



HELP US ADVOCATE FOR INVESTMENT IN EBF AT THE FY24 ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET HEARINGS

The Illinois State Board of Education will be hosting a series of hybrid budget hearings this October. We need the help of advocates to ensure that they prioritize an investment of at least \$550 million in new funds for the K-12 Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) formula in their FY24 budget request. Please submit a testimony request today to help Illinois' schools reach adequate funding.


ISBE WRITTEN AND ORAL TESTIMONY TALKING POINTS AND SAMPLE TESTIMONIES

This mini toolkit includes:

- a series of talking points
- sample testimony
- social media action to engage ISBE during the budget hearings

Feel free to utilize the talking points to craft your individual testimony following the outline that is included.

Three Public Hearings will be conducted in-person and virtually from:

- **Virtual: 4-7 p.m. Oct. 4**
- – Registration deadline: 11:59 p.m. Sep. 29
- **In-Person: 4-7 p.m. Oct. 6 at 100 North First Street Springfield, IL 62777** – Submit –request in writing by Oct. 4. Speakers who submit online requests after the deadline are not guaranteed a time slot to speak and may present at the end of the hearing dependent upon availability of time.
- **Virtual: 4-7 p.m. Oct. 24** 
- – Registration deadline: 11:59 p.m. Oct. 20

For information on budget hearings, visit this link: <https://www.isbe.net/budget>

Sign-up for written or oral testimony here: <https://www.isbe.net/budgetrequestform>

[Click here for a step-by-step overview](#) of the sign up process. Additional instructions from ISBE can be found at <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/FY24-Budget-Hearing-Instructions.pdf>

As you sign up to testify, you will have the option to submit written or sign up for oral testimony. There is power in numbers! We hope you consider joining us for oral testimony. If you would like to sign up to provide written testimony, use the same sign up process and email your testimony to ISBE at isbefy24@isbe.net (be sure to include your Funding Request Reference Number).

If you would like support to walk through the process, please email Sherijay Innocent at sinnocent@advanceillinois.org If you need help finding your adequacy percentages for a school district, please email Mercedes Wentworth-Nice at mwentworth_nice@advanceillinois.org.

Page Break

TALKING POINTS TO CRAFT YOUR TESTIMONY

Below, talking points that can be used for advocating for an additional \$550 million in EBF. Feel free to use all or some of these talking points in your testimony.

Importance of EBF Investments

- Research is clear -- funding matters in providing students the high-quality education they need to succeed in school and beyond.
- Over the past five years, the Evidence-Based Funding formula has proven to be a successful tool for increasing funding in K-12 schools while driving resources to the most underfunded districts. To date, the state has invested nearly \$1.6 billion in new tier funding and drastically reduced the number of severely underfunded schools in Illinois.
- Yet despite this meaningful progress, in FY23 over half of the state's students (more than one million kids) are still in districts funded below 75% of full funding.
- I am here to recommend that ISBE request at least \$550 million in new funding through EBF in FY24 in order to make progress toward ensuring all students have a high-quality education, regardless of their zip code.

\$350 Million is Not Enough

- We still have a long way to go to fulfill our promise of fully funding K-12 education in our state. At the passage of the Evidence-Based Funding formula, the state set a goal in statute of fully funding the formula within 10 years. According to estimates from the Illinois State Board of Education released last December, if we continue to add an additional \$350 million each year in new funds (roughly the pace we've been going), it would take *at least two decades* from the passage of EBF to fully fund our schools.

- Increasing our annual appropriation of new funds to \$550 million will accelerate our pathway to adequate and equitable funding in Illinois and allow hundreds of thousands more students to benefit from attending fully funded schools.
- Over the past 5 years, inflation has also driven up the costs of adequately funding a school. The annual \$350 million increase is no longer an acceptable floor. We need to increase our annual investment if we want to accelerate the path to full funding.

Equity Imperative

- Because the EBF formula targets new funding to the state’s most underfunded districts, fully funding the EBF with at least \$550 million in FY24 is the best way for the state to work to address systemic inequities in K-12 education.
- Despite gains made by investments in the formula, students who are Black, Latinx, English Learners, or from low-income households are still the most likely to be in underfunded districts.
 - *Feel free to use any of the below statistics in your testimony:*
 - 71% of students from low-income households are in districts funded below 75% of full funding, or “adequacy,” compared to 46% of students who are not from low-income households.
 - 9% of English Learners are in schools funded below 75% of adequacy, compared to 56% of students who are not English Learners.
 - 74% of Black students and 72% of Latinx students are in schools funded below 75% of adequacy, compared to 47% of White students.
- In FY23, my school district [insert district name here] is funded at [X]% of full, adequate funding. That means we have a gap to full funding of \$[X] overall, and \$[X] per pupil. *[Advocates can pull FY24 stats from [this sheet](#), or we can provide that information upon request.]*

COVID-19 and Federal Funds

- While the need was great pre-pandemic, it has only grown since the onset of COVID-19. COVID-19 has had profound effects on teaching and learning that will be felt for years to come. Supporting the academic, social-emotional, mental, and physical needs of students, families, and staff is vital to our state’s recovery and ability to build back better.
- Furthermore, the pandemic has both highlighted and exacerbated inequities deeply rooted in our state’s education system. COVID-19 profoundly disrupted the education of students all across Illinois, but students who are Black, Latinx, English Learners, or from low-income households have been particularly affected.

