

Literacy & Justice for All

Only one-third of Illinois third graders are proficient or advanced readers, which is, unfortunately, on par with the national average. But while many states have recently taken major action to improve, Illinois remains on the sidelines.



For two-thirds of young Illinoisans who are not proficient or advanced readers, the stakes are sobering. Research from the Annie E. Casey Foundation shows that these students are significantly less likely to graduate and significantly more likely to end up in the criminal justice system. The unfulfilled potential is not only heartbreaking, but inexcusable: researchers estimate that 95% of students who are provided the appropriate instruction can indeed learn to read proficiently.

So, what's the best way for students to receive that appropriate instruction? It can only

happen when educators have the support they deserve to learn evidence-based reading strategies in their preparation programs and through professional development. Illinois' early literacy crisis is not the fault of our teachers.

Last year, the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus laid the foundation for a new chapter for Illinois students by drafting bill language supporting evidence-based literacy instruction. This year, a statewide group of advocates have formed the Illinois Early Literacy Coalition to fight for equitable access to evidence-based literacy instruction

(ilearlyliteracy.org). The Coalition is advocating for a \$5 million appropriation in the ISBE budget for early literacy priorities.

Do yourself a favor. Listen to the podcast "Hard Words" by Emily Hanford. Chances are, it will completely change the way you think about early literacy.

Then, you can continue your journey into early literacy by watching the video from the Illinois Early Literacy Coalition's October 5 virtual legislative event "Literacy and Justice for All," at bit.ly/LiteracyAndJusticeForAll. You'll learn about the miraculous Mississippi story that put the state at the top of reading growth, see what evidence-based reading instruction looks like, and find out how Illinois can change the trajectory for our younger students.

Pop Quiz

1. What percentage of Illinois third graders are proficient or advanced readers?
2. How many states require teacher candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of evidence-based reading instruction before they are licensed?
3. Is Illinois one of them?
4. What state is leading the country in reading gains?

Answers
1. Only one-third
2. 22
3. Nope
4. Mississippi

Only one-third of Illinois third graders are proficient or advanced readers.

Evidence-Based Funding Works!

Springfield Comes Through with \$350 Million for Education

With an influx of federal relief funds headed to districts, education funding advocates watched legislators debate this spring whether the minimum \$350 million in additional Evidence-Based Funding would be included in the budget. ***It was!***

When the EBF Formula was enacted in 2017, a "Minimum Funding Level" was established, setting a goal that every year the legislature would increase the allocation to the formula by \$350 million. The first \$300 million would be distributed through the new formula and the next \$50 million would fund property tax relief grants to districts with high tax rates. This innovative property tax mechanism integrates state school funding and property tax relief, giving lawmakers a tool to leverage property tax relief funding to simultaneously fund education.

This year also saw significant federal COVID relief funds, most of which flows to districts and can be spent over the next three years.

These much-needed funds will help districts hire social workers, provide high-dosage tutoring, maintain safe learning environments, expand instructional time, and implement other strategies that work within their local context to boost student learning. This is truly a great opportunity to restore learning loss and support students' social and emotional health. However great these programs will be, they will be based on one-time federal-relief revenue streams. Schools cannot build sustainable, ongoing programs with just federal funds.

Only by increasing Evidence-Based Funding will schools be able to close their gap to funding adequacy in the future. According to funding models reviewed by the Professional Review Panel, it will take until 2042 to reach adequate funding if only \$350 million per year is invested; to fully fund the formula in eight years, an increase of nearly \$800 million annually is needed.

FOR YOUR CONSTITUENTS

Learn from History

A broad bipartisan majority of Americans agree: for students to create a better society, schools need to provide a thorough, accurate, and fact-based history education and teach students to reject racism and respect the equal value of every person.

Unfortunately, rampant misinformation about what is taught in schools is forcing teachers to omit difficult parts of our history and not teach students that racism is wrong, adding yet another stressor for teachers at the worst possible time. That is why respected organizations collectively representing millions of parents, educators, students,

and other Americans of goodwill have come together to form the Learn from History Coalition.

The inaugural partners of the Coalition are broad and bipartisan. They include AFT (American Federation of Teachers), AASA (The School Superintendents Association), The Education Trust, Educators for Excellence, Facing History & Ourselves, NSBA (National School Board Association), News Literacy Project, OAH (Organization of American Historians), Stand for Children Illinois, Teach Plus, and Teach for America. The Coalition is facilitated by Stand for Children



Leadership Center. Over 2,500 individuals participated in the Coalition's launch in September.

