No shortage of ideas

In recent years, states have adopted many new policies to attract new teachers — and keep them in the classroom

by Tim Anderson (tanderson@csg.org)

A s a library media specialist in a Minnesota middle school, Rep. Mary Kunesh-Podein comes across potential teachers all the time. It’s the students themselves.

“At our school, students are often mentoring other students, and we are flabbergasted at what we see,” she says. “They have the patience. They have the understanding. They connect well with that other student.

“And we think, ‘This kid would make such a great teacher.’”

As a legislator, Rep. Kunesh-Podein also thinks about this: What state policies could expose more of these young people to the profession, and get them on a path to becoming a teacher?

One idea, part of a legislative proposal in Minnesota this year (HF 824/SF 1012), is to bring college-level, credit-bearing Introduction to Education classes into the state’s high schools; another is to identify and eliminate barriers (financial or otherwise) that stand in the way of lower-income individuals getting certified to teach.

Attracting more teachers, as well as retaining them, has been on the minds of many state policymakers in the Midwest, as evidenced by the burst of new legislative proposals, laws and investments over the past few years. A few examples:

- Iowa is now spending $160 million annually on what it says is the most extensive teacher leadership and compensation system in the country.
- Kansas and Minnesota are providing help for school paraprofessionals interested in pursuing teacher certifications.
- South Dakota recently raised its state sales tax for the purpose of boosting teacher pay, and in Illinois, lawmakers this year set a minimum annual salary for teachers (it gradually reaches $40,000 by the 2023-24 school year).
- In Indiana, legislators passed bills this year that provide for new teacher-residency programs and career ladders for instructors in select school districts.

Taken together, the list of recent actions in the Midwest (see page 7 for the full state-by-state rundown) reflects the kind of comprehensive approach needed to address teacher shortages over the long term, says Ryan Saunders, a policy adviser at the Learning Policy Institute.

“Pay alone isn’t going to get you all the way there,” he says, and neither is simply increasing the supply of licensed teachers.

“It’s also about how we keep the teachers we have — how to prevent the revolving door we see now because of high attrition rates,” Saunders adds.

Annual teacher attrition across the country is about 8 percent, according to the institute, and two-thirds of these efforts leave the profession for reasons other than retirement. Among new teachers, an October 2018 national study by the University of Pennsylvania found, 44 percent leave within five years.

Leadership opportunities, pay grow for teachers in Iowa

In an August 2018 report of the Learning Policy Institute, Saunders and his co-authors highlight strategies at the leading edge of efforts to strengthen the educator workforce.

One of the states singled out multiple times: Iowa. Since passage of a law in 2001, that state has required (and helped

% change in number of people completing teacher preparation programs in state: 2016-'17 vs. 2014-'15


Inflation-adjusted change in teacher pay: 1999-'00 to 2017-'18

Loan forgiveness, higher pay, incentives to teach in high-need geographic or subject areas, stronger induction programs and compensated career ladders are among the strategies being used by legislatures in the Midwest to address states’ shortages of teachers.
**Health & Human Services**

Illinois requires health insurance policies to cover maternal mental health, postpartum depression

Health insurance policies in Illinois must cover maternal mental health issues, including postpartum depression, under a new law signed by Gov. J.B. Pritzker in August.

While Illinois’ existing health insurance law talks about mental health coverage, it “didn’t specify clearly enough for me” that pregnancy-related issues and postpartum depression should be included, says Rep. Mary Flowers, who sponsored HB 2895. The legislation came about due to a newspaper story about a new father who, after his wife had given birth, noticed she was acting strangely; when a doctor told him to wait for an examination until her next scheduled checkup, he didn’t wait, but put her in a mental health facility — an act that saved her life.

Flowers says her bill drew language from a 2018 California law (AB 2193) that requires private and public health plans and health insurers to create maternal mental health programs. It also requires obstetric providers to confirm that screening for maternal depression has occurred or to screen women directly, at least once during pregnancy or the postpartum period.

(A related Flowers-sponsored bill signed into law in August, HB 2895, requires the Illinois Department of Public Health to provide continuing education for staff working with pregnant or postpartum women, starting next year.)

“There is a huge gap in care for perinatal mental illness, and having a law like this makes a big difference,” says Wendy Davis, executive director of Postpartum Support International, a 33-year-old organization working to increase awareness of postpartum mental disorders, “Davis says.

Illinois is also the only state where postpartum depression is a reason to review criminal convictions.

“Illinois really just leads the way in [addressing] postpartum mental disorders,” Davis says.

Other Midwestern states, though, have taken steps in recent years to address maternal mental health:

- Indiana screens mothers in its Maternal, Infant, & Early Childhood Home Visiting Program.
- Iowa’s Bureau of Family Health maintains maternal health services including postpartum assessments of babies and mothers, either in clinics or at home, and the state’s Perinatal Depression Project has also drawn applause from Postpartum Support International.
- Minnesota requires hospitals to give all mothers information about postpartum depression and anxiety. The final report of the Governor’s Task Force on Mental Health, issued in November 2016, recommended that the state increase options for postpartum mental health treatment or consider creating inpatient mother-baby postpartum units as in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, Belgium and the United Kingdom.

Brief written by Jon Davi, CSG Midwest staff liaison to the Midwestern Legislative Conference Health & Human Services Committee. He can be reached at jdavis@csg.org. The committee’s co-chairs are Kansas Rep. Susan Concannon and Iowa Rep. Shannon Lundgren; its vice chair is Minnesota Rep. Jennifer Schultz.

Midwest-Canada Relations

In Minnesota, tuition reciprocity reaches across international, as well as state, borders

If a Minnesota student wants to have the experience of attending college in another country, he or she doesn’t have to go far — and the cost can be much less than the tuition paid at a public, in-state university.

That is because Minnesota has a tuition-reciprocity agreement with its northern neighbor, the Canadian province of Manitoba.

Manitoba students take advantage of this program as well, paying the tuition as in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, Belgium and the United Kingdom.

In place since 1989, the exchange program attracts a relatively small number of participants compared to Minnesota’s reciprocity agreements with the neighboring states of North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin (see table).

Under each of these agreements, Minnesota experiences a net outflow of students — for example, 127 left for a Manitoba school vs. 31 Manitobans who come to the state for school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement</th>
<th># of students participating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota-Wisconsin</td>
<td>13,504 from Minnesota; 8,296 from Wisconsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota-North Dakota</td>
<td>11,917 from Minnesota; 6,024 from North Dakota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota-South Dakota</td>
<td>3,439 from Minnesota; 1,181 from South Dakota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota-Iowa*</td>
<td>145 from Minnesota; 91 from Iowa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota-Manitoba</td>
<td>127 from Minnesota; 31 from Manitoba</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sandy Connolly, director of communications for the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, says the exchange program gives the state’s students more choices of schools that are relatively close to home, thus providing a better chance for them to attend a “best-fit institution.”

