Fact Sheet: Illinois Education Funding & Recent Cuts
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Division of Public Information, Illinois State Board of Education

On Jan. 23, the Illinois State Board of Education submitted its Fiscal Year 2015 budget recommendation to Governor Pat Quinn and the General Assembly, calling for a $1.08 billion increase in P-12 education general funds appropriations over the previous year. This represents an appropriation that would, for the first time in five years, fully fund general aid to districts at the level set in state statute. ISBE’s recommendation comes after years of funding reductions, totaling nearly $2.7 billion since Fiscal Year 2009, that have led to the loss of thousands of teachers and aides, increased class sizes, and cuts to music, art, sports, and many other educational programs and local school services.

In February, State Superintendent of Education Christopher A. Koch provided testimony regarding the Board’s budget proposal at both House and Senate Appropriation committees. In March, legislators asked Superintendent Koch to return and testify about the impact of a projected $1 billion reduction in the K-12 Education funding. During that testimony, he shared some of the potential impacts, including:

- An estimated 13,000 fewer teachers and larger class sizes;
- Elimination of discretionary transportation; leaving about 84,000 children to find another way to school on a route with a known safety hazard;
- Elimination of our entire Early Childhood Block Grant, ending state-funded preschool services for 90,000 children;
- Loss of millions of dollars in federal funds for programs that support career and technical education, as well as grants that help students with disabilities and children from low-income families because Illinois would not meet the required state contribution threshold.

Later in March, Gov. Quinn offered two education funding proposals; his plan to increase education funding by $291 million through the existing income tax, as well his not recommended budget which would mean a $633 million decrease if the income tax is not extended. To see both the recommended/not recommended budget for education, please click http://www.isbe.net/budget/default.htm

Elements of the Governor’s Not Recommended Budget include:

- A reduction of $451 million in General State Aid from FY14 levels which amounts to a 10.2 percent decrease in funding. This would mean a significant increase in proration from the current 89 percent level to approximately 79 percent.
• An $18 million reduction in the appropriation for Early Childhood, likely meaning that 5,000 fewer 3 – 5 year and 1,000 fewer 0 – 3 year olds would receive Early Childhood Education services.

• Loss of federal funds because of the inability to show state “effort” or meet the required state contribution.

Such a cut would impact districts in a number of ways including:

• A statewide reduction of an estimated 6,100 teachers (and an increased student to teacher ratio statewide of nearly 5 percent.
• The number of Illinois school districts in “Financial Watch” status could increase from 49 to 67 and the number of districts in deficit spending would increase from 532 (61.8%) to 680 (78.8%).
• As many as 21 districts could realize a negative aggregate operating fund balance in FY15. If a district realizes two consecutive years of negative fund balances, they could be statutorily certified in financial difficulty. Certification may lead to Financial Oversight.
• Bilingual education and special education programs will continue to be underfunded. School districts may use GSA funds to support those programs and as a result, further reduce general education resources.

**Recent Funding Issues**

In recent years, districts have received less funding from local tax revenue, due to the recession and consequent decline in assessed home values. Additionally, the state’s General Fund allocation for P-12 education has been cut by $715 million, or 9.7 percent, since Fiscal Year 2009. More than 18 line items have been reduced, and more than 40 line items have been totally eliminated.

**Since FY2009, these cuts have included:**

• $165.5 million (3.6 percent) reduction in General State Aid (GSA), the most flexible fund to support district operations. For the past five years, funding shortfalls have forced district GSA receipts to be prorated below their claim amounts. Cuts to GSA impact education in many different ways. For example, statewide since 2009, at least 6,400 fulltime teacher and aide positions have been cut.

• $133.7 million (39.4 percent) reduction in Transportation. To make do with reduced funding, some districts have cut bus services and implemented longer routes, meaning children spend more time on the road. Many more have cut back on field trips.

• $80 million (21 percent) reduction in the Early Childhood Block Grant. Twenty six percent fewer children (roughly 25,000 3-5 year olds) will be served by ISBE-supported programs in FY14 than were served in FY09.

