
ILLINOIS EDUCATION





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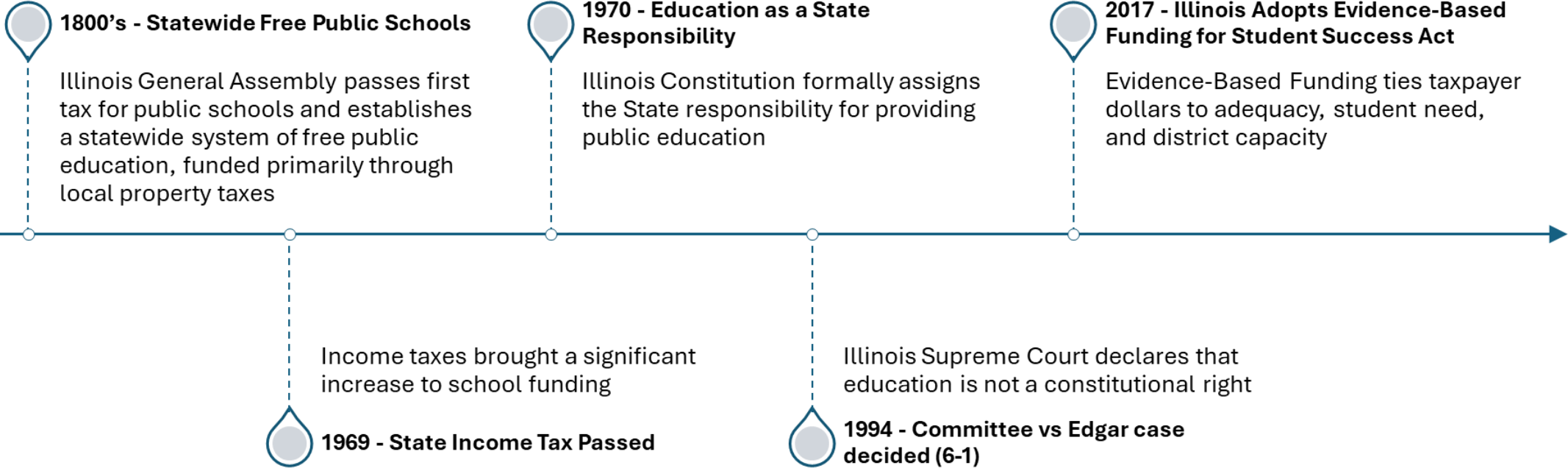
- Current IL House and Senate bills



Overview

Illinois Education History

The State of Illinois has gradually assumed greater responsibility for public education, from the first statewide tax in the 1800s to the 1970 constitutional mandate. The 2017 Evidence-Based Funding Act marked the most significant shift in how the State directs resources toward student need and district capacity.





Education Authority in Illinois

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is the statewide governing body responsible for setting policy, oversight, and strategic direction for public K-12 education in Illinois. Its authority comes from both the Illinois Constitution and the Illinois School Code.



"Provide each and every child with safe and healthy learning conditions, great educators, and equitable opportunities by practicing data-informed stewardship of resources and policy development, all done in partnership with educators, families, and stakeholders."

- ISBE Mission Statement



Educational Units in Illinois

Several official sources count educational units in Illinois differently, below shows the source, count, and methodology of each

Source	Count	What it's counting
ISBE School District Financial Profile Report 2025	851	Only governing school boards with taxing authority and direct responsibility for operating schools
ISBE EBF Formula Recipients FY2026	934	Everything that receives Evidence-Based Funding (Regional Offices of Education and University Lab Schools Included)
Nation's Report Card SY25	1,029	Every "local education agency" that receives federal education funding (includes independent charter schools and state-operated agencies like Illinois School for the Deaf)



State vs Federal Graduation Requirements

Illinois

Illinois School Code and Illinois State Board of Education

- 4 years language arts
- 3 years mathematics (1 of which must be Algebra I and may include 1 year of computer science)
- 2 years science, 2 years social studies (at least 1 year must be US history or combination of US history and government)
- 1 year music, art, foreign language, or vocational (becomes 2-year foreign language starting with 2028 class)
- Minimum school year consist of 185 days, and 176 days of actual attendance
- ISBE provides leadership advocacy, and oversight

Federal

U.S. Department of Education, ESSA, and NAEP

- Assessments on mathematics and reading or language arts administered in each of grades 3rd-8th and at least once in grades 9th-12th
- NAEP selects a small sample that accurately represents students in the nation



U.S. Department of Education Federal Mandates

Federal law establishes minimum standards and equity requirements while states retain primary authority over curriculum and instructions