Students in Minnesota paid an average tuition of just under $3,000 last year in Manitoba for an arts and sciences degree, a substantial savings over the approximately $15,000 tuition at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

As a smaller province in population, Manitoba is able to give its students the chance to take advantage of programs at nearby Minnesota schools that may not be available to them in the province.

State and provincial officials say, too, that this cross-border movement of students can enhance economic, cultural and educational ties between the two jurisdictions.

All of Minnesota’s reciprocity agreements date back decades: Manitoba, 1989; South Dakota, 1978; North Dakota, 1975; and Wisconsin, 1969.

The state also is part of the Midwest Student Exchange Program. Run by the Midwestern Higher Education Compact, this program allows in-state students to attend select universities in nine other states at a tuition rate equal to 150 percent of what in-state students pay.

Brief written by Ilene Grossman, CSG Midwest staff liaison to the Midwestern Legislative Conference Midwest-Canada Relations Committee. She can be reached at igrossma@csg.org. The committee’s co-chairs are Ohio Rep. Bob Cupp and Manitoba Minister Kelvin Goertzen; the co-vice chairs are Michigan Sen. Jim Stamas and Saskatchewan Speaker Mark Doherty.
Agriculture & Natural Resources

New programs in Minnesota, Wisconsin seek to help struggling dairy industry, farmers

Pick the indicator, and it points to troubling times for the Midwest’s dairy industry.

Wisconsin, which has led the nation in farm bankruptcies three straight years, lost 450 dairy farms in the first half of 2019 alone — on top of the 590 that closed in 2018. In all of this region’s major dairy-producing states, too, the number of licensed dairy herds is falling, by as much as 13 percent in Michigan (see map).

A worldwide surplus of milk, combined with the impact of tariffs, has led to multiple years of unfavorable market conditions for dairy farmers: Farmgate prices dropped precipitously in 2014, to below $17 cwt, and have remained down and below the cost of production, $20 cwt. (Cwt is a unit measurement equal to 100 pounds of milk).

Can states help turn around, or at least stabilize, the situation for dairy farmers?

This year, legislators in two of the nation’s top dairy-producing states have sought ways to help, including putting new dollars into price supports (Minnesota) and research (Wisconsin).

Through two separate budget bills passed during the state’s 2019 legislative session, Minnesota is appropriating $8 million for a Dairy Assistance, Investment and Relief Initiative. This program is targeted for small and medium-sized operations (those producing less than 16 million pounds of milk a year) enrolled in the federal Dairy Margin Coverage program.

State payments under the Minnesota initiative are based on an operation’s amount of milk production in 2018. For example, if a dairy farmer produced 5 million pounds of milk, he or she is eligible for two payments of $2,500 each. (The payment is 10 cents per cwt, up to the first 5 million pounds of production.)

In Wisconsin, over the next biennium, the state will put $8.8 million toward a Dairy Innovation Hub in order “to hire faculty and fund the research infrastructure necessary to grow the dairy industry,” says Rep. Travis Vanel, a leading legislative proponent of the idea. That research will be conducted at three of the state’s university campuses.

The Dairy Innovation Hub was among 51 recommendations made in June by a state task force that met for nearly a year to explore ways to maintain a viable, profitable dairy industry in Wisconsin. Investing more in research was one of six recommendations listed as a “very high” priority in the task force’s final report.

“Fresh thinking and innovative ideas from the University of Wisconsin are what made us the Dairy State,” the report says. “Sustaining Wisconsin’s dairy industry requires a rededication to that history of innovation.”

The task force (created by the University of Wisconsin and state Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection) also singles out the need for more state-funded research into new and value-added dairy products.

Great Lakes

Caucus hears options for dealing with shoreline erosion caused by near-record-high lake levels

With water levels in the Great Lakes surging to or above record high levels, coastal communities along all five lakes are scrambling to deal with erosion and flooding woes.

During a September 6 web meeting, members of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus heard from David Hart, assistant director for extension at the University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute, about the impact of high water levels in the Great Lakes and what communities can do to mitigate its effects.

Based on his work with a shoreline stabilization effort in Milwaukee and Ozaukee counties in Wisconsin, Hart said myriad options have been developed, or are available for state and local officials to use:

• Options for erosion control and bluff stability include relocation of buildings, “green” infrastructure and mandating low-impact development on bluffs.

• Options for bluff stability practices include blufftop stormwater management, bluff “dewatering,” use of vegetation and green infrastructure, regrading and/or terracing.

• Options for structural shore protection include building revetments (slopes built to absorb the energy of incoming water), sea walls, breakwaters, or groins (structures that look like a small breakwater and create or maintain beaches on their uprift sides).

He also singled out state legislation from 2018, including Indiana’s SB 178, which requires companies removing sand for port and industrial water intake pipes to deposit that sand onto regional beaches rather than offshore; and Ohio’s HB 709, which lets homeowners on impacted coasts create a “special improvement district” to use an additional property tax levy to pay for shoreline improvements.

High water marks: Mean water levels in Great Lakes for August 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lake</th>
<th>Mean water level (feet)</th>
<th>Historical comparisons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superior</td>
<td>603.22</td>
<td>• tied record-high water level from August 1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 8 inches above water level from August 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 13 inches above long-term monthly average for August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan-Huron</td>
<td>581.76</td>
<td>• 3 inches below record-high level from August 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 15 inches above level from August 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 10 inches above long-term monthly average for August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Clair</td>
<td>577.30</td>
<td>• 2 inches above previous record-high level from August 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 13 inches above level from August 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 31 inches above long-term monthly average for August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erie</td>
<td>574.21</td>
<td>• 3 inches above previous record-high level from August 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 12 inches above level from August 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 30 inches above long-term monthly average for August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>247.80</td>
<td>• 2 inches below previous record-high level from August 1947</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 24 inches above water level from August 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 25 inches above long-term monthly average for August</td>
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</table>

Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District

"3"
After decades of delay, shipments of spent fuel from Midwest’s nuclear plants may take different route

State governments have lots of experience coordinating and planning shipments of radioactive waste with the federal government, but little to none working directly with the nuclear industry on shipments.

That may change in the not-so-distant future.

