



August 30, 2017

The Fight Continues for Better Education

This week the General Assembly passed legislation that the governor states he will sign that will move Illinois to an "evidence-based model" of education funding, taking into account each district's individual needs and its local revenue sources when appropriating state aid by prioritizing districts that are furthest from being fully-funded.

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) said the bill will provide the district with roughly \$450 million more, with \$76 million more in state aid under the new funding formula, \$18.5 million for early childhood education and \$13 million for bilingual education, minus a \$4 million loss from various shifts in the state budget.

The measure will also allow Chicago to raise its property taxes by roughly five percent overall, resulting in an average 2.5 percent increase per homeowner expected to generate an additional \$125 million.

The deal will also shift normal pension costs for CPS - the only district for which Illinois does not make employer contributions - to the state, allocating an additional \$221 million to the district.

One of the components of the bill will provide scholarships to students who attend private schools through a tax credit program. The scholarship plan will earmark up to \$75 million for scholarship tax credits, potentially benefiting about 10,000 private school students whose families make less than \$73,000 per year.

However, now that the education bill as passed, there is really no guarantee that opportunities for our students on the West Side will improve, or that our West Side schools will improve. We really must come together on the West Side of Chicago and demand better, with especially more accountability and transparency for the tax credit scholarship program so it could truly benefit families on the West Side who would be interested in the scholarship program. We have to fight to make sure any tax increases that we will see will directly lead to improvements for our families and schools here on the West Side.

The public is invited to our Town Hall meeting on August 31, 2017 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Loretto Hospital, where we will be joined by Ralph Matire from the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability so we can learn more about the recent laws that will affect personal and business income taxes. We will also discuss the new education funding policy that was recently passed. All are welcome.

Sincerely,

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District