



URGE KEY LEADERS TO INVEST AT LEAST \$550 MILLION NEW FUNDS IN THE EVIDENCEBASED FUNDING FORMULA IN FY26

Accelerate Illinois' progress toward adequate and equitable funding for all K-12 students.

WHY IS ADEQUATE AND EQUITABLE EDUCATION FUNDING IMPORTANT?

Research shows that high quality educational experiences from birth through postsecondary (B-20) make a real difference for our students and their communities. Our districts need adequate and equitable state funding to provide these opportunities to all students. When public schools have the necessary resources they need, students perform better academically. Resources can include:

- Investment in additional social-emotional supports
- Up-to-date materials and facilities
- Competitive compensation for educators

“If the state neglects this opportunity to invest in our kids, this will result in reduced services and staffing, and a setback for the progress we have all worked so hard to achieve over the past two years. This ultimately compromises the commitments that we have all made to families across Illinois.” Ellen Moiani, Noble Schools

WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE-BASED FUNDING (EBF) FORMULA?

Before adopting a new funding formula, Illinois had one of the least equitable school funding formulas in the country, with one of the lowest levels of state financial support. In 2017, Illinois made a commitment to **adequately** and **equitably** fund K-12 schools through the passage of the Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) formula.

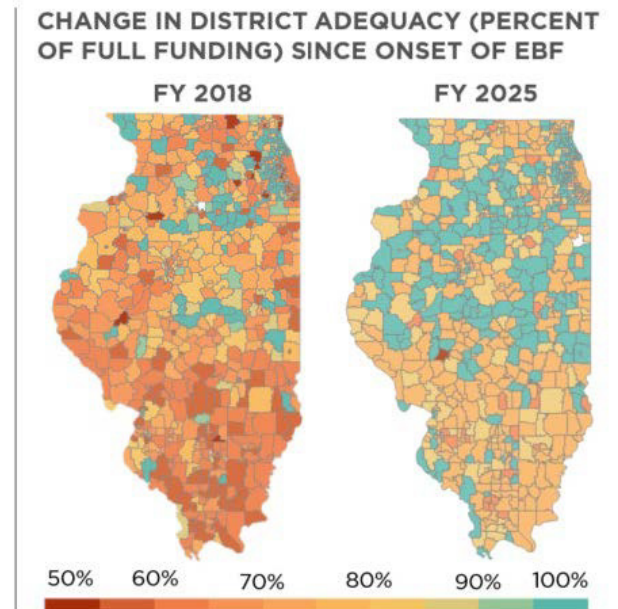
EBF uses research to determine what resources a district needs. Also, the formula includes more investments for special education, students from low-income households, and English Learners so that all districts can provide high-quality educational opportunities for all students.

EBF was designed to address continuous under-funding and inequities in Illinois' K-12 funding system. Each year that the state funds EBF, the formula drives new state resources to the districts furthest from full funding. At the passage of EBF, the state committed to investing at least \$350 million new dollars every year into the formula.

IS EBF WORKING?

Since 2017, EBF has driven \$2.1B in new funds to Illinois' school districts, significantly reducing the number of severely underfunded districts, and allowing schools to provide stronger instruction and support.

While EBF has made significant progress in closing funding gaps and addressing systemic inequities, currently, over 1.3 million students in Illinois are still in underfunded districts, and at the current pace of investment, our K-12 system won't reach full funding by the time these students graduate. We simply can't wait for another generation of students to graduate without ever experiencing a fully funded education.



Even with the meaningful progress that Illinois has made, **3 in 4 students** are still enrolled in underfunded districts (below 90% of full funding).

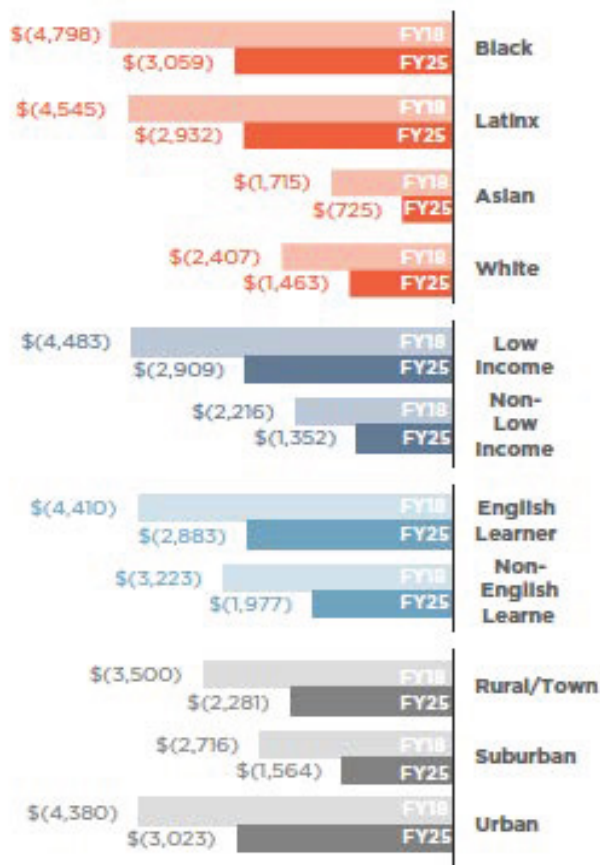
WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Ongoing student needs, rising costs, and expiring federal stimulus funds are putting immense pressure on district budgets this year.

Pandemic related disruptions had profound effects on teaching and learning that continue to be felt today. While data show Illinois students' levels of proficiency in English Language Arts now exceed pre-pandemic levels, progress is lagging in Math, and outcomes remain deeply inequitable across lines of race and income. There is significant work left to be done to address these historic and persistent inequities. Further, student mental health needs have grown tremendously, meaning additional services are needed to support students to achieve strong academic outcomes.

Investing \$550M more in EBF is the best way to address systemic inequities in our education systems that were exacerbated by pandemic disruptions. Students from low-income households, students of color, and English Learners are disproportionately concentrated in Illinois' most underfunded school districts. Students from rural and urban areas are also more likely than their suburban counterparts to be enrolled in underfunded districts.

PER-STUDENT GAP TO FULL FUNDING



How to read this chart:

In FY18, average per-student funding for Black students was \$4,798 below the amount needed to reach adequate funding. The state has lessened this gap, but average funding for Black students is still \$3,059 per student below what's needed

WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT?

It's time to reaffirm our commitment to students by making an investment in EBF above \$350M in FY26 and beyond. When EBF was passed, the General Assembly set a goal to reach full funding by 2027. If we continue adding only \$350 million each year in new funds, it will take another 10 to 13 years to reach full funding. Increasing our annual appropriation of new funds to \$550 million will cut our time to full funding roughly in half, allowing hundreds of thousands of students to benefit from attending fully-funded schools sooner.

Every child deserves access to the same high-quality resources, dedicated teachers, and enriching learning environments, regardless of their background or where they live. When funding is equitable, it helps to bridge the gap between communities, ensuring that all children can thrive academically and socially." - Parent

Let decision makers know that increasing our annual appropriation of new funds to \$550 million will accelerate our pathway to full funding.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

We need your voice! For more information on how you can stay informed on our advocacy work, please email engagement@advanceillinois.org