The reason: For decades, the federal government has been unable to find a permanent repository to store the nation’s spent fuel from nuclear power plants, and the industry is now trying to take matters into its own hands.

Private-sector plans to create consolidated, interim storage facilities in New Mexico and Texas are now before the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. With licensing approval from the commission, the owners of these facilities could begin to receive shipments of spent fuel from nuclear plants owned by their subsidiaries as well as other utilities until a permanent federal repository is completed.

Potential of private-sector shipments

Across the Midwest (Missouri included), as of the end of 2017, more than 20,300 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel was being stored at 23 operating or decommissioned nuclear power plants in nine states.

The plan has always been to get this highly radioactive waste off-site.

In 1987, the U.S. Congress designated Nevada’s Yucca Mountain as the permanent repository site for the spent fuel from the nation’s power plants. But a mix of factors — including years of opposition from Nevada and the Obama administration’s decision to reject the Yucca site in 2010 — means a storage solution from the federal government is nowhere in sight.

For utilities, as long as the spent fuel is left at their facilities, they must provide 24/7 security and cannot finish the work of cleaning up the sites of decommissioned plants that no longer generate electricity. In northern Illinois, for example, a decommissioned plant keeps a state beach park on the shores of Lake Michigan divided in two. The Big Rock Plant in Michigan was decommissioned more than 20 years ago; its land cannot be redeveloped until there is a place for the spent fuel to be sent.

Private-sector shipments to the New Mexico and Texas facilities could resolve this problem of spent fuel being stranded at shutdown sites, but also create new challenges for states.

“States bear the primary responsibility for protecting the health and safety of the public and the environment,” notes Kelly Horn of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency and a member of The Council of State Governments’ Midwestern Radioactive Materials Transportation Committee.

To date, states have met this responsibility in partnership with the federal government.

In the Midwest, for example, through the work of CSG’s Midwestern Radioactive Materials Transportation Project, states have a great deal of experience working with the Department of Energy on large-scale shipments of radioactive waste (mostly waste being moved from the nation’s defense sites and from domestic and foreign research reactors).

“Transportation of spent nuclear fuel (from power plants), the work of training emergency-response personnel, monitoring shipments, conducting inspections, enforcing state-specific regulations, and providing escorts becomes the responsibility of the states,” Horn notes.

Under federal law, for large-scale shipments of spent fuel from nuclear power plants to a federally operated repository, the Department of Energy would have to provide training funds and technical assistance to states and tribes affected by the shipments.

However, no such legal obligations apply to private-sector shipments.

Some states in the region may be able to recoup some of their shipment-related activities through fees (see map). However, these fees would only be collected when shipments begin, as a result, no funds would be available for advance preparations and training.

Earlier this year, members of the CSG Midwestern Radioactive Materials Transportation Committee participated in an industry-led “tabletop exercise” at the Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plant in Minnesota. The event helped to begin a dialogue between the industry and state, tribal and local stakeholders regarding private-sector shipments of spent nuclear fuel.

In November, the committee will host an exercise of its own.

“Communication [between states and industry] has to occur early and often to ensure the shipping strategy is complete and thorough,” Horn says.

Article written by Mitch Arvidson, who provides staff support to The Council of State Governments/Midwestern Radioactive Materials Transportation Project. He can be reached at marvidson@csg.org.

### Sites of nuclear power plants, status of reactors in Midwest

**Operating nuclear reactor(s) at plant**

**Shut-down nuclear reactor(s) at plant**

**Mix of operating, shut-down reactor(s) at plant**


<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>999</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
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<td>1,384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
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<td>1,519</td>
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* Five of the Midwest’s plants have been permanently shut down but still store spent nuclear fuel. Zion is Illinois, Big Rock Point in Michigan, Fort Calhoun in Nebraska, and Kernmantle and La Crosse in Wisconsin.


### States in Midwest with shipment fees on spent nuclear fuel, other radioactive waste

**Shipment fee in place**

**No shipment fee**

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**Spent nuclear fuel being stored on-site at nuclear power plants in Midwest**

**About CSG’s Midwestern Radioactive Materials Transportation Committee**

- Includes governor’s appointees from the executive branches of 12 Midwestern states; state legislators also can be appointed by the chair of CSG’s Midwestern Legislative Conference
- Brings states together to identify, prioritize and work with the U.S. Department of Energy on regional issues related to the transport of radioactive waste and materials, including spent nuclear fuel

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**Mix of operating, shut-down reactor(s) at plant**

Source: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

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You want to teach schoolchildren something about your state or provincial government, but how to do that with a population of one million living across a quarter-million square miles?

Two programs in Saskatchewan provide different related answers. The A Day in the Legislative Assembly program gives eighth-grade students (generally 13- and 14-year-olds) from southern Saskatchewan the opportunity to tour the Legislative Building in Regina and learn about the province’s system of government. Students are introduced during the Legislative Assembly’s daily session and invited to watch the proceedings.

The first A Day in the Legislative Assembly in 2010 got a great response from teachers, so the Provincial Capital Commission sought and got permission to make it a permanent program, says Donna Cuddington, the commission’s senior executive coordinator.

After a year off to redesign the program for a permanent footing, the commission relaunched it in 2012. A Day in the Legislative Assembly is now offered twice a year, during Saskatchewan’s fall and spring legislative sessions, she says.

The second program the Charles Knight Mentorship, is for northern Saskatchewan students in grades nine through 12 (generally between 14 and 18 years of age).

Through the program, students learn about the democratic process, explore postsecondary education opportunities and careers in government, and learn about Saskatchewan’s history.

Charles Knight Mentorship participants come to Regina for several days of activities, including meeting the lieutenant governor, cabinet ministers and members of the Legislative Assembly and participating in a mock parliamentary session inside the province’s legislative chamber.

The program includes tours of the Legislative Building and Government House (the lieutenant governor’s official residence), the University of Regina, the First Nations University of Canada, Saskatchewan Polytechnic-Regina Campus, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police’s Depot Division.

All expenses to participate in the program are covered through the Provincial Capital Commission. Transportation from either La Ronge or Prince Albert (respectively a First Nations Nation University of Canada, Saskatchewan Polytechnic-Regina Campus, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police’s Depot Division. Travel expenses to and from Regina are covered by the commission.

In 2014, the commission offered the program to both the Regina and Prince Albert (respectively a First Nations Nation University of Canada, Saskatchewan Polytechnic-Regina Campus, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police’s Depot Division.

The programs focus on provincial government, but not the province’s role vis-à-vis the federal government in Ottawa, Cuddington says.

“Just doing this alone is very educational and gives them more of a grasp on what goes on [in the Legislative Assembly]. That’s enough for them to take in at the time,” she says.

