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### The Funding Illinois' Future Coalition Calls for an End to the Regressive Practice of Proration

SPRINGFIELD – More than three dozen superintendents, education advocates, and community leaders today urged the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to end the regressive practice of proration, a backdoor budget cut that falls hardest on the most disadvantaged districts and students.

The representatives of the Funding Illinois' Future coalition asked ISBE to recommend a capped per-pupil cut as part of next year's education budget. This represents a shared sacrifice in these difficult fiscal times.

Superintendent Tony Smith and the state education agency provided information on how a capped per-pupil cut would impact districts. It would result in districts losing the lesser of \$124 per student or 1.05 percent of their operating expenditure per pupil. These estimates are based upon the projected revenues put forth by the Governor's office. This information was the basis for ISBE's discussion during the monthly meeting.

As it stands, Illinois public schools – and students – are the most inequitably funded in the nation. That means disadvantaged students who need the most receive the least.

A recent report revealed that Illinois' most disadvantaged school districts – those serving the greatest numbers of low-income students – receive about \$2,540 less per student than school districts serving the fewest numbers of low-income students, according to analysis by The Education Trust.

"The depth of the disparity in our state is unparalleled. It is getting worse every year that we continue to prorate general education funds and hit hardest the districts – and students – who most rely on state support," said Robin M. Steans, executive director of Advance Illinois and a coalition member. "We cannot continue down this path."

For five years, Illinois has paid school districts just some of the general education funds owed, a backdoor budget cut called the proration of General State Aid. The state hits every district with the same percentage cut, but this hamstringing districts – and students – who can least afford it.

Proration this year cost several of the poorest districts more than \$1,000 per student, while some of the wealthier districts lost just \$30 per student.

When analyzed through a different lens, proration resulted in an average cut per student of \$295. For Latino students, the average cut under proration was \$361. For African-American students, it was \$413. The average cut a low-income student suffers is \$435.



“Whether as policymakers or parents, we must protect our most vulnerable students,” Caroline Sanchez Crozier, president of local council and state education chair of League of United Latin American Citizens – Illinois and a coalition member. “We urge the Illinois State Board of Education to do the same.”

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*The Funding Illinois’ Future coalition is a diverse coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to improving how Illinois supports its public schools and students. Learn more at [www.fundingILfuture.org](http://www.fundingILfuture.org).*