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Funding the Formula

As the General Assembly's session days wound down and legislators worked to get a budget in place by April 8, education funding advocates increased their call for a \$350 million increase for the Evidence-Based Funding Formula. Fiscal Year 2023 is the fifth budget year for the formula, and the legislature has come through in four of the five years with the additional funding.


But though many still think of the Evidence-Based Funding Formula as "new," only about half of today's sitting legislators were in office when it was enacted. Even fewer were around to see the four years of working groups, task forces, negotiation tables, reports, recommendations, resolutions, and failed bills that preceded its passage, as well as the massive outpouring of grassroots support from every region in the state. So as the sun has set on the FY23 budget deal, it seems appropriate for a brief walk down memory lane...

A 2013 Senate resolution kicked off a school funding task force. That set the table for an aggressive summer schedule of discussions, which Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) board members attended along with Senators, largely supported by an Education Commission of the States staff member who spoke to the wide array of school funding schemas in place throughout the country.

After this arduous process, the Senate came up with a bill based on principles of equity and transparency. But that was just the beginning. What started as an earnest conversation soon devolved into heated debate about "winners" and "losers."


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Summer 2013
SR 431 (Manar) creates Advisory Committee on School Funding, which meets throughout the off-season



May 2014
SB 16 (Manar) passed the Senate; no House action taken. The bill would have created an equitable formula based on weighted student enrollment

February 2015
SB 1403 (Barickman) and HB 4022 (Welch) introduced the "Vision 20/20" school funding plan, based on an evidence-based adequacy calculation; no action taken



February 2016
School Funding Reform Act (SB 1 - Manar) is filed; no committee vote

Summer 2016
Gov. Rauner announced bipartisan, bicameral 25-member commission, which releases a report after six months of meeting

February 2017
SB 1 (Manar/Davis) introduced and negotiated throughout session


May 2017
SB 1 passes both House, but Rauner issues amendatory veto

August 29, 2017
The next day, the agreed-to Evidence-Based School Funding Formula (SB 1947) passed

August 31, 2017
Senate overrides the veto; House fails to override the veto

August 31, 2017
SB 1947 signed into law!

FY2022
The Evidence-Based Funding approp is \$1.3 billion higher than its first year allocation. But it is \$4.6 billion short of fully funding the formula. At this rate, the formula will not be fully funded until 2042.



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Some districts would get less state funding than they had received the prior year, and this was a non-starter for some people. Huge rallies flooded the capitol as educators, parents, and students demanded a fix to the deep funding inequities for which Illinois schools had grown notorious. Chicago Public Schools' CEO travelled to Vandalia, to join downstate superintendents to call for funding reform that all of their schools so desperately needed.

Interestingly, around this same time, ISBE released projected allocation of General State Aid (GSA) for the following year. To the surprise of many, there were an abundance of "winners" and "losers" even without any changes to the formula at all. Every year, as calculations were input for each district's property values, student population, and poverty concentrations, the distribution of the State's funding shook out differently and many districts received less GSA than they had the prior year.

A decision was made toward the end of the discussions that the "new" formula would ensure that each district would continue to receive at least the same amount it had received the prior year; however, new funding would be deliberately targeted to the most under-funded districts. And with this sort of "hold harmless" guarantee, the *only way* Illinois' school funding system would become more equitable would be to invest new money consistently. That provision was enshrined in the law, called the "Minimum Funding Level," and established statutorily as \$350 million each year. Even at this rate, reaching full funding for Illinois' schools is still decades away.

Thus, this modest \$350 million annual investment is the key to the success of Evidence-Based Funding. Without those annual incremental increases, Illinois will never escape its legacy of inadequately, inequitably funded public schools.



Getting Our Books in a Row: Illinois will hold comprehensive literacy discussions

The quest for improved literacy outcomes is gaining more momentum and national attention as stakeholder groups agree to converge this summer toward comprehensive, statewide literacy policies that ensure all students receive literacy instruction that meets their needs and prioritizes equity. One-third of Illinois' students read below a "Basic" level, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Most other states have enacted literacy reforms, but Illinois has largely avoided statewide literacy initiatives... until now.

