

How do changes in funding and circumstances influence the implementation of EBF from year to year? What was the overall effect of EBF on districts?



Illinois State Board of Education

EBF LEGISLATION

In 2017, the [Evidence-Based Funding for Student Success Act](#) was signed into law. It replaced one of the most regressive funding formulas in the country and was designed to address inequity in Illinois' school funding to ensure that all students have access to a high-quality education.

THE 5-YEAR EVALUATIVE STUDY

The legislation calls for an evaluative study to be completed every five years by the EBF Professional Review Panel and submitted to the State Board of Education, the General Assembly, and the governor. It is intended to assess whether the EBF model is achieving state goals, including whether the formula is leading to the desired outcomes in student achievement, adequacy, and equity. See the full report [here](#).

Qualitative Analysis Methodology

District administrators, principals, and teachers from **87 schools** that saw academic improvement in ELA and math assessment scores from SY 2017-18 to SY 2018-19 **participated in interviews and completed a digital survey regarding their spending decisions**. Each of these districts were designated as Tier 1 in SY 2017-18, and academic improvement was determined by meeting the following criteria:

- Statistically significant increase in ELA and math assessment scores for all students.
- Each of the target student groups (Black, Hispanic/Latino, IEP, EL, and low income) either saw no decreases in proficiency or a narrowing of the achievement gap.

KEY FINDINGS

Overall Effect of EBF on Districts

Many interview and focus group participants reported an overwhelmingly positive impact on their schools and districts so far but noted that they remain far from fully funded and emphasized need for continued investment.

“Accountability but not ‘oppressive levels of accountability measures’ **allowed districts to put money to good use.**”

- District Administrator

“Sometimes we think about the budget as **putting numbers behind things, but there are actual kids and students that it supports.**”

- Principal

“If [EBF] continue[s] to be funded... you’re going to see **test scores start shooting up in a bunch of districts that have been neglected in the past.** And without that EBF money it’s going to stunt that growth for sure.”

- District Administrator

“It doesn’t matter how much extra money that you get if your staff and your teachers are not receptive of it and do not take what they’ve been given and use it. **We took all of the programs and all of the technology and we didn’t let it sit on a shelf.** We used it and I just think it doesn’t matter how much you get if you don’t use it.”

- Principal

2022 5-YEAR EVALUATIVE STUDY

Challenges to Systematic and Organizational Change

Having to choose how to spend between competing priorities and difficulty in hiring due to staff turnover and a lack of qualified candidates were the primary challenges to progress discussed by interview participants.



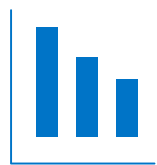
“It’s really one thing to determine the need for a specific position, it’s another thing to find the person qualified to fill it. And so I think that one challenge that we pretty much experienced throughout all of the years that I can think of, but even more so now more currently, is actually finding the people who have the skills that we need to fill the roles at the price that we can afford to pay.”

- District Administrator



“We have had a high teacher turnover rate. It’s been something that we’ve really been focusing on and trying to improve. We have also struggled to fill some of our most high-needs areas, and this isn’t just new to COVID, but we have a dual language program and we’re just not being able to compete.”

- District Administrator



“When I first got here and we’d have an opening in education, we’d have a teacher opening, I would get somewhere around 200 applicants and now I might get 10 and only two of them were worth looking at.”

- District Administrator

Pandemic-Related Challenges

Regarding the pandemic, participants cited a need for increased investments in:

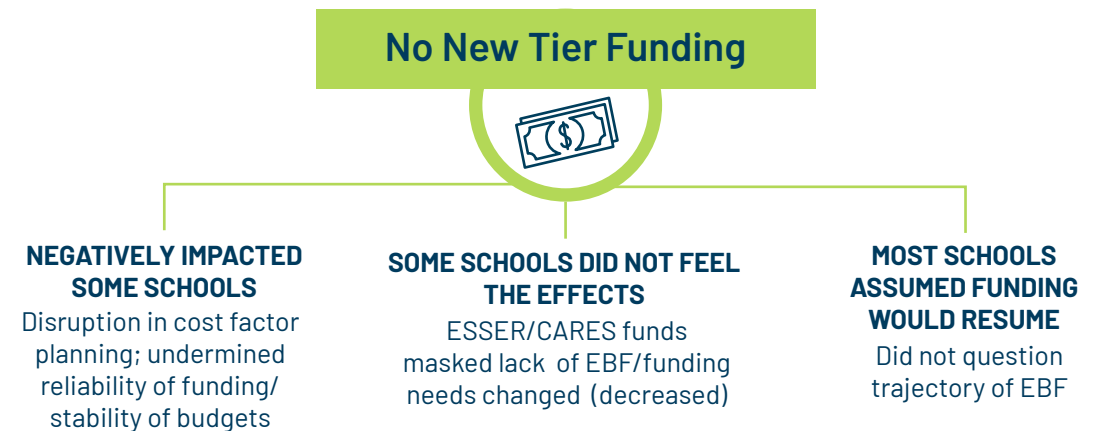


“[EBF was] around the time where we started getting 1-to-1 Chromebooks, so I know a lot of that money was also spent on technology. We were able to allocate those in such a way that every kid in the school had one, which then set us up in a really good position for COVID.”

-Educator

Changes in Funding: No New Tier Funding in FY 2021

The lack of tier funding in FY 2021 created challenges for some districts, forcing district administrators to forgo hiring or cut staff, stop certain programming or forgo planned investment in EBF cost factors, and choose less expensive technology options.



NEGATIVELY IMPACTED SOME SCHOOLS

Disruption in cost factor planning; undermined reliability of funding/ stability of budgets

SOME SCHOOLS DID NOT FEEL THE EFFECTS

ESSER/CARES funds masked lack of EBF/funding needs changed (decreased)

MOST SCHOOLS ASSUMED FUNDING WOULD RESUME

Did not question trajectory of EBF