According to its website, the Provincial Capital Commission, which has no precise analog among state governments, is mandated “to enhance quality of life for our citizens through the celebration and creation of opportunities, stewardship of the land, and engagement of our youth about our democracy and provincial history.”

The commission also “promotes, preserves and strengthens our diverse heritage and culture to ensure that [Regina] is a source of provincial pride and significance.”

This year’s Midwestern Legislative Conference Chair’s Initiative of Illinois Sen. Elgie Sims Jr. is “State Strategies to Build Civic Engagement.” Articles on this topic will appear throughout the year in Stateline Midwest.

** Illinois’ minimum wage will increase incrementally to $15 per hour by 2025. **

-- Jon Davis (jdavis@csg.org)

** Question of the Month **

** QUESTION: What are Midwestern states doing about wage theft? **

Minnesota passed a new wage-theft law during the spring legislative session. HF 2 (an omnibus jobs, economic development, energy and commerce finance bill) includes appropriations of nearly $2 million a year for wage theft prevention, doubles the number of investigators, and makes certain wage-theft violators a felony.

Wage-theft violations can cover minimum wage, overtime, forcing employees to work off-the-clock, meal breaks, pay stub and illegal deductions, tipped minimum wage, and misclassification of workers. According to a 2017 study by the Economic Policy Institute, 2.4 million workers in the 10 most populous U.S. states lose $8 billion a year in minimum-wage violations alone.

The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry estimates that 39,000 workers in the state lose nearly $12 million per year.

Minnesota is not the only state in the region to address this issue.

In Illinois, SB 161 takes effect in January. It creates a Worker Protection Unit within the attorney general’s office. It will work with the Illinois Department of Labor to detect unlawful conduct and sue violators of several laws, including the Prevailing Wage Act and the Employee Classification Act.

Indiana’s SB 465 (from 2009) requires employers to post minimum-wage requirements and provides for the sharing of information about classification of construction workers between the state’s Department of Labor, Department of Revenue, Workforce Development agency and Worker’s Compensation Board.

SF 2416 (from 2008) requires the labor commissioner in Iowa’s Department of Workforce Development to investigate alleged violations and to file an annual report on the administration of the state’s wage-theft laws. That law also established civil penalties and specified which employer actions are considered simple, serious or aggravated misdemeanors.

Nebraska’s LB 560 (from 2014) requires employers to give each employee an itemized statement listing their wages and deductions each payday. It also provides whistleblower protections to employees and criminal penalties for employers who violate the law.

The Ohio Fair Minimum Wage Amendment, approved by voters in 2006, forces employers found in violation of wage laws to pay the employee’s back wages and damages, as well as the employee’s costs and reasonable attorney’s fees.

Wisconsin Act 292 of 2009 allows the state Department of Workforce Development to issue stop-work orders and impose penalties due to the misclassification of employees in the construction industry.

Question of the Month response by Mitch Arvidson, CSG Midwest policy analyst. He can be reached at marvidson@csg.org. Question of the Month highlights an inquiry sent to the CSG Midwest Information Help Line: csgm@csg.org or 630.925.1922.

**Hourly minimum wage in Midwest, 2019**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S. State</th>
<th>Minimum Wage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>$9.86*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>$9.25**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>$9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>$8.55*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>$8.25**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Minimum wage is adjusted annually for inflation. ** Illinois’ minimum wage will increase incrementally to $15 per hour by 2025. Missouri’s minimum wage will increase incrementally to $12.00 per hour by 2020.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor

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**Above federal minimum wage**

Federal minimum wage, $7.25 per hour

**Below federal minimum wage**

$7.25

**MLC Chair’s Initiative: State Strategies to Build Civic Engagement**

Saskatchewan students get unique, inside look at provincial government

by Jon Davis (jdavis@csg.org)

Saskatchewan students get unique, inside look at provincial government

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school districts provide more mentoring and support for first- and second-year teachers. And starting with a law enacted in 2013, Iowa has implemented a $160 million Teacher Leadership and Compensation System.

That law raised pay for beginning teachers, while also establishing a process for school districts to reward veteran, effective instructors. “We now have more than 10,000 teachers in compensated, defined leadership roles,” Iowa Department of Education Director Ryan Wise says. That is equal to about one-quarter of Iowa’s educator workforce.

Subject to approval by the state (based on standards set out in the law), every Iowa school district has established its own leadership system. Teachers, for example, may get more pay for becoming schoolwide instructional coaches, serving as mentors to newer teachers, helping integrate technology into every school classroom or designing professional-learning opportunities. Along with giving teachers the opportunity to earn more pay, Wise says, the new system has fostered more teamwork among teachers — a change that can not only help the work climate in a school building, but also improve instruction through the sharing of best practices.

“All the [classroom] doors are open, teachers are constantly working together,” Wise says about the shift in culture brought about by Iowa’s Teacher Leadership and Compensation System. “Students never bat an eye when they see a bunch of adults walking into their classrooms, because that’s just how their buildings function now.”

In his home state of Indiana, Sen. Jeff Raatz has visited schools that have implemented systems similar to Iowa’s, and he liked what he saw — particularly the chance for providing more supports for incoming teachers and additional opportunities for established instructors.

This year, the Indiana General Assembly created a $3.5 million grant program (HB 1008) for select school districts that create new “career ladders” and leadership and compensation opportunities for teachers.

That new initiative was one of several legislative actions taken in Indiana, where teacher pay and shortages were two of the most talked-about policy issues of 2019. Legislators, for example, included $150 million in Indiana’s biennial budget to help school districts pay down their pension liabilities, with the idea that districts would then have more money to raise teacher pay. Under another new law (HB 1003), the legislature also set a new goal for every school district — have at least 85 percent of its spending go to the classroom.

Lastly, Indiana will begin investing state dollars in teacher residencies (HB 1009), one of the evidence-based strategies highlighted in the Learning Policy Institute’s 2018 report. These residencies give prospective teachers a full year of intensive, preservice experience under the guidance of a mentor teacher. They also typically provide compensation for the prospective and mentor teacher. The hope, Raatz says, is that a stronger induction system will lead to greater success in the classroom among new teachers and “prevent them from walking away after the first year.”

Teacher shortages: ‘Not distributed equitably or evenly’

States not only should be comprehensive in their policy approach (meaning they address everything from teacher recruitment and retention, to compensation, school climate and licensure), Saunders says, they also should be strategic. “[Teacher] shortages are not distributed equitably or evenly,” he says.