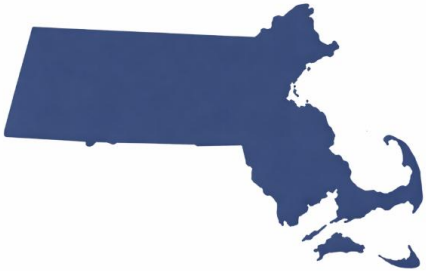
No Child Left Behind Act (2002)	Common Core Standards (2010)	Every Students Succeeds Act (2015)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)- Required annual standardized testing and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)- Mandated subgroup reporting to expose achievement gaps- Relied heavily on test-based sanctions- Increased administrative and instructional demands on states	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Focused on Mathematics and English Language Arts- Defined academic expectations across grade levels- Adoption and implementation determined by individual states	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Maintained annual assessments and subgroup reporting- Allowed states to design their own accountability systems- Clarified the federal role as oversight and support rather than prescription- Shifted responsibility for improvement strategies to states and districts



Education Overview

High Performing States

Massachusetts



- MCAS accountability system reports four-year graduation rates
- Heavy investment in teacher training and retention in high-need districts

Florida



- Extensive school choice programs, charter school options, and parent empowerment policies
- Rigorous academic standards known as B.E.S.T. Standards

Wyoming



- High funding bolstered by natural resource taxes
- State constitution guarantees free quality education

2024 NAEP Scores

Reading
Gr 4
225 vs 214 US

Gr 8
268 vs 257 US

Math
Gr 4
246 vs 237 US

Gr 8
283 vs 272 US

Reading
Gr 4
218 vs 214 US

Gr 8
253 vs 257 US

Math
Gr 4
243 vs 237 US

Gr 8
267 vs 272 US

Reading
Gr 4
222 vs 214 US

Gr 8
260 vs 257 US

Math
Gr 4
243 vs 237 US

Gr 8
278 vs 272 US



Education Overview

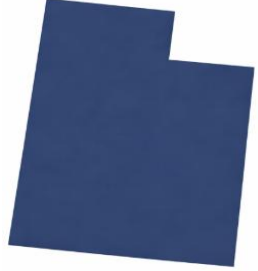
High Performing States

New Hampshire



- Education Freedom Accounts (EFAs) use state-funded grants for educational costs
- PACE initiative that replaces standardized testing with performance

Utah



- STEM initiatives and early math programs like MILO & Friends
- Widespread dual enrollment and college readiness programs

North Dakota



- Choice Ready framework prepares students for college, career, or military
- PCBL initiative offers local control and instruction tailored to individual student needs

2024 NAEP Scores

Reading
Gr 4
218 vs 214 US

Gr 8
253 vs 257 US

Math
Gr 4
243 vs 237 US

Gr 8
267 vs 272 US

Reading
Gr 4
219 vs 214 US

Gr 8
261 vs 257 US

Math
Gr 4
242 vs 237 US

Gr 8
282 vs 272 US

Reading
Gr 4
216 vs 214 US

Gr 8
257 vs 257 US

Math
Gr 4
241 vs 237 US

Gr 8
280 vs 272 US

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Performance Data

Mississippi Miracle

From lowest literacy achievement rates to a national leader in reading proficiency, Mississippi has implemented the following without large funding increases:

Strong Legislative Foundation (2013)	Early Identification & Alignment	Instructional Capacity & Teacher Support	Targeted Intervention & Accountability	Statewide Coordination
<p>Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) and Early Learning Collaboratives Act (ELCA)</p> <p>Established a statewide K–3 framework for literacy reform</p>	<p>Universal reading screener within the first 30 days of kindergarten</p> <p>Early-childhood programs aligned with K–3 literacy goals</p>	<p>Literacy coaches placed in low-performing districts to model instruction and provide feedback</p> <p>Teacher preparation and professional development aligned to the science of reading (LETRS)</p>	<p>Third-grade reading requirement tied to grade-level proficiency</p> <p>Supportive retention policy with remediation, reassessment, and continued coaching</p>	<p>Implementation coordinated across state leaders, districts, preparation programs, and community organizations</p>

- Following implementation of its literacy reforms, Mississippi’s reading performance and national standing steadily improved.
- From **2015 to 2024**, Mississippi rose from **47th to 9th nationally**.

