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A Closer Look at Illinois' Approach to K-12 School Funding

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A Closer Look at Illinois' Approach to K-12 Funding

Introduction

The funding of education has become increasingly a worry to parents, administration, and staff. Funding has left them all questioning if they will have the necessary funding in order to return quality education to K-12 students. This concern has now grown even more since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and its' introduction to virtual learning. Now, it is up to funding sources and advocates such as government officials and the state/federal governments to find a solution.

Differences Between Schools

It is important to note the difference in school types to understand their type of funding and situation. Listed are the most known school types.

Public: the most common type of K-12 schools that are overseen by districts. These schools are funded by the public and obey both state and federal laws

Private: most funding comes entirely from private donors and these schools have control over what they chose to do

Key Difference: Private schools compared to public schools are far more difficult to be admitted into and are expensive. In turn, public schools are the most common and gravitating option for Illinoisians due to their financial affordability and flexibility with IEPs (Note: this type of school will be further discussed for the rest of the project).

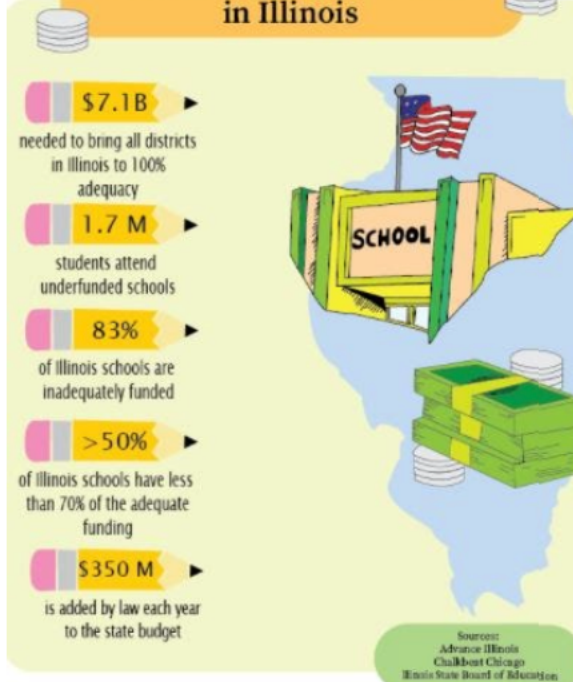
Illinois Education Background

Allocating the necessary budgets to K-12 public schools in Illinois persists to be an issue

- Illinois districts are constrained to educate students below the adequate funding margin, which is below 70% to actually meet their needs as a result of inequitable funding (2018)
- Top Cause: Illinois State Constitution is interpreted to heavily rely on property taxes to fund the majority of public schools and federal funding only provides 7%

Illinois K-12 Funding

School Funding Inequities in Illinois



Covid-19 Challenges

- The Illinois State Board of Education had requested to increase the \$9 billion budget by \$412 million for this school year (\$475 for 2022-2023)
- In compensation for the bipartisan promise (of 2017) of government officials to increase the budget by \$350 million for each of the past two years they've fallen behind (EBF)
- Additional health and safety expenses
- Decrease in student performance
- Limited sources for effective education

Findings

- Federal money helps in the short term, but it is up to consistent equal distribution of funds by Illinois school districts to rid of the inequity gap
- Illinois government officials are to be consciousness about prioritizing institutions with low-income and low property value neighborhoods to provide a safety net against inequities

Future Direction

- A path towards progress includes building upon the Evidence-Base Funding for Student Success Act that promised to increase \$350 M for funding each year called the Equity Boost proposed by American education advocacy group Stand for Children
- This includes integrating teacher pension funding into EBF and leaving it at school districts' discretion to distribute the money that would have otherwise gone under state responsibility and ultimately leave wealthier districts with more than enough funding
- Progressive property taxes/Property Tax reliefs

Conclusion

- While Illinois makes efforts to ameliorate the K-12 school funding situation, it must constantly be up to date to face changing circumstances of outside factors and constituents' conditions

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