Laurie Goldstein, a coalition member from Wilmette, told the *Illinois Times* how she realized there were "gaping holes that you could drive a truck through" in the history lessons she had been taught. Her work both locally and through Learn from History

aims to provide accurate and complete lessons for all students.

Share the Coalition's toolkits that help ensure schools can teach fact-based history. Find separate kits for school board members, school system leaders, teachers, and parents at learnfromhistory.org or contact info@learnfromhistory.org.

Confused About... Where the Lottery Money Goes?

With the summer of lottery drawings for COVID vaccinated folks, I got to thinking about an age-old question: "Wasn't the Illinois lottery supposed to fund public education?"

The short answer: It does, but it's not nearly enough money. The Illinois Lottery generates about \$700 million each year that goes to the Common School Fund. That \$700 million is a drop in the bucket compared to how much is needed to fully fund public education. The Illinois State Board of Education's General Funds budget is about \$9 billion. And that doesn't even include the additional billions in early childhood expenses that are appropriated through other agencies, higher education costs, or teacher pensions, none of which are actually fully funded anyway.

But, of course, there's a longer answer, too. When the lottery was created in 1974, there was plenty of debate on whether the proceeds should go to education, but in the end, they were allocated for regional public transit. That changed in 1985, when the legislature passed a bill re-directing lottery receipts to the Common School Fund.

However, that did not directly lead to an increase in education funding. In the words of sponsoring State Senator Joyce Holmberg (D – Rockford) from floor debate, "...we will not be adding one penny more necessarily, but it is just the intent of what we...all

thought originally might be done, that we will put all of the money in the Common School Fund." Speaking in opposition, Sen. John Maitland (R – Bloomington) said constituents would still be upset after passage because, "you promised us lottery money, you passed it, and we still didn't get it... It's a charade."

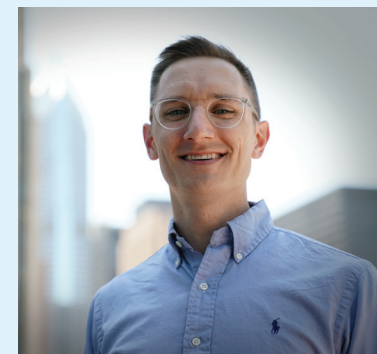
Things got even more complicated in 2009. As a part of the capital bill that year, the General Assembly outsourced management of the lottery to a private vendor and authorized internet ticket sales. The hope was that the private vendor would significantly increase lottery receipts so schools would still receive the same amount plus inflation and the remainder would help fund capital projects. This protected the lottery's funding for education, but also created even more disconnect between lottery sales and education funding levels.

The bottom line is that even though the lottery's tie to the Common School Fund wasn't intended to bring more funding for schools, that \$700 million would have to come from somewhere if the lottery didn't exist.

This article is adapted from Jessica Handy's "Confused About..." blog series at stand.org/ilconfusedabout.



Meet the Team



Name and Role: Scott McDonald, Marketing & Communications Director

Education: BA in Journalism and Political Science from Marquette University

Family: I live in Chicago with my wife, young daughter, and our French bulldog, Angus.

What do you love about your job? Each day is different with new challenges to solve and opportunities to pursue.

What do you do for fun? Explore my neighborhood on walks with my daughter.

Who is your role model and why? Aside from my parents, Congressman John Lewis is someone I have admired for years. His resilience to make the world a better place offers us an amazing example for how to live.

What is your hidden talent? I can smoke a mean pork shoulder on a standard issue charcoal grill.