Year	Average Reading Score
2015	214
2017	215
2019	219
2022	217
2024	219



Performance Data

Comparing Midwest States

State	Number of Students Enrolled	Pupil/Teacher Ratio	Number of Local Education Agencies	Number of Full Time Equivalent teachers
Illinois	1,846,264	13.53	1031	136,492.2
Indiana	1,032,723	15.33	444	67,373.75
Iowa	508,112	14.09	336	36,068.04
Kansas	483,505	13.01	337	37,166.56
Michigan	1,426,491	16.58	365	86,021.53
Minnesota	869,967	14.7	574	59,181.41
Missouri	891,248	12.77	565	69,785.52
Nebraska	329,162	13.69	279	24,052.26
North Dakota	119,033	12.35	221	9,639.10
South Dakota	141,467	13.71	165	10,315.30
Wisconsin	814,202	13.66	468	59,623.02
Ohio	1,675,300	16.64	1057	100,659.10

NAEP 2024 State Profile, Nation's Report Card (NCES)



Performance Data

Regional State Education Scores

State	Grade 4 Math Avg	Grade 4 Reading Avg	Grade 8 Math Avg	Grade 8 Reading Avg ↓
Wisconsin	239	215	283	260
Minnesota	241	214	282	260
South Dakota	240	214	281	260
North Dakota	241	216	280	257
Nebraska	238	212	280	256
Ohio	239	216	279	260
Indiana	240	220	278	262
Illinois	236	214	277	262
Iowa	237	215	275	261
Kansas	237	213	274	255
Michigan	235	209	270	255
Missouri	235	212	270	255
National Average	236	214	272	257



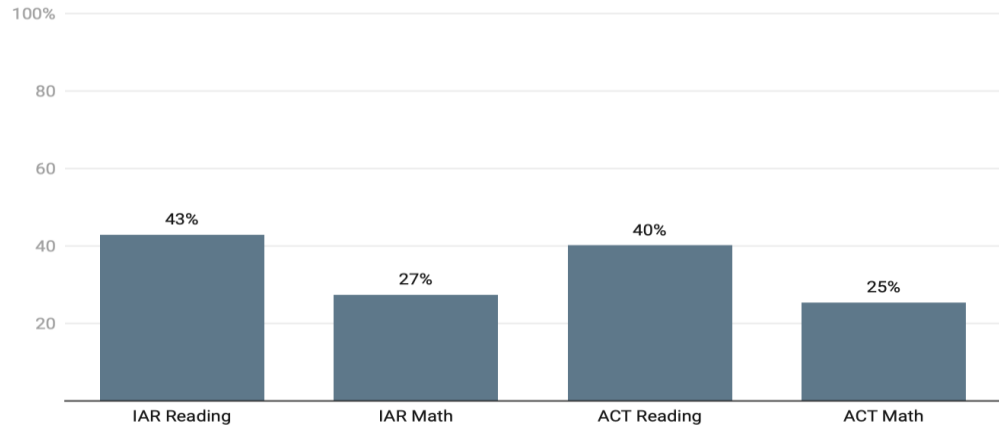
Performance Data

How Chicago Compares

Chicago Public School 2025 Proficiency	Illinois 2025 Proficiency
English/Language Arts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall: 42% proficient High School: 39.8% proficient Grades 3–8: 42.4% proficient 	English/Language Arts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall: 52.4% proficient High School: 51.3% proficient Grades 3–8: 52.6% proficient
Math <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall: 27% proficient High School: 25.2% proficient Grades 3–8: 27.3% proficient 	Math <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall: 38.4% proficient High School: 39% proficient Grades 3–8: 38.2% proficient

Most Chicago students test below grade level standards

The percent of 3rd-8th grade students meeting proficiency standards in ELA and math on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness and 11th grade students on the ACT in 2025 in Chicago Public Schools.



