Rahm Emanuel will be sworn in as Chicago's new mayor on May 16, just 15 days before the end of the state legislative session. So while Emanuel has more than enough on his plate dealing with the first Chicago mayoral transition in 22 years, he and his team appear well aware that they will have precious few days to get what they want out of the Statehouse after he's inaugurated.

Emanuel's transition team hired a Statehouse emissary several weeks ago. They're not calling him a "lobbyist," however. He's more of an "observer," they say. And they decided not to call attention to themselves by choosing any of the well-known, Chicago-connected contract lobbyists in town. Instead, they hired Mike Ruemmler, who ran Emanuel's campaign advance team. Born and raised in southern Illinois' Mt. Vernon, Ruemmler is not your typical city lobbyist. Ruemmler ran a campaign for state Senator Michael Frerichs, so he has some Statehouse connections.

Emanuel has tried hard not to step on Mayor Daley's toes, using the "one mayor at a time" phrase over and over. While that philosophy has extended to Springfield, it doesn't mean Emanuel is completely uninvolved. He sat down with House Speaker Michael Madigan, Senate President John Cullerton, and Senator Kimberly Lightford before the final school-reform deal was made. His staff also worked on behalf of Lightford's bill, and Emanuel has since pledged to make sure the House passes it.

As anyone who has tried it most surely knows, working with Madigan is not the easiest thing in the world. Madigan has not yet committed to approving the Senate's school reforms as-is. Indeed, some of his people have all but declared that the bill will have to be changed. Too many anti-union tweaks could endanger the bill's viability in the Senate, however, where the majority Democrats are always resistant to being pushed around by the House. Making sure the bill survives the usual House-versus-Senate back-and-forth will be a significant test of Emanuel's abilities.

A source with close ties to Emanuel predicted last week that the mayor-elect and the speaker should be able to work together. Emanuel served time as a leader in Congress, so he

understands how to deal with needy, demanding legislators. More importantly, Emanuel – like Madigan – absolutely hates being lied to. Nothing upsets him more than someone who makes a commitment and then doesn't follow through. Madigan, of course, has always reserved his most intense payback for those he believes haven't told him the truth.

But Madigan is a one-of-a-kind character in politics. Madigan won't ever lie to you, but he also won't come right out and say what he intends to do until he's ready to do it.

"He'll say, 'You're going to be fine,' when you ask him if your bill's gonna pass," marveled one longtime Statehouse denizen. "You never know what that means. Am I going to be fine personally even if my bill dies? Is my bill going to pass? You just don't know."

Madigan gave Daley a huge welcome-wagon present after Daley was first elected in 1989 by jamming through a tax hike solely for schools and local government. But Madigan's latest tax hike gives not a penny more to schools and local governments. In fact, cuts to both are likely. Madigan has often tried to test new leaders to see what they are made of. But he hasn't yet clearly shown his hand one way or another when it comes to Emanuel.

Mayor Daley was always reluctant to lobby legislators one-on-one, even when invited to by Madigan. That refusal to get down into the trenches often meant his bills died, which frustrated his allies to no end.

Emanuel broke with that tradition even before he was elected, lobbying individual members on behalf of the civil-unions bill late last year. And then there is his ongoing involvement with the school-reform bill, which neatly dovetailed with his campaign promises to rein in the teachers' union. He reportedly intends to use the same personal touch on major legislation important to his agenda, personally or municipally. But he will try not to overdo it, I'm told. Instead, he'll keep that weapon "in reserve" and use it only when he has to.

I've covered state politics for 21 years, yet this is the first Chicago mayoral transition I've ever seen up close. It should be fascinating.

Rich Miller also publishes Capitol Fax *(a daily political newsletter) and CapitolFax.com .*