

EDUCATION FUNDING ADVISORY BOARD

March 18, 2005

2:30 p.m.

**James R. Thompson Center
9th Floor Conference Room
Chicago, Illinois**

Board Members Answering the Roll Call:

- 1. Senator Arthur Berman**
- 2. Mr. Ramon Cepeda, Jr.**
- 3. Ms. Anne Davis**
- 4. Mr. Steve Demitro, Chairperson**
- 5. Mr. James Dougherty**

Chairperson Demitro called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

Chairperson Demitro made opening remarks and asked the Board members to give a summary of their backgrounds. After all five Board members gave a summary of their backgrounds; the Chairperson opened the meeting for public comment.

Karen Evans a social worker from Batavia expressed concern about SB/HB 750, specifically whether the additional revenue would actually be spent to benefit children and education. She indicated that she had two concerns; (1) that there would be no emphasis on holding the line on spending and (2) that the bill was not actually a reduction of property taxes, but a “rebate”. Ms. Evans stated that “Ill. does not shortchange education”. She indicated that according to the NEA, Illinois was 10th in spending on education and 4th or 5th in payments to teachers. She further stated that more funding does not equate to higher scores or better outcomes.

Senator Berman disagreed with the witness. He indicated that the funding system in Illinois is overreliant on property taxes and that for the system to be fair, we must move away from that.

Ms. Davis asked for the study cited by the witness. Ms. Evans indicated that she would forward the study.

Cynthia Woods thanked the Board for their service and wished them luck, stating that this was an opportunity to achieve fairness. She closed by offering the services of the IASB.

Bindu Batchu of A+ Illinois stated that Illinois had 2nd highest average for disparity between school districts and the highest gap between poverty students and affluent students. She believes that EFAB needs to achieve school funding equity so that the lowest funded can also compete. She encouraged the Board to look at other issues that challenge school boards, such as race, poverty and special education.

Peg Agnos representing LEND and SCOPE gave a brief overview of these groups. She briefly described how “tax caps” have impacted education and asked the Board to consider this impact. She indicated that she would forward to the Board a copy of a regional cost study done by the University of Illinois. She thanked the Board for their service.

Joe Matula, Superintendent of Maercker #60 in DuPage County believes that it is the State’s responsibility to ensure a fair opportunity for all children.

Gretchen McDowell from the IPTA thanked the Board for their work. She stated that she supports SB/HB 750 and offered her help to the Board.

Michael Jacoby, Superintendent from Geneva # 304 and a member of LUDA, supports SB/HB 750. He indicated that a “broad, fair tax system”, would allow for more predictable budgeting for school districts. He thanked the Board for their time.

Marleis Trover Superintendent for Vienna High School District #133 supports SB/HB 750. Senator Berman thanked her for her prior service on the EFAB Board.

No other witnesses wished to testify.

Chairperson Demitro asked the ISBE staff to testify as to the Foundation Level methodology.

Toni Waggoner of the ISBE staff gave an overview of the methodology used to generate the Foundation Level of \$6,419 for FY 04. Ms. Davis asked about NCLB variables and their impact on the formula. ISBE staff indicated that no NCLB variables were used in this formula.

Mr. Dougherty expressed his concern about the formula methodology, specifically that no high school variable/data were used.

Senator Berman asked if the Employment Cost Index (ECI) could be used in this formula. ISBE staff indicated that ECI could be used in the formula.

The Board asked that staff provide the following:

- 1. Adjust the October, 2002 EFAB recommendation, using the Employment Cost Index.**
- 2. The raw data used in the methodology (operating expense per pupil, per capita tuition charge, poverty %, ect.).**
- 3. Separate high school and elementary assessment data for unit districts.**
- 4. Individual ISAT data.**

At 5:03 p.m. the Chairperson moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Senator Berman.