9th Grade on Track

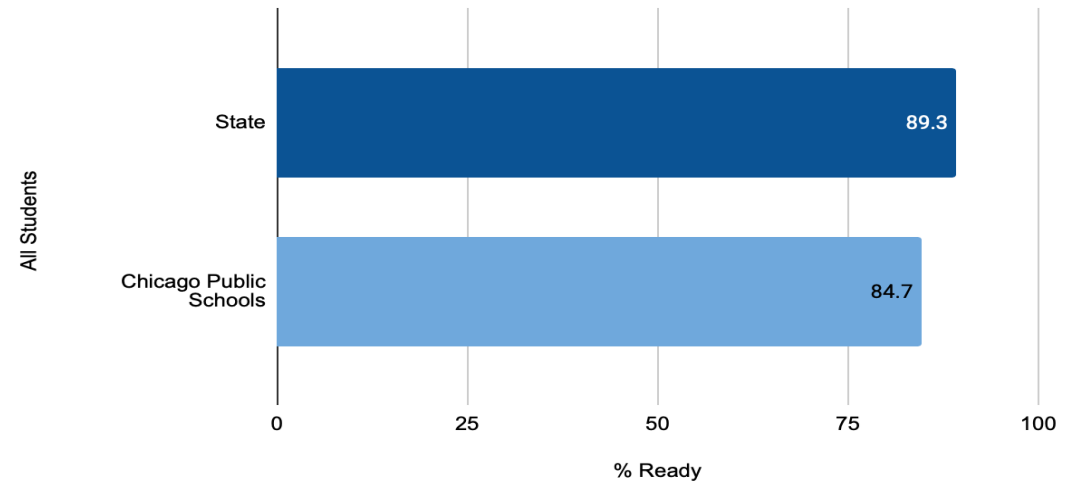


Chart: @illinoispolicy • Source: Illinois State Board of Education • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

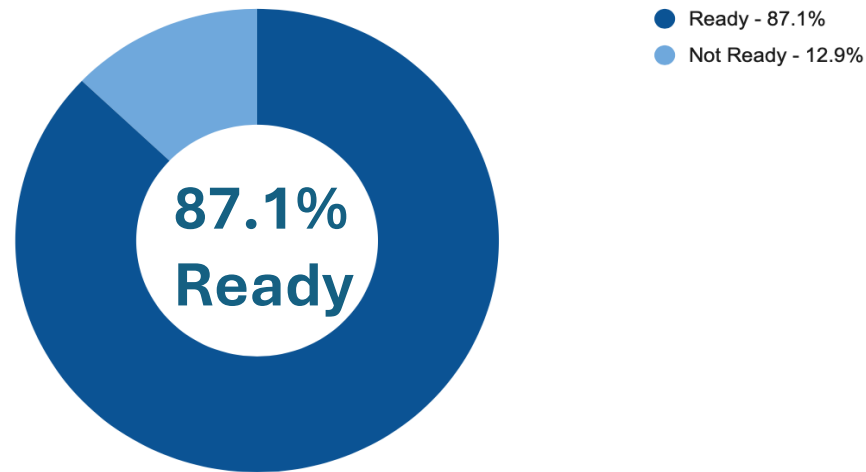


Performance Data

Early Learning Readiness

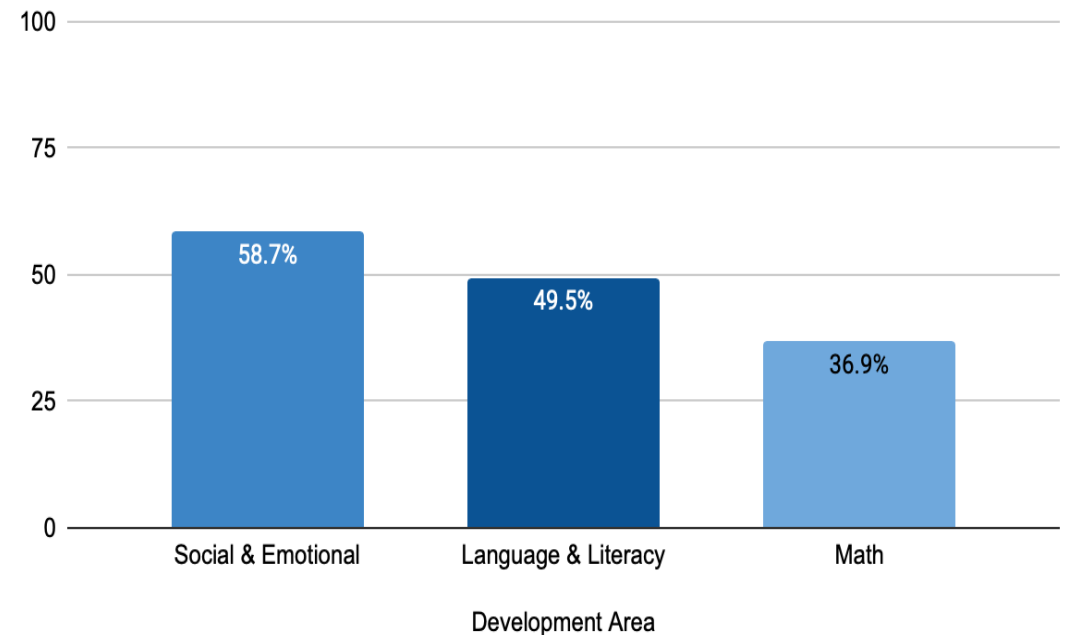
Since 2017-2018 school year, Illinois teachers have used the KIDS assessment to observe students during natural activities like play and group work. This approach maps development across three key domains as children enter school. These early milestones help educators understand each student's unique strengths and needs from day one.