Instead, shortages tend to be most acute in sparsely populated areas, as well as in schools with higher numbers of low-income families and students of color.

The appropriate policy response from states, then, may be to establish targeted induction, compensation and incentive programs. In Nebraska, for example, a state-funded initiative offers loan forgiveness to individuals who teach in high-need subject areas, higher-poverty schools and rural parts of the state.

Some states also provide incentives for teachers with National Board Certification (a voluntary, advanced teaching credential) to teach in higher-need schools. Illinois Sen. Andy Manar says that was one of the approaches that his state took this year.

“We went a little deeper than just invest-
ing more in our budget for the National Board Certification Program," he says.

“We said that we want that certification to happen first in our Tier 1 [underfunded or lower-performing] schools. We want to provide incentives to teachers in those schools to go beyond their bachelor’s degree, and then encourage them to stay in their school because it’s where they are needed the most.”

Over the past two years, Manar and other legislators have adopted a series of new laws that he says were needed to “lift up the teaching profession” in Illinois. None were more important, he adds, than establishment of a new minimum teacher salary (HB 2078).

“We have teachers in Illinois that would qualify for Medicaid; that’s a grave injustice,” he says. Starting in 2020, annual teacher pay must be at least $32,076; the minimum salary rises to $40,000 by 2023.

“Now a young person has a guaranteed salary, no matter where he or she teaches,” Manar says. “That does so much for the psychology of how decisions are made for prospective teachers.”

‘Grow Your Own’ programs help schools build workforce from within

Illinois law also now permits student-teachers to be paid (SB 1952), a move that could help individuals transition into teaching from another profession. Sen. Manar gives the example of paraprofessionals already working in a school and interested in becoming a certified teacher.

“They can’t quit their job in order to come back as a licensed teacher,” he says.

Providing some kind of pay or stipend for the stint as a student-teacher removes a financial obstacle, and it’s one component of another emerging state strategy referred to as “Grow Your Own.” Kansas has been experimenting with this approach by offering a “limited apprentice license” to individuals identified by a school district. For example, someone working in a school as a special-education paraprofessional now has an accelerated, alternative pathway to becoming a special-education teacher. While continuing his or her work as a paraprofessional, the individual is paired in the fall with a mentor teacher while taking coursework in special-education instruction. By the spring, he or she can be hired as a special-education teacher while taking more coursework.

In Minnesota, the state funds a $1.5 million Grow Your Own grant program that school districts can use in one of two ways: 1) provide tuition scholarships or stipends to paraprofessionals who are employed by the district and seeking a teaching license; or 2) encourage high school students to pair a prospective teacher with a veteran teacher for one year of intensive training.

Strengthening the educator workforce: Examples of policies in place in 11-state Midwest

**ILLINOIS SETS MINIMUM SALARY FOR TEACHERS — $40,000 by 2023**
Starting next year, school districts in Illinois will have to pay teachers at least $32,076 a year. That minimum salary goes up to $40,000 by the 2023-24 school year (HB 2078). Other legislative actions this year will allow student teachers to be paid and remove a requirement that teachers pass a basic skills test to be licensed.

**INDIANA INVESTS IN CAREER LADDERs FOR TEACHERs**
Legislators took several steps in 2019 to bolster the education workforce. In the area of teacher pay, the state established a pilot program for career ladders for teachers (HB 1088), appropriated $150 million to pay down school districts’ pension liabilities, and set a goal that 85 percent of each district’s spending go to the classroom (HB 1100).

**IOWA PUTTING MORE TEACHERs IN SCHOOL-BASED LEADERSHIP POSITIONS**
Six years ago, with passage of HF 215, Iowa legislators launched what has since become the nation’s most extensive teacher-leadership system. About one-quarter of Iowa teachers now hold compensated, leadership positions in their school buildings — for example, serving as instructional coaches or as mentors to new teachers.

**KANSAS PROGRAM HELPS PARAPROFESSIONALS BECOME TEACHERs**
Under a two-year pilot program of the Kansas Department of Education, school districts identify paraprofessionals and others “with great potential” and then help these individuals become teachers via an accelerated licensure pathway created by the state. The initiative is for elementary-school and special-education teachers.

**MICHIGAN PARTNERS WITH SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO OFFER TEACHER RESIDENCIES**
Michigan’s plans under the U.S. Every Student Succeeds Act include developing teacher residencies in partnership with higher-poverty districts. These residencies pair a professional teacher with a veteran teacher for one year of intensive training. (Both are often compensated for participation in the residency.)

**MINNESOTA TAKES MULTIPRONGED APPROACH TO TEACHER SHORTAGE**
Individuals who teach in a state-defined “shortage area” may now be eligible for up to $5,000 in student loan repayments. Minnesota legislators also have established new grant programs to recruit teachers of color, and two years ago, they revamped and simplified the state teacher licensure system (HF 140).

**NEBRASKA USES PORTION OF LOTTERY PROCEEDS TO HELP TEACHERs WITH LOANS**
Using lottery proceeds, Nebraska offers a loan-forgiveness program for individuals who major in a subject area with a shortage of teachers. They receive $3,000, for up to five years, for each year of teaching. Those teachers working in a sparsely populated or higher-poverty school are eligible for up to $6,000 a year.

**NORTH DAKOTA FOSTERS DEVELOPMENT OF HIGH-QUALITY PRINCIPALS**
According to the Learning Policy Institute, North Dakota is among the states using new funding opportunities under the Every Student Succeeds Act to foster the development of high-quality principals — an important factor in school climate and teacher retention. The state also has a State Teacher Shortage Loan Forgiveness Program.

**OHIO EMPHASIZES IMPORTANCE OF MENTORING, INDUCTION PROGRAMS**
During their first four years in the classroom, Ohio teachers take part in a Resident Educator Program that includes intensive support from trained mentors. The Learning Policy Institute also notes that Ohio is among the states leveraging new federal funds (under the Every Student Succeeds Act) to strengthen teacher induction programs.

**SOUTH DAKOTA RAISES STATE SALES TAX TO BOOST PAY FOR TEACHERs**
Three years ago, with the passage of HB 1182, the South Dakota Legislature increased the state’s sales tax rate from 4.0 percent to 4.5 percent in order to increase the salaries of public school teachers. During the first year of the new law, average teacher pay in the state increased by nearly $5,000.

