



**Illinois State Board of Education  
FY 2027 Budget Testimony  
October 21, 2025**

Thank you Chair Isoye, Vice Chair Leak, Dr. Sanders and members of the State Board of Education. My name is Jen Figurelli, and I am providing testimony on behalf of the Legislative Education Network of DuPage (LEND) relating to the FY 2027 ISBE budget. Our districts represent all four tiers in the Evidence Based Funding formula.

It is important to consider several factors when addressing your FY27 budget recommendations:

**UNDERFUNDED MANDATED CATEGORICAL PROGRAMS (MCATS)**

Over the years MCATs have been consistently underfunded:

- The continued proration of MCATs causes financial burdens on our districts.
- For both regular education and special education transportation programs have been underfunded for decades.
- School districts have had to pick up more of the cost for this rapidly growing service (from about 40% of the overall transportation costs in the late 1990's and early 2000's to about 60% of the overall costs during the past decade or two).
- Increased Transportation Fund property tax levies, or
  - In some cases, to either eliminate or scale back the service
  - Pass the cost on to parents via a parent fee/parent pay model
- Annual allocations of \$350 million into EBF, coupled with underfunding of MCATs, creates increased disadvantages, especially for districts in the upper tiers and under PTELL
  - A tax capped county allocates more to the Transportation Levy which means there is less money left for the Education Fund Levy.

**EBF FUNDING**

**WE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT** at least \$350 million into EBF and **strongly encourage full funding** of MCATs in particular regular and special education transportation.

**WE DO NOT SUPPORT any changes or modifications to EBF** unless they are presented to the Professional Review Panel, fully assessed, researched and analyzed to determine the impact on all the tiers. We support on-going study and evaluation of the current Evidence Based Funding Formula.

### **LOCAL PROPERTY TAXES**

An issue that may not necessarily be viewed as a budget item but impacts our school districts and communities are local property taxes. We have long standing positions in opposition to any state-imposed efforts that will reduce or freeze property taxes at the local level. Historically, since the mid 1900's, property taxes have played an important role in funding school districts. The State entered in funding in the mid 20th century playing a small part.

### **CLOSING**

As ISBE, the General Assembly and school districts throughout the state continue to evaluate, review, and improve methods of providing education to students, we want to continue to work alongside the State Board of Education as you face the many difficult fiscal challenges this upcoming budget cycle.

We look forward to continued engagement on this and other matters affecting our students and schools.

Jen Figurelli, Executive Director  
LEND, SCOPE, IHSDO  
[jenfigurelli@ethekos.com](mailto:jenfigurelli@ethekos.com)  
312.451.7278

Peg Agnos, Executive Advisor  
LEND, SCOPE, IHSDO  
[pegagnos@ethekos.com](mailto:pegagnos@ethekos.com)  
630.632.2954