About Stand for Children

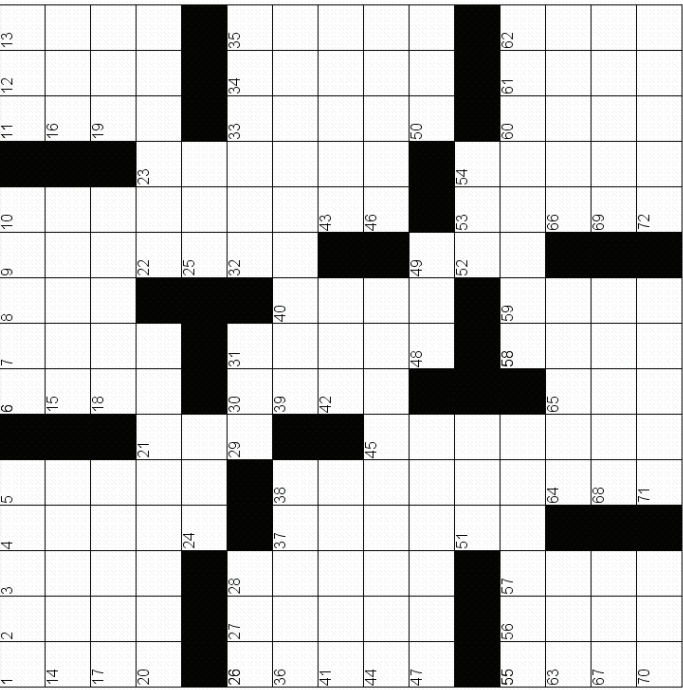
Stand for Children is a non-partisan education advocacy organization that believes every child, regardless of skin color, zip code, first language, or disability, deserves access to a high-quality, relevant public education.

- stand.org/Illinois
- facebook.com/StandIllinois
- @IllinoisStand

Read On, Illinois!

Find the crossword solution at stand.org/Oct21NewsStand.

- ACROSS**
- Disappearing social media pics
 - Locale for voter conversations
 - Ezike's realm
 - Case law setter
 - The Gem State
 - Secure Choice dep. destination
 - Open spaces at JRTC and Willard Ice Building
 - More recent
 - Trig. word that isn't CAH or TOA
 - *You need three of them*
 - Cause for strained breathing
 - IL ratified it after 36 years
 - Small piece to support a ball
 - He's known for his jokes
 - Cmte that files A-1s and quarterlies
 - List of corrected mistakes
 - How He-Man holds his sword
 - *State, Lincoln, and LRB holdings*
 - Related to the pinkie-to-elbow bone
 - A martial arts weapon
 - Dent, sweet, and pop
 - *What to do when they call special session*
 - Build
 - Try
 - Site for a medicinal bath
 - IL Link Card agency
 - Electrical regs. IL follows
 - "Hey you!"
 - Needing food
 - *A fundamental goal of public education*
 - Nationalist chant at sporting events
 - IL's ultimate 14-across
 - Nest
 - Accelerate
- DOWN**
- Mark
 - It may be fiscal or foot
 - Energy field
 - DCFS foster parent classes
 - One step
 - Bounce
 - Tribute
 - Uncooked
 - Rulebreaker
 - A close contest
 - Gossip
 - Cause for a corsage
 - Nelson Muntz catchphrase
 - Rest
 - Fear
 - Hastily coats
- ACROSS**
- Beethoven wrote for her
 - Gateway to India condiment
 - Attempt
 - Shoulder muscles, informally
 - Suspensions of cases
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The occasional Springfield publication
for persistent education champions



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Students are getting a running start on earning credits in college or for a trade through dual credit.

FOR YOUR CONSTITUENTS

Dual Credit Advocacy Toolkit

The success of tomorrow's workforce depends on the success of today's students.

Dual Credit programs are an important avenue for setting students up for success. When high school students enroll in Dual Credit courses, they earn both high school and college credits at the same time. It is well established by the Brookings Institution and other leading researchers that college graduates earn more than students who do not earn college degrees. By embracing Dual Credit, we are giving students a jump-start to earning those higher wages.

Thanks to a great many state legislators, recent laws have made it easier to secure strong Dual Credit partnerships between school districts and their higher education partners. As a result, Dual Credit programs are increasing in Illinois.

Let's keep the trend going and make sure every high school student who wants to enroll in Dual Credit has the opportunity to do so!

The Dual Credit Advocacy Toolkit is web-based, user-friendly, and free-of-charge. It has actionable resources for expanding and making Dual Credit opportunities more affordable. Designed with the help of students, teachers, and community colleges, the toolkit is for:

- High school and community college administrators
- Teachers looking for broader credentialing
- Parents wanting to support their schools by increasing course offerings
- Anyone interested in helping make sure Illinois students are ready for the 21st century workforce

Access the toolkit at StandAdvocacyToolkit.org. For a demonstration, contact Aimee Galvin at agalvin@stand.org.

Want to learn even more about Dual Credit?

"Expanding Equity in Dual Credit" is an easy-to-read primer (dualcreditequity.org).