Entering Kindergarten Readiness
Illinois State Board of Education - 2025



Readiness by Development Area

Illinois State Board of Education - 2025





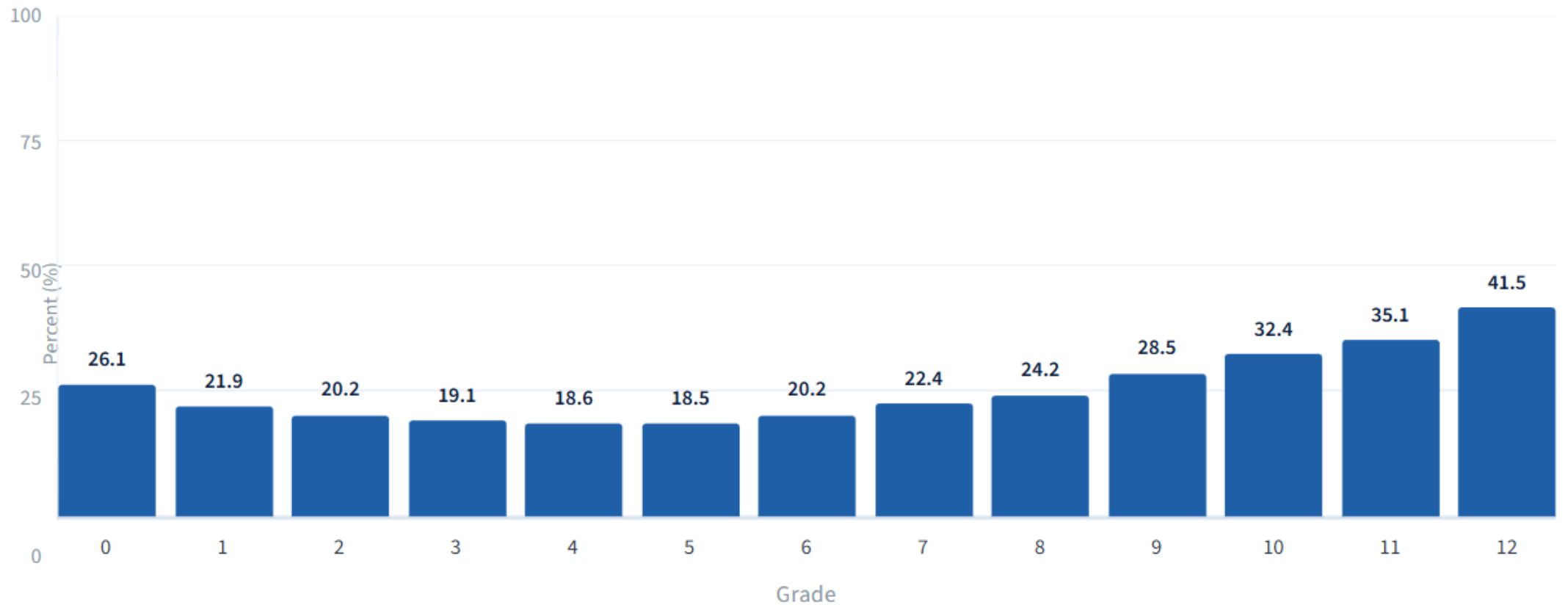
Chronic Absenteeism in Illinois

Illinois law defines "chronic absentee" as a student who misses 10% of school days within an academic year with or without a valid excuse. Chronic absenteeism can lead to lower reading/graduation rates and higher dropout risks.

Chronic Absenteeism by Grade

Note: 0 = Kindergarten

% of Students Who Miss 10% or More of School Days





Performance Data

Proficiency in Illinois

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

NAEP average scores are mean scale scores, not proficiency level.

- 2025 Results**
- **Reading: ~33% Proficient or Above**
 - **Math: ~32% Proficient or Above**

- Illinois Grade 8 Averages**
- **Reading: ~262**
 - **Math: ~277**

Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR)

- **Score levels set by ISBE**
- **4 Levels**
Below | Approaching | Proficient | Above

- 2025 Results**
- **Reading: ~ 52% Proficient or Above**
 - **Math: ~38% Proficient or Above**

These are state-set performance thresholds aligned to grade-level standards.

Understanding the Results

Proficiency = performance at one-point in time

NAEP and IAR scores are not directly comparable, but proficiency rates are:

