



The system for school funding in Illinois remains inequitable

No two children are alike. Children have individual learning needs. Research shows low-income students need more resources to support their learning than their wealthier peers. We believe an equitable education funding system gets students the resources they need to be prepared for college and career success. The goal of Funding Illinois' Future is for Illinois to adopt an equitable education funding system that closes the gap between low-income and non-low-income districts in the next five years. **"Equal" is not the same as "equitable."** Currently the funding system systematically disadvantages students in school districts that are primarily low-income, rural, urban, African-American and Latino.

Inequitable funding impacts low-income students

Low-income students are falling behind wealthier students. More than half of state education dollars go to districts regardless of their wealth, shortchanging poor districts that have students with greater needs. But because of inequitable funding, students in low-income districts are faced with larger class sizes, fewer special classes like art and music, outdated textbooks and increased student activity fees.

The funding gap deepens Illinois' achievement gap. Low-income students score up to 35 percentage points lower on achievement tests than their wealthier peers. Low-income Illinois 4th-graders and 8th-graders trail the rest of the nation in performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Low-income Illinois 4th-graders are 43rd in the nation in NAEP math proficiency and 44th in NAEP reading proficiency.

Funding Illinois' Future envisions an equitable system that does the following:

Closes funding gaps. Poverty is growing in Illinois: 44% of school districts are low-income, up from 13% in 2005. Our goal is to close gaps between the poorest and wealthiest districts in five years.

Recognizes individual student needs. The social, emotional and physical needs of low-income students, English learners and students with special needs require additional resources.

Recognizes local needs. Property-poor communities cannot make up for inequitable funding by raising taxes. Many low-income areas are taxed at high rates yet lack adequate resources for their schools.

Makes a lasting impact. School funding is about kids, not politics. A new, more equitable system should be sustainable and kept from annual political decision-making.

For more information, visit fundingilfuture.org