Dozens of stakeholder groups met this spring to discuss the Right to Read Act, all with a shared goal of improving literacy outcomes for students and all with varying perspectives on how to accomplish that. The groups have committed to continuing to work over the summer, expanding the umbrella even further to ensure that Illinois' literacy policy is designed comprehensively and inclusively. The positive side of being late to the literacy improvement game is that Illinois has many states to look at for successful outcomes, potential pitfalls, and implementation best practices. State literacy policies attempted in other states range from educator preparation and licensure changes, to professional development and coaching for teachers, to curricular improvements, to interventions for struggling readers.

Progress for Illinois High School Students



Springfield took another step in the direction of equity this session by passing HB5506 and HR582. Thank you, respectively, to Chief Sponsors Rep. Stuart and Sen. Rezin, and to Rep. West. **Dual Credit Access** is enhanced with HB 5506 (Stuart/Rezin), which passed both Houses unanimously. The bill extends provisions of the Dual Credit Quality Act to allow more access to advanced coursework for high school students. The bill allows high school teachers to teach Dual Credit while completing additional graduate

coursework, under the oversight of a higher education institution. In addition, that provisional Dual Credit licensure pathway would now open to Career and Technical Education teachers. Finally, the bill paves the way for schools to offer Dual Credit courses for high school credit only to students who do not meet enrollment standards of the higher education partner. This is especially important for small schools that may not have enough enrollment to offer a Dual Credit and non-Dual Credit section of a course.

HR582 (West) will help guarantee taxpayer funds are well spent by asking the P-20 Council to make sure the funding mechanism for **Career and Technical Education (CTE)** is efficient and maximizes collaboration among secondary, post-secondary, and employer partners.

The **Dual Credit Advocacy Toolkit** is available (StandAdvocacyToolkit.org) to anyone interested in helping build up their schools' Dual Credit opportunities. This guide walks users through the path to establish Dual Credit partnerships in their schools, geared toward parents and administrators. The handy resource also offers teachers a tool to explore what Dual Credit teaching opportunities are available to them with their current credentials.

Teaching Kindness in Illinois Schools



This mural in the hallway of Wagoner Elementary School reminds everyone to be kind and helps set the tone for students and staff.

Research demonstrates that schools which intentionally and systematically teach kindness enhance students' sense of safety, support, and acceptance. As a result, more students succeed in school and in life.

To help educators support student success, Stand for Children and its partners created **Teach Kindness**, a program that provides teachers with the highest quality social-emotional learning content, **free-of-charge**. Its content has been accessed over 32,500 times by educators in 7,356 schools across all 50 states.

Every component of this popular program is designed with educator convenience and student needs in mind. In

addition to being free, the content can be taught in-person or in synchronous and asynchronous learning environments. Furthermore, Illinois educators and schools are eligible to win Stand's **Teach Kindness Awards**. And there's more: Illinois educators can receive extra stipend support through Stand's professional development opportunity, "**Getting Ready for Teach Kindness**." (Read "An Offer for Your Principals.")

Using best-in-class social-emotional learning activities to teach kids to practice kindness on a more regular basis, they become more aware of their emotions, words, and actions, and they become better equipped to navigate their classrooms, schools, and communities.

In 2021, six Illinois schools received Stand's Kind School Award. The 2021 Kind School recipients are Wagoner Elementary, Palmer Elementary, Beard Elementary, Fiske Elementary, Carver Elementary, and Burke Elementary. This awards program is being significantly expanded for the 2022-23 school year.

Stand is ready to support the schools in your district today. Contact us for more information to share with your schools or suggest they visit bit.ly/Teach-KindnessIL and reach out to Brandi Watts, Director of Educator Partnerships for Stand Illinois at bwatts@stand.org.

An Offer for Your Principals: Getting Ready for Teach Kindness this May!

Teach Kindness works best when principals and Teach Kindness teacher leaders set aside time for planning and implementation. Stand for Children offers "Getting Ready for Teach Kindness," a training and planning opportunity for schools interested in adopting Teach Kindness the following school year. It will be here before we know it!

If you have any principals at schools that might benefit from Teach Kindness, please invite them to join a virtual informational session during the week of April 18 with Educator Partnerships Director Brandi Watts. More info can be found by scanning the QR code, or by contacting Brandi at bwatts@stand.org.



Meet the Team



Name and Role: Mimi Rodman, Executive Director

Family: Daughter Carrie (graduate student in public health at Columbia University and bartender), son Sam (graduate student in computer science and business administration at The University of Chicago and getting married this summer), and husband Ben (Managing Director at Raymond James Financial and avid golfer)

Lived in: Stillwater, OK; Lubbock, TX; New York, NY; Washington, DC; Seoul, Korea; Chicago and Wilmette, IL

Education: BA, University of Chicago; JD, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law

What do you love about your job? The variety of tasks. My to-do list today includes reviewing endorsement questionnaires, expanding our SEL program to reach more schools, and deep diving into legislation. It is never boring.

