy, and 532 districts, or 63% of the total, are below 90%.

ISBE estimates that bringing all districts up to the goal of at least 90% of adequacy would cost an additional \$3 billion.

Sen. Graciela Guzmán, D-Chicago, introduced legislation this year that would have required the state to fully fund the formula to bring all districts above the 90% adequacy mark.

In a recent interview, Guzmán said that at the current pace of adding just \$300 million in new money each year, factoring in inflation, it will take at least another decade to reach the goal of bringing all districts up to or near adequacy.

"We're already seeing the impact of inadequacy in school districts all across our state," she said. "We've heard a lot of robust testimony from school districts that are talking to us about the kinds of staff decisions that it means. It means fewer counselors, larger class sizes, less bilingual support, less special ed support, less reliable transportation. That's happening. And then at the same time we see more pressure than ever on teachers, on our students, on parents, on families, on local taxpayers."

Property tax relief

Another element of the 2017 funding reform was to address some of the inequity in local property tax rates around the state.

At the time the EBF formula was passed, according to ISBE data, the state paid only about 26.6% of the total cost of public schools. Local revenue, primarily from property taxes, accounted for 66.4% of the total cost, or \$20.4 billion.

Under the new formula, in addition to \$300 million in new funding for the neediest schools, the state is supposed to provide approximately \$50 million for property tax relief grants, which can be distributed to districts with particularly high tax rates.

Districts that received the grants had to agree to use the

money to lower their total property tax levy for at least two years. After that, the grant amount became part of the district's funding base going forward.

Last year, however, Pritzker called for pausing the property tax relief program amid questions about whether the program was doing any good. Meanwhile, ISBE was tasked with conducting a review of the program to measure its impact.

"We've got to figure out, how do we do that better, and I don't think we have the answer quite yet," Pritzker said during a March 5 news conference. "But it didn't seem appropriate for us to just throw the money into the program without having a better potential outcome."

The state's report found that from 2015 through 2023, tax rates in districts that received the grants did go down. But rates also declined over that period for most districts that did not receive the grants, a trend the report said could be explained by rising property values.

Further, it found total property tax revenue collected in districts receiving the grants grew, but at a slower pace than in districts that did not receive the grants.

"What I think the report says is that it's helped some districts, hasn't been as beneficial elsewhere," Sen. Michael Halpin, D-Rock Island, who chairs the Senate's education budget committee, said in an interview. "But I think it's worthwhile, given the current issues with affordability, to maybe put those back in for this year. But I'm regularly pushing for additional money to go into the formula."

Under the new budget, districts receiving the grants in the upcoming fiscal year will be required to use them to lower their property tax levies for three years instead of two.

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The Sidney Scoop

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DEADLINE TO SUBMIT

TO OUR COLUMNISTS:

10 a.m. Friday

prior to publication

Look for your correspondent's Memorial Day Services and Ceremonies SCTP Feature Article published in this week's edition of the Southern Champaign County Today Paper.

Sidney American Legion Post 433 Commander Bill Hensch wants to thank everyone who helped with and those who attended the Sidney American Legion Post 433 Memorial Day program at the Mt. Hope Cemetery in Sidney.

The Village of Sidney Board of Trustees regular monthly meeting should have taken place on Monday, June 1. Look for a report from your correspondent in next week's edition of the Southern Champaign County Today Paper.

The Sidney American Legion Post 433 will hold an American Flag Retirement Ceremony on Flag Day Sunday, June 14 at 5:00 p.m. in front of the Post Home located at 221 South David Street in downtown Sidney. The public is invited to attend.

The Sidney American Legion Post 433 will hold their next monthly meeting at the Post Home located at 221 South David Street in downtown Sidney on Monday, June 15 at 6:00 p.m. Prospective

new members are always welcome and encouraged to attend and all monthly meetings, unless otherwise posted, are held at the Post Home.

Winston's Old Bank and the Sidney Saloon will host a Saturday, June 20 Street Fest in the downtown area between Byron and Railroad Streets from 3:00 p.m. – midnight with bands performing from 3:00 – 6:00 p.m. and from 7:00 – 10:00 p.m. Stay tuned for the band lineup.

Have a wonderful week!

If you or your organization have news items you want published drop a line to Ann Rhoton at P. O. Box 491, Sidney, IL 61877 or call (217) 688-2812 between 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Don't hesitate to leave a message if there's no answer.

News items must be turned in by 10:00 a.m. each Friday to be published in the following week's paper. Items submitted after the deadline will be published in the following week's column.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HERITAGE COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #8

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN by the School Board of Heritage Community Unit School District 8, in the County of Champaign, State of Illinois, that a public hearing will be held at 6:55 pm., on the 15th day of June 2026, at Heritage Elementary/Junior High School in the Homer Band Room preceding the regularly scheduled meeting at 7 pm at the same location.

The purpose of this hearing will be to seek input concerning the provision of the School Code allowing for eLearning days in lieu of closing schools and using an emergency make-up day as amended by Public Act 101-0012. Section 5/10-20.56 of the School Code contains the minimum requirements to ensure staff and student participation in an eLearning day will allow the day to be counted as a day of student attendance.

Heritage Community Unit School District #8,
in the County of Champaign, State of Illinois.

President of the Board, Curt Elmore;
Superintendent, Kimberly Norton;
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