• $12.3 million (16.2 percent) reduction in Bilingual Education. In contrast, the number of Limited-English-proficient (LEP) students in the state has increased from 6.3 percent in 2003 to 9.5 percent in 2013.
Illinois State Board of Education

Reductions since FY09 include:

1. $165.5 million (3.6 percent) reduction in General State Aid
2. $133.7 million (39.4 percent) reduction in Transportation
3. $80.1 million (21.1 percent) reduction in Early Childhood
4. $12.3 million (16.2 percent) reduction in Bilingual Education
5. $12.0 million (64.7 percent) reduction in Alternative Learning/Regional Safe Schools
6. $12.0 million (45.6 percent) reduction in Illinois Free Lunch/Breakfast
7. $10.5 million (91.3 percent) reduction in National Board Certification
8. $8.6 million (42.7 percent) reduction in Truant Alternative and Optional Education Programs
9. $5.4 million (68.2 percent) reduction in District Consolidation
10. $2.7 million (90.0 percent) reduction in Children’s Mental Health Partnership
11. $1.6 million (46.8 percent) reduction in Agriculture Education
12. $1.8 million (7.3 percent) reduction in ISBE Administration
13. $1.7 million (40.0 percent) reduction in State and District Tech Support
14. $1.2 million (69.6 percent) reduction in Advance Placement Classes
15. $0.7 million (33.0 percent) reduction in Materials for the Visually Impaired
16. $0.5 million (1.3 percent) reduction in Career and Technical Education
17. $0.4 million (33.0 percent) reduction in Blind and Dyslexic Education
18. $0.2 million (50.9 percent) reduction in Educator Investigations and Hearings
19. $0.2 million (8.6%) reduction in Assessments

Eliminated Programs since FY09 include:

1. Reading Improvement Block Grant ($76.1 million)
2. ADA Block Grant ($74.8 million)
3. Textbook Loan Program ($42.8 million)
4. Summer Bridges ($22.2 million)
5. Transitional Assistance ($19.2 million)
6. Teacher and Administrator Mentoring ($14.0 million)
7. Transportation Reimbursements ($11.9 million)
8. After School Programs ($9.7 million)
9. Class Size Reduction Pilot ($8.0 million)
10. Fast Growth Grants ($7.5 million)
11. Gifted Education ($7.0 million)
12. Jobs for IL Graduates ($4.0 million)
13. Re-Enrolling Students ($4.0 million)
14. Targeted Interventions ($4.0 million)
15. Rural Technology Initiative ($4.0 million)
16. Charter Schools - Transition Impact Aid ($3.4 million)
17. Statewide System of Support ($3.3 million)
18. Principal Mentoring ($3.1 million)
19. Growth Model ($3.0 million)
20. Healthy Kids Chicago ($3.0 million)
21. Hard to Staff Schools Incentives ($3.0 million)
22. Homeless Education ($3.0 million)
23. Response to Intervention ($2.0 million)
24. Healthy Kids Cicero & Berwyn ($1.0 million)
25. Chicago Principals and Admins Association ($1.0 million)
26. Aerospace Education Initiative ($0.9 million)
27. School Breakfast Incentive Program ($0.7 million)
28. Minority Transition Programs ($0.6 million)
29. Illinois Economic Education ($0.3 million)
30. Adler Planetarium ($0.2 million)
31. Museum of Science and Industry ($0.2 million)
32. Metro East Consortium for Child Advocacy ($0.2 million)
33. Temporary Relocation Expense Fund ($0.1 million)
34. Teacher of the Year ($0.1 million)
35. IL Governmental Internships ($0.1 million)
36. Parental Participation Pilot ($0.1 million)
37. Longitudinal Data System ($0.3 million)
38. ADP and Standards Materials and Training (2.0 million)
39. Arts & Foreign Language ($4.0 million)
40. Classroom Cubed ($2.0 million)
41. Grow Your Own Teacher ($3.5 million)
42. Tech Immersion ($4.0 million)