- Federal relief funds play an important role. These dollars have been a lifeline to our schools and communities and are being used to help address the immediate impacts of, and recovery from, the pandemic.
- One time funds *cannot and should not* replace or mitigate the state’s role in funding schools through the Evidence-Based Funding formula. Federal recovery dollars are for addressing additional resources needed to respond to and recover from the pandemic and EBF funds build a foundation for long term, stable funding for Illinois’ students and schools.
- The challenges brought by COVID-19 will reach beyond FY24 and the expiration of federal funds. Closing the gap to adequate funding in our K-12 schools is the least we can do to equip districts with resources to support students whose learning have been impacted by the pandemic after federal funds have lapsed.

ISBE BUDGET HEARINGS SAMPLE TESTIMONY

Below, you will find a suggested structure and examples of testimonies you can use as you craft your testimony for the upcoming ISBE (Illinois School Board of Education) FY24 Budget hearing.

As ISBE is only allowing three minutes for each oral testimony, we recommend the following structure:

- *Opening*
- *Body Copy*
 - *Talking points*
 - *Partner story*
- *Closing*

We provided a breakdown below of each section for additional assistance.

SECTION BREAKDOWN

Opening

This is your opportunity to introduce yourself, your community, and tell ISBE why you are providing oral testimony. This is where you state your clear recommendation of the following:

We are recommending the Illinois State Board of Education requests at least \$550 million in additional state funding for EBF in FY24.

Body Copy:

This is the area where you begin to make your case for why you are recommending ISBE continues to include at least \$550 million into EBF in their FY24 request. This area can be broken into two parts:

- *Facts and Data*

- *We have provided suggested talking points that you can use to craft your testimony*
- *Your Story (if applicable)*
 - *Share your community's story with ISBE. Share the impact EBF has had on your community.*

Closing

This is where you want to conclude your testimony with a soft call to action; and thank ISBE for the opportunity to share your testimony.

- *Suggested closing statement*
 - We, the **[organization name or your name]**, appreciate ISBE for the opportunity to testify and your consideration of our recommendation. We sincerely hope you heed our recommendation so that Illinois students receive the quality education they deserve.

SAMPLE TESTIMONY

Below, you will find an example testimony based on the above outline on how to structure your testimony. As a reminder, ISBE allows approximately three minutes for oral testimony. The sample testimony is approximately 3 minutes in length. For those submitting written testimony, content may exceed three minutes.

I want to thank ISBE on behalf of **[organization name]** for the opportunity to testify **[or offer written testimony]**. I am here today to advocate for all Illinois students and recommend that ISBE prioritizes an investment of at least \$550 million in new funding for Evidence-Based Funding in the fiscal year 2024 (FY24) budget.

Five years ago, after decades of inequitable and inadequate funding for K-12 education, our state committed to doing better. At the passage of the Evidence-Based Funding formula, the state set a goal in statute of fully funding the formula within 10 years. According to estimates from the Illinois State Board of Education, if we continue to add an additional \$350 million each year in new funds (roughly the pace we've been going), it would take *at least two decades* from the passage of EBF to fully fund our schools.

Increasing our annual appropriation of new funds to \$550 million will accelerate our pathway to adequate and equitable funding in Illinois and allow hundreds of thousands more students to benefit from attending fully funded schools.

But this is about more than just adequate funding. It's also about equity. The Evidence-Based Funding formula was designed to correct inequities deeply rooted in our state's education

system. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has in many ways worsened those inequities. COVID-19 profoundly disrupted the education of students all across Illinois, but students who are Black, Latinx, English Learners, or from low-income households have been particularly affected. Despite gains made by investments in the formula, these students are also still disproportionately concentrated in our most underfunded districts. Because the EBF formula targets new funding to the state's most underfunded districts, adding \$550 million in new funds into EBF in FY24 is the best way for the state to work to address structural inequities that have worsened as a result of the pandemic.

PARTNER STORY

Briefly share why you/your organization supports this recommendation based on your experiences in communities. We recommend answering the following questions:

- *How has EBF funding helped your school/district/community over the past 5 years? Are there positions you were able to create or fill, programs you were able to invest or grow, or positive impacts you're seeing?*
- *What would additional resources allow your school/district to invest in? Elaborate here on the programming, staff, and supports you anticipate EBF dollars in FY24 will make possible, such as retaining staff, investing in professional development, keeping class sizes manageable, etc.*

We have a long way to go to fulfill our promise of fully funding K-12 education in our state. The significant and inequitable toll that COVID-19 has taken on our schools and students only increases the urgency with which we need to fully fund our schools. Adding \$550 million in new funds to the Evidence-Based Funding formula will get us to full funding faster and allow additional generations of students in Illinois to benefit.

We, **[your name & school district/organization name]**, appreciate ISBE for the opportunity to testify and for your consideration of our recommendation. We sincerely hope you heed our recommendation so that Illinois students can receive the quality education they deserve.