**WISCONSIN OFFERS GRANTS TO HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS In HIGH-POVERTY SCHOOLS**
Wisconsin offers an incentive for teachers with advanced, national certification to teach in high-poverty schools — annual state grants of $5,000 for nine years. To be eligible, individuals must be certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Legislators created the incentive program more than a decade ago.
Elected majority leader in her second term, her dual goals are to keep her supermajority caucus united and the Senate running smoothly by Jon Davis (jdavis@csg.org)

I
t he timing had been better. Kris Langer might have joined the South Dakota Legislature much earlier than 2013, when then-Gov. Dennis Daugaard tapped her to complete the term of a departing legislator.

Not surprisingly, it wasn’t the first time the local civic and business leader — known for her work on the City Council and as a Realtor — had been asked. “My kids were pretty young,” she says about turning down previous opportunities. “Then, my youngest was going to be a senior in high school, so the timing just kind of lined up.”

Fast forward six years, and Langer has won three elections — one to the House seat, and then two successful Senate races — and emerged as one of the state’s top legislative leaders. In a recent interview with CSG Midwest, she reflected on her time in the South Dakota Legislature, her approach to leadership, and her overarching policy goals for the state.

Q: What do you think of the transition from local to state government?
A: It definitely was very different than what I anticipated. You go in thinking that you at least know something, being on a city council, but things were different. It was much more formal, and in some ways, things move quickly because we only have up to a 40-day session. But in other ways, like anything in government, it can move kind of slow and be kind of painful. So I think you just get better at it and realize that you can make a difference, and that’s why you continue to serve. Or, at least that’s why I do.

Q: Six years into your legislative career, what do you like best about the work?
A: I really enjoy working on good policy and making a difference, feeling like you actually do create something that really makes a difference for people, for your constituents’ lives, their well-being. That’s why you do it, that’s why you go into public service: to really feel like you do make a difference and that you need to be there for that particular purpose, to ensure that we continue our way of life in South Dakota the way it is.

Q: You became Senate majority leader in late 2018. What appealed to you about holding that leadership position?
A: I think trying to steer things in the right direction and get the sort of policy that you want, that you want to make sure you’re driving everything in the right direction. And there’s also kind of an organizational philosophy of making sure that everybody is on the same page or at least trying to go for the same common goals. We had a new governor (Kristi Noem) coming in, so it was her first term as governor and my first term as majority leader. I worked hard to get her elected and we work well together, so that was one of the driving forces of me wanting that leadership spot, hoping that we could do some great things together. I look forward to that continuing.

Q: How would you describe your leadership style or philosophy?
A: It’s not my job to stand up and tell my caucus what they need to do. It’s more following what I see happening and where I think the Senate as a whole needs to go. I’m kind of laid back, I guess, as far as that goes, but I want to make sure everybody feels equipped to handle what they’re up against. That’s one of my goals as the leader — that our members have the right information to make the best decisions that they can. And especially for the new senators coming in, I want to help them know where they need to be, what are important things for them to attend — just kind of those types of organizational things. And I’m also big on the decorum. I like to start things on time and make sure that the Senate looks like the respected body that it is.

Q: Your caucus has such a large majority of members, 30 of the 35 total seats. What is your approach to dealing with the minority party?
A: I would say, for the most part, we have a really good working relationship with our counterparts. We work across the aisle well. There’s obviously the big, hot-button issues we disagree with and kind of just know that that’s going to be a sticking point, but I try to communicate with them as much as I can about what we’re going to take on the floor that day, what they need to be prepared for. I try to keep them as informed as I can.

Q: What would you say have been your biggest legislative accomplishments?
A: Probably just keeping South Dakota such a business-friendly state; balancing our budget; keeping our conservative values right at the forefront. We passed a bill this session to place “In God We Trust” in our schools. You know it’s on our currency, and now it’s out there in all of our schools. Having our young people see that is really what we wanted. [Editor’s Note: The new South Dakota law, SB 55 of 2019, requires that the motto “be located in a prominent location within each public school.”] We want to keep South Dakota family-friendly, and we want to keep our kids in the state, really make it a good place to be. We’re working now on some mental health issues that are hopefully going to be very helpful to the public.

Q: What are the biggest challenges for your state in the next five years?
A: A challenge for us is always funding. We’re a low-tax state; we don’t have a lot of extra revenue laying around. It’s always a challenge: where those dollars are going to be appropriated. Everybody’s always fighting for the last penny on the bottom line, so that’s kind of where we’re always driven: How do we best use those dollars and make sure that we’re not growing government and raising taxes for unnecessary things?

“I really enjoy working on good policy and making a difference, feeling like you actually do create something that really makes a difference for people, for your constituents’ lives, their well-being.”
A first for Iowa’s children: New mental health system devoted to them

2019 law is based on input from experts in the field, reforms of adult system

by Iowa Rep. Joel Fry (joel.fry@legis.iowa.gov)

We have all seen the heartbreaking news stories of a young person taking his or her own life due to depression, other mental illnesses or bullying.

Many of us, too, have been directly impacted by knowing someone personally who has faced mental health issues.

Teen suicide and mental illness are issues that plague not only Iowa families, but communities all across the Midwest and nation. Unfortunately, it has become all too common for a parent to recognize that his or her child is suffering from mental illness, but then struggle to find an on-ramp into the system and access treatment.

That is why this year, Iowa lawmakers and Gov. Kim Reynolds worked across the aisle to pass a historic children’s mental health legislative package. Our goal: ensure that Iowa parents and young people have a place to turn for help.

As a licensed independent social worker, I was especially proud to be the floor manager for HF 690, the governor’s bill to create a children’s mental health system.

Changes in funding, governance

The May 2019 signing of HF 690 marked a significant milestone in Iowa, but it also was the continuation of a multi-year effort to reform mental health services for people of all ages.

In our state, adult mental health had been delivered through county-based services until 2015, when the Legislature switched to a regional governance structure. Iowa’s 99 counties were formed into 14 Mental Health and Disability Services (MHDS) regions. This move allowed counties to pool their resources and offer a core set of services that met statewide standards.

The voting membership in each of these regions consists of one elected supervisor from each county, thus keeping the decisions local and accountable.

Every year since this change in governance structure, we have made adjustments in funding for the 14 MHDS regions or to the core-service requirements. Most significantly, in 2018, the Legislature unanimously passed HF 2456, which made sweeping reforms to how our regional systems address and help adults with complicated mental health needs.

We sought to fill the gaps in Iowa’s adult system with additional crisis services and long-term treatment options, ensuring that those with mental illness can access services near their families and in their home communities.

The next step: Improve services for children.

Soon after last year’s signing of HF 2456, Gov. Reynolds established a Children’s Mental Health Board. Its task: “Take a comprehensive look at what resources are currently in place and develop a strategic plan with specific recommendations to implement a children’s mental health system.”

