



FY24 EBF Talking Points

EBF talking points from FY24 budget toolkit with some updates to add B-20 framing in underlined text.

Importance of EBF Investments

- Research shows that high-quality educational experiences from birth through postsecondary make a dramatic difference in individuals' success in school, career, and life. Adequate, equitable state funding for early childhood education and care, K-12 public schools, and higher education is necessary to provide these opportunities.
- 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 million in new tier funding and drastically reduced the number of severely underfunded schools in Illinois. Prior to the passage of EBF, 164 districts were funded at less than 60% of what they needed. In FY23, only 2 districts are still below 60% of full funding.
- 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.
- If we increase tier funding by \$550M each year, we will reach full funding in less than 10 years.

- 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

- Addressing systemic inequities in Illinois requires increased investment in education. Our education systems—from early childhood through higher education—have suffered from years of under-investment and inequitable investment that has contributed to significant gaps in student outcomes across lines of race, income, and English Learner status.
- 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 47% of students who are not from low-income households.
 - 69% 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.

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.
- Onetime 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 wrought 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 to support students whose learning has been impacted by the pandemic after federal funds have lapsed.

Additional B-20 Funding Talking Points: EBF is important to advancing funding adequacy in our B-20 systems

- Investing in EBF is a crucial step in moving closer to fully funding our Birth through Postsecondary education systems.
- Our Birth through Postsecondary (B-20) education systems work together to support students. K-12 students thrive when they have had access to high-quality early childhood experiences. Post-secondary students persist at higher rates when they have had a strong K-12 education. Colleges and universities prepare the early childhood and K-12 educators that help our P-12 students succeed. Investing in EBF is an important piece to strengthening the health of all our systems.

Additional Talking Points re EBF and the Economy: Revenue Increases and the Importance of Investments in Education

- Illinois is experiencing yet another strong revenue year in FY23, with General Revenue Funds predicted to be the highest they've been in the past 10 years (source: Center for Government Forecasting and Accountability). We are in a strong enough economic place to be able to make the investments in education our students need right now.
- Due to unexpectedly high revenues in FY23, the state was able to pass a significant supplemental budget in January of this year that sent billions more funds out the door. Education was not a priority in the supplemental budget—it needs to be a priority now.
- Investments in education pay off. Better academic outcomes, enabled by adequate investments in education translate to economic growth, increased earnings, and decreased unemployment.

Response to ISBE Finance and Audit Committee Proposal

- Last week the Illinois State Board of Education staff proposed to the board's Finance and Audit Committee only \$350M in additional appropriations to EBF for the FY24 budget and an increase of just 10 percent to early childhood education and care. To say the least, we are disappointed.
- This proposal is a far cry from what's needed to put Illinois on the path to adequate and equitable schools and funding and ensuring Illinois' learners have access to the education, care, and support they need to flourish and thrive.
- What's been proposed is not enough. Should the \$350M gain approval, and Illinois continue down the road of adding only \$350 million each year in new funds to EBF, it will take two decades from the passage EBF to fully fund our schools. That's precious time lost for the majority of our students who are currently in underfunded districts, and especially impact our students of color, students from low-income households, and

rural and urban students that disproportionately attend our underfunded districts. Should the 10 percent increase for early childhood move ahead, it will undermine efforts to make needed changes in our state's early childhood system to support our workforce and improve equitable access for young children. Our students deserve more and ensuring they have what they need to succeed cannot wait.

- 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. As many of the Board members noted last week many of these funds are set to expire in the next two years. An investment of \$550 in EBF will help smooth out that financial cliff for districts and ensure that learning renewal efforts continue on past the expiration of federal funds.
- The public has sent a clear message: our students and educators need this funding. More than 50 stakeholders including parents, teachers, school leaders, and advocates attended ISBE's budget hearings to advocate for an increase to EBF above \$350M. More than 40 spoke to the need for a 20% increase for ECE. We implore the board to listen to voices from the field and advocate for at least a \$550M increase in EBF and a 20% increase for Early Childhood Education in FY24.