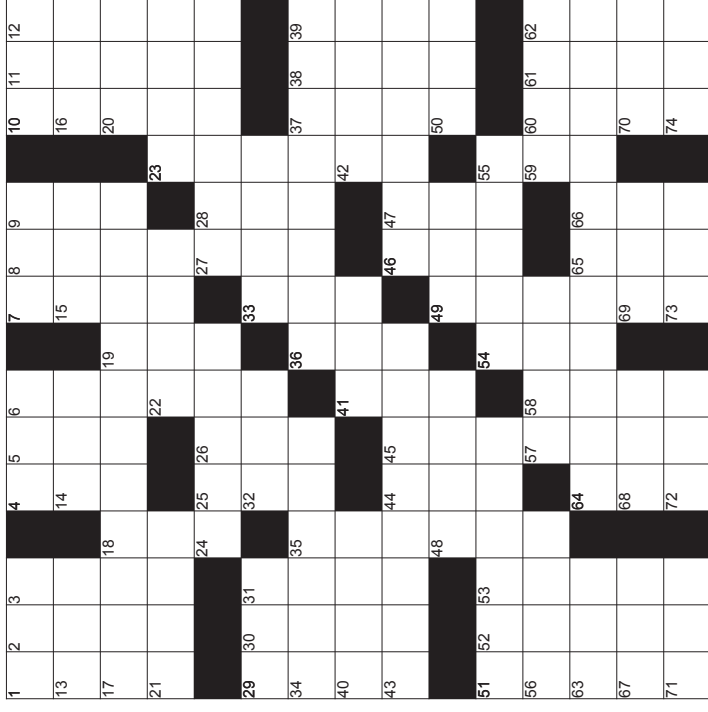
What do you do for fun? Gardening. I'm growing artichokes for the first time, and my cold frame is full of seedlings.

Inside Baseball

Find the crossword solution at stand.org/Apr22NewsStand.

ACROSS

1. Inquire
4. Sum up
7. An hour ahead of CST
10. Equipment for hitting
13. Mimic
14. Take to court
15. Brookfield _____
16. Beer
17. Pass a bill unanimously
20. Descendant
21. Pause
22. Egg-shaped
23. Evergreen
24. Flavor
27. Spiget
29. One party, abbrev.
32. Sine _____
33. Swallow
34. Side to side
36. Some types of budget figures
40. You, archaically
41. Marinated sushi ingredient
42. Peters or Rachel Wood
43. Question from a friendly reporter
46. Whole
48. Wearer of sheep's clothing
49. Mon _____
50. Morning mist
51. Per _____
54. Former planet
56. Fire byproduct
57. Naked
59. Expansive
63. Sea eagle
64. Like the Senate, compared to the City Council
67. Help
68. _____ Thurman
69. Madre's hermana
70. Make a mistake



71. Pod-dweller
72. The Grinch's dog
73. Match
74. Another party, abbrev.

DOWN

1. Oohs accompaniment
2. Type of ball
3. Carb-free
4. Fireplace leftover
5. Twosome
6. Give a less senior position
7. Between 2nd Chronicles and Nehemiah
8. Heartfelt
9. 2,000 pounds
10. Standard
11. By oneself
12. Principle
18. Likely
19. The day before
23. Finger, sock, or marionette
25. YouTube interruptions
26. Bro's sibling
28. Everything
29. Bruno's companions (we don't talk about Bruno!)
30. Reverberation
31. Univ. teacher
33. Guy's partner
35. Survivor directive
36. Los Angeles neighborhood, with "Ain"
37. Keen
38. Unusual
39. Was aware
41. Shelf sitter
44. Possible author of that social media comment
45. Civil Rights Memorial's state
46. Flightless bird
47. Miniscule error
49. Notices
51. Inexpensive
52. Large nest
53. Bamboo eater
54. Prefix meaning earlier or forward
55. Mature eggs
58. Cleaner or web development technique
60. Cured
61. Certain
62. Two years, for a state representative
64. Keeping quiet
65. Fib
66. Consume

About Stand for Children
Stand for Children is a unique catalyst for education equity and racial justice, to create a brighter future for us all.

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