Improving access to services

Throughout the summer and fall of 2018, the board met to develop recommendations with input from providers, educators, parents, state agencies and advocates, with a focus on local access and care coordination of mental health services for children. After examining all the options, the board recommended that the children’s system be built upon the existing adult MHDS regions. Its strategic plan became the basis for this year’s HF 690 and related budget recommendations.

Under the new law, a state board will implement and manage Iowa’s new mental health system for children. Made up of 17 voting members appointed by the governor (including Iowans with experience in education, mental health, child welfare and juvenile justice), the board will provide guidance to Iowa’s MHDS regions.

Each region, in turn, will have a dedicated children’s services coordinator who will focus solely on the development of children’s mental health services in that area. The coordinator will ensure that children are able to access crisis services, in-patient treatment and outpatient therapy — closer to home and their families. HF 690 also expanded voting membership of these regional boards to include not only county supervisors, but also a representative from the education system and a parent of a child who utilizes children’s behavioral health services.

In the Iowa House, I serve as chair of the Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee, which included all the budget recommendations from the governor and the Children’s Mental Health Board. We provided significant state investment to eliminate a waiting list of about 1,000 kids to access the Children’s Mental Health Home and Community Based Services Waiver. These new state dollars will allow these children and their families to immediately receive much-needed services close to home.

We also funded a statewide, 24-hour crisis hot line for all ages, as well as new psychiatric residencies to bring providers to rural communities. In our state’s budget for education, we invested $1.2 million to provide mental health awareness training for educators and schools, along with $750,000 to develop additional ways for schools to meet mental health needs and strengthen community supports for students.

This legislative package was the product of many folks working together. I would credit bringing together so many professionals, experts and advocates in the mental health field to craft the best legislation possible. Throughout the development of the legislation and appropriation process, lawmakers of both parties collaborated to do what was best for Iowa’s children.

Parents should always have a place to turn when seeking treatment for their child. This year’s legislation was a big step forward and builds a foundation for future advancements.

By April, we will receive implementation reports from each of the MHDS regions to see how they plan on advancing children’s mental health services in their area, and I look forward to addressing this bipartisan priority in the years to come.

Rep. Joel Fry has been a member of the Iowa House since 2011. He also is a 2012 graduate of CSG Midwest’s Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development (BILLD).

Submissions welcome

This page is designed to be a forum for legislators and constitutional officers. The opinions expressed on this page do not reflect those of the Council of State Governments or the Midwestern Legislative Conference. Responses to any FirstPerson article are welcome, as are pieces written on other topics. For more information, contact Tim Anderson at 630.925.1922 or tanderson@csg.org.
Sen. Carolyn McGinn elected officer of Midwestern Legislative Conference

Kansas legislator will formally join MLC’s leadership team in late 2019

The Midwestern Legislative Conference’s newest officer is a respected veteran of the Kansas Legislature who also has considerable experience with The Council of State Governments.

Kansas Sen. Carolyn McGinn officially joins the MLC’s four-member officer team later this year, putting her in line to become the nonpartisan group’s chair in 2022 — the same year that her home state hosts the MLC Annual Meeting. She will serve as second vice chair in 2020.

A member of the Kansas Legislature since 2005, McGinn serves as chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee. She lives with her husband, Mark, on a family farm outside the town of Sedgwick.

Her involvement with CSG has included serving as financial officer for the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission. A 2010 graduate of CSG’s Henry Toll Fellowship Leadership Program, Sen. McGinn also is second vice president of State Ag and Rural Leaders — a national group of state and provincial legislators working to address key issues in agriculture.

The current officers of the MLC are Illinois Sen. Elgie Sims, chair; Michigan Sen. Ken Horn, first vice chair; South Dakota Sen. Gary Cammack, second vice chair; and Indiana Sen. Ed Charbonneau, immediate past chair.

A rotation of officers occurs every year based on elections that take place at the MLC Annual Meeting. The MLC includes all legislators from the 11 Midwestern states and the Canadian province of Saskatchewan; three other Canadian provinces are affiliate members.

The Midwestern Office of The Council of State Governments provides staff support to the MLC.

CSG releases first-of-kind study on prison admissions

In a groundbreaking report issued in June, The Council of State Governments Justice Center provides a state-by-state analysis on the extent to which probation and parole violations contribute to prison populations.

In the Midwest, for example, supervision violations (technical and nontechnical) account for more than half of all prison admissions in seven Midwestern states: Wisconsin, Kansas, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Indiana and Michigan.

Nationwide, nearly one-quarter of admissions are the result of technical violations of parole or probation. These are often minor offenses such as failed drug tests or missed curfews.

The report, titled “Confined and Costly: How Supervision Violations Are Filling Prisons and Burdening Budgets,” can be found at csgjusticecenter.org/confinedandcostly. It includes a list of seven questions to guide state leaders as they craft policies on parole and probation violations.

Congratulations to 2019 CSG Toll Fellows from Midwest

In August, 11 legislators and other state officials from the Midwest completed one of the nation’s premier leadership development programs for state-government officials — The Council of State Governments Henry Toll Fellowship Program.


Middle row (left to right): South Dakota Secretary of Human Services Secretary Shawnee Rechtenbaugh, Michigan Sen. Adam Hollier and North Dakota Southeast Judicial District Judge Cherie Clark


The Council of State Governments was founded in 1933 as a national, nonpartisan organization to assist and advance state government. The headquarters office, in Lexington, Ky., is responsible for a variety of national programs and services, including research, reference publications, innovations transfer, state-legislation and interstate consulting services. The Midwestern Office supports several groups of state officials, including the Midwestern Legislative Conference, an association of all legislators representing 11 states (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin) and the Canadian province of Saskatchewan. The provinces of Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario are MLC affiliate members.
The 2019 class of BILLD fellows gathered in Minneapolis in August for five days of rigorous training to improve their leadership and policymaking skills. This year’s Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development included participation from 36 legislators from 11 Midwestern states and three Canadian provinces. Now in its 25th year, BILLD has trained more than 875 lawmakers from the Midwest. Many graduates have gone on to hold high-ranking leadership positions in their legislatures, as well as serve in executive agencies, statewide offices, the U.S. Congress and the judiciary.

Designed for legislators in their first four years of service, the highly interactive curriculum includes a series of leadership-training courses, policy seminars and professional development workshops. The Council of State Governments’ Midwestern Legislative Conference conducts the annual program in partnership with the Center for the Study of Politics and Governance at the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey School of Public Affairs. This collaboration allows the institute to tap into the expertise of top scholars in a variety of policy areas. This year’s BILLD fellows explored policy sessions on the economy and workforce, cybersecurity, Midwest-Canada trade relations and health care. The institute’s faculty also includes professional development experts and legislative leaders from the Midwest who lead seminars in areas such as:

- consensus building and negotiation,
- communication and speechmaking,
- time and focus management,
- effective lawmaking, and
- civil discourse

Minnesota House Speaker Melissa Hortman, South Dakota Senate Assistant Majority Leader Jim Bolin and Michigan House Minority Leader Christine Greg discuss strategies for becoming effective legislators and leaders at a session of this year’s BILLD program.

The Council of State Governments’ Midwestern Legislative Conference conducts the annual program in partnership with the Center for the Study of Politics and Governance at the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey School of Public Affairs. This collaboration allows the institute to tap into the expertise of top scholars in a variety of policy areas. This year’s BILLD fellows explored policy sessions on the economy and workforce, cybersecurity, Midwest-Canada trade relations and health care. The institute’s faculty also includes professional development experts and legislative leaders from the Midwest who lead seminars in areas such as:

- consensus building and negotiation,
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- effective lawmaking, and
- civil discourse

The 2019 Class of BILLD Fellows

36 legislators complete leadership training

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BILLD Alumni Notes

During South Dakota’s 2019 legislative session, Rep. Jamie Smith (BILLD class of 2017) was selected to serve as House minority leader. The Democrat from Sioux Falls was first elected to the House in 2016. Smith also serves on the House Health and Human Services, State Affairs, Legislative Procedure, and Joint Legislative Procedure committees.

He is joined by two other BILLD fellows who serve as leaders of the House minority caucus: minority whips Rep. Orin Lesmeister (class of 2018) and Rep. Erin Healy (class of 2019). In the South Dakota Senate, Sen. Jim Bolin (BILLD class of 2012) currently serves as assistant majority leader. The Republican from Canton was first elected to the Senate in 2016, after having served in the House for eight years. Bolin also is vice chair of the Senate Retirement Laws Committee.

Sen. Reynold Nesiba (class of 2018) also serves in leadership in the South Dakota Senate, as minority whip.

In August, several BILLD alumni took part in the 2019 Toll Fellowship Program — a national leadership program conducted by The Council of State Governments.

- Indiana Sen. Mike Crider (class of 2015)
- Nebraska Sen. Tony Vargas (class of 2017)

Please submit Alumni News to Laura Tomaka, CSG Midwest program manager for BILLD. She can be reached at ltomaka@csg.org.
Kansas and Missouri end border war over state tax incentives

With her signing of an executive order in August, Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly pronounced the end of a longstanding “economic border war” between her state and Missouri. Her action, combined with legislation passed in Missouri this year (SB 182), stops the two states from offering tax incentives to companies in the Kansas City region.

For the war to truly end, The Wichita Eagle reports, local governments on both sides of the border need to follow the states’ lead. Because they are not bound by the Kansas executive order or new Missouri law, cities and counties could still offer property tax abatements to lure businesses.

The Hall Family Foundation, a Kansas City-based philanthropic group, analyzed the movement of jobs over the past decade between two Kansas counties (Johnson and Wyandotte) and one Missouri county (Jackson). Its findings: An estimated 10,000 jobs moved between the two states, at an incentive cost of about $330 million. According to The Wichita Eagle, most of those incentives came from the states, rather than local governments.

Instead of competing through tax incentives, Gov. Kelly says, Kansas and Missouri will work together to boost economic development in the Kansas City region.

Minnesota bans use of hand-held cell phones by all drivers

Under a new law that took effect in August (HF 50), drivers in Minnesota can only use voice commands or single-touch activation on their phones to make calls and texts. Violators of the state’s “hands-free” statute will be ticketed $50, plus court fees; the penalty is $275 for repeat violations.

According to the Governors Highway Safety Association, 18 other states, including Illinois in the Midwest, have hands-free bans in place. In each of these states, the use of a hand-held cell phone is a primary offense, meaning a police officer can cite a driver for it without any other traffic offense taking place.

Every state in this region has laws that ban all use of cell phones by some or all novice drivers. In addition, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota and Nebraska prohibit all cell phone use by school bus drivers, and Wisconsin has a hand-held ban that applies in roadwork zones. Every Midwestern state also outlaws text-messaging by drivers.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, a total of 34,247 fatal crashes occurred in the United States in 2017. Of those crashes, 1.2 percent involved cell phone use as a distraction. Twenty-six percent of these crashes were speed-inducing-related, and 29 percent involved alcohol impairment.

Ohio’s budget invests heavily in schools’ wraparound services

Over the next two years, Ohio will invest $675 million in a newly created fund that provides nonacademic, wraparound services to students.

This money (part of the state budget, HB 166) can be used by schools in several ways — for example, mental health counseling, mentoring and after-school programs, child nutrition services, help for homeless youths, and training in the area of trauma-informed care. Schools will partner with local organizations and treatment providers to deliver these wraparound services.

According to the Ohio chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the $675 million investment marks a “once in a generation type of achievement for mental health advocates.”

Ohio’s recent legislative actions reflect a trend across the Midwest, where many laws have been enacted in recent years to boost school-based mental health services. Other examples from this year include:

- Indiana’s SB 325, which will help schools and families develop plans for at-risk children to receive mental health services.

- Illinois’ HB 1561, which allows school districts to use a local-option, 1-cent county sales tax to hire mental health professionals.

Tax talk: Rate cuts in Ohio, Wisconsin; big statewide vote in Illinois

Income tax relief is coming to residents in at least two Midwestern states this biennium, while in a third state, legislators took the first step this year toward a major tax overhaul.

In Wisconsin, under AB 56 and AB 251, rate reductions are being made to the state’s bottom two income-tax brackets. (Wisconsin’s graduated system has four tax brackets.) According to Gov. Tony Evers, a total of $518 million in income-tax relief will be provided over the biennium. In signing his state’s new budget, Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine said personal income taxes would be cut by $668 million. HB 166 eliminates the state’s two bottom brackets, which were for income up to $21,750, and includes across-the-board rate cuts of 4 percent in Ohio’s remaining five tax brackets.

Along with Wisconsin and Ohio, five other Midwestern states have some form of a graduated income tax system: Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska and North Dakota. South Dakota has no income tax, and Illinois, Indiana and Michigan have a flat income tax.

In 2020, Illinois voters will decide whether to ditch the constitutionally mandated flat tax in favor of a graduated system. The statewide vote will occur as the result of a constitutional amendment approved this year by the General Assembly.