

**"The Future of Illinois Education and What We Can Do About It!"
May 14, 2009**

Basic Facts

- School funding in Illinois relies on local wealth, meaning that the primary responsibility for funding falls on local property taxes.¹
- The Illinois Education Funding Advisory Board (EFAB) recommended a foundation level of \$6,974 per child for the fiscal year 2008, which is \$1,240 more per pupil than what the General Assembly passed for their 2008 budget, for an overall additional cost of \$2 billion. EFAB is a non-partisan board, made up of representatives of education, business, and the public.²

Public School Funding: Illinois Compared to Other States

- Illinois ranks 49th of 50 states in the proportion of education funded by state money. This in turn pushes the primary obligation for education funding down to local resources, primarily property taxes, creating great disparities between districts across Illinois, based on local property wealth.²
- Illinois ranks 48th in tax burden, though it has the 5th largest population and economy in the US. The Center for Tax and Budget Accountability suggests that by raising income taxes by less than one-half of one percent, Illinois could afford to meet EFAB's recommendation, and still remain in the bottom 10 states with regard to tax burden.¹

The Good

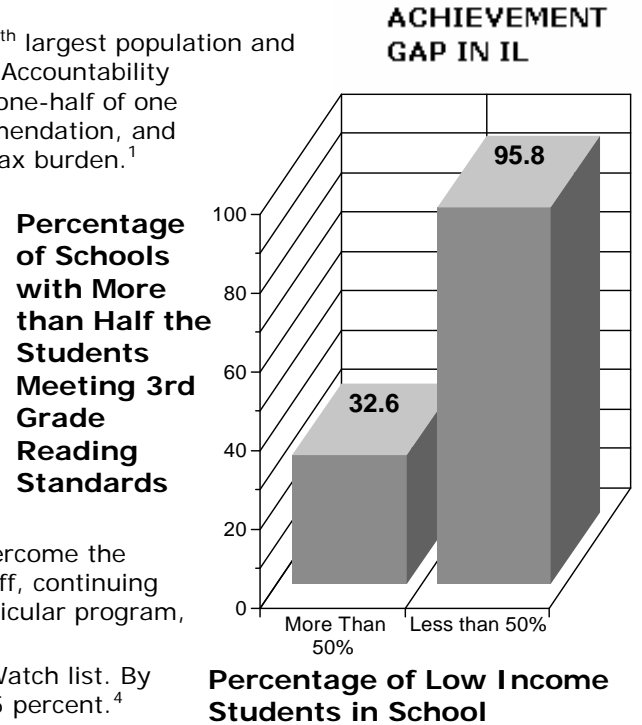
- "Illinois has made great strides in expanding access to preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds. According to a recent National Institute for Early Education Research report, Illinois ranks first preschool access for 3-year-olds and 12th in access for 4-year-olds— a remarkable achievement."³

The Problem in Illinois

- *Education Week* gave Illinois the failing grade of D+ in school funding fairness.⁴
- The result of inadequate funding can be seen in the drastic steps that local schools must take to overcome the issue, including, increasing class sizes, reducing staff, continuing the use of outdated textbooks and cutting extracurricular program, etc.⁴
- In 2002, 49 Illinois schools were on the Academic Watch list. By 2005, the number was 516, an increase of over 955 percent.⁴
- ACT, the college-testing organization, found that only 22% of Illinois students are ready for college in all 4 ACT subject areas of English, mathematics, reading, and science. Readiness in this sense means that the student has a chance of "earning a score high enough to have at least a 75% chance of earning a C or better in a freshman, non-remedial, college course."⁵

Racial discrepancies in Illinois

- In "Chicago, America's Most Segregated Big City," *Chicago Tribune* found that: "Blacks in Chicago are the most isolated racial group in the nation's 20 largest cities, according to a Tribune analysis of 2008 population estimate. To truly integrate Chicago, 84% of the black or white population would need to change neighborhoods, the data show."⁶
- Minorities, particularly African Americans and Hispanics, are significantly over-represented in schools with high poverty rates, with over 93% of all African American children and over 66% of all Hispanic children attending school districts with low income rates of 30% or greater.²



Percentage of Low Income Students in School

¹ Center for Tax and Budget Accountability (CTBA), *We Need School Funding Reform in Illinois Now!*, 2006
² CTBA, *Money Matters: How the Illinois School Funding System Creates Significant Educational Inequities that Impact Most Students in the State*, 2008.
³ Voices for Illinois Children, *Illinois Kids Count 2009*
⁴ CTBA, *The Current Status of Public Education Funding in Illinois*, 2006
⁵ Advance Illinois, "The State We're In: Advancing Public Education in Illinois,"
⁶ Little, Darnell, & Azam Ahmed. "Chicago, America's Most Segregated Big City." *Chicago Tribune*, December 26, 2008.

- Children that reside in communities of concentrated poverty or significant minority concentration are more likely to attend a school on the state's academic watch list.⁴
- The disparities in both quality of teachers and academic performance between primarily White and primarily minority school districts in Illinois are material, and correlate to instructional expense per child, local property wealth, and inadequate state funding.²
- Throughout IL, academic proficiency scores are lower in high-poverty schools and schools enrolling large numbers of racial and ethnic minorities, special education students and students that speak English as a second language.⁴

Discrepancies between Districts

- Local resources for school districts vary widely by geographic area within the state. (See figure)³
- "Illinois has the most inequitable education funding system in the country, with per pupil spending ranging from a high of almost \$23,700 to a low of less than \$4,500."⁴
- *Huge differences in local resources per pupil are only partially offset by state funding.* For example, among elementary school districts in FY2007, local revenues per pupil ranged from less than \$2,000 in Posen-Robbins (southern Cook County) to more than \$18,000 in Kenilworth (northern Cook). After the addition of state revenues, funding per pupil in Posen-Robbins rose to about \$8,600—still less than half the level in Kenilworth (\$18,600).³
- The wealthiest school districts in IL account for 23% of IL students. Their education is better, with higher quality teachers and significantly more spending on instruction versus the majority of IL students: the 77% who are not fortunate districts.²
- The achievement gap affects students in more ways than commonly believed. Those living in low-income neighborhoods are less likely to have cultural, athletic & academic enrichment activities available to them, & these activities have been found to support academic achievement and cognitive growth; others contribute to the development of the whole child, including physical health, character, artistic expression & social growth.³

The Bottom Line: Money Matters

- There is a strong correlation between increasing instructional expenditures per student by \$1,000-\$2,200, and academic performance, as measured by the Illinois State Achievement Test.²
- This strong correlation between increased instructional expenditures and improved academic performance is evident in both school districts with low poverty (3%-8% low income rates) and significant poverty (27%-32% low income rates).²
- Illinois' is 1st nationally in reliance on local property taxes to fund public schools. The national average for state-based revenue used to fund education is 50%. Illinois is at only 30%, ranking 50th nationally.⁴

State and Local Revenue Per Pupil, by Metropolitan Area, FY2007

	Local Revenue per Pupil	State Revenue per Pupil	State & Local Revenue per Pupil
Statewide	\$7,724	\$3,310	\$11,034
Northeast			
Chicago	\$6,487	\$4,535	\$11,022
Suburban Cook County	\$10,811	\$2,529	\$13,340
Collar counties			
DuPage County	\$10,829	\$1,325	\$12,154
Kane County	\$7,880	\$2,633	\$10,513
Lake County	\$10,490	\$2,326	\$12,816
McHenry County	\$8,029	\$2,107	\$10,136
Will County	\$7,795	\$2,716	\$10,511
DeKalb County	\$6,980	\$2,950	\$9,930
Grundy County	\$8,871	\$1,509	\$10,380
Kendall County	\$7,406	\$2,661	\$10,068
Northwest			
Moline-Rock Island MSA	\$5,635	\$3,735	\$9,371
Rockford MSA	\$6,141	\$3,804	\$9,945
Not In MSA	\$6,500	\$3,547	\$10,047
East Central			
Bloomington-Normal MSA	\$7,076	\$2,315	\$9,391
Champaign-Urbana MSA	\$6,576	\$2,997	\$9,574
Danville MSA	\$3,723	\$5,032	\$8,755
Decatur MSA	\$4,696	\$4,441	\$9,137
Kankakee-Bradley MSA	\$5,011	\$4,471	\$9,483
Not In MSA	\$4,992	\$4,048	\$9,040
West Central			
Peoria MSA	\$6,178	\$3,496	\$9,674
Springfield MSA	\$6,348	\$3,436	\$9,784
Not In MSA	\$4,358	\$4,396	\$8,754
South			
St. Louis MSA	\$4,758	\$4,692	\$9,450
Not In MSA	\$3,650	\$5,102	\$8,752

MSA = Metropolitan Statistical Area

Sources: Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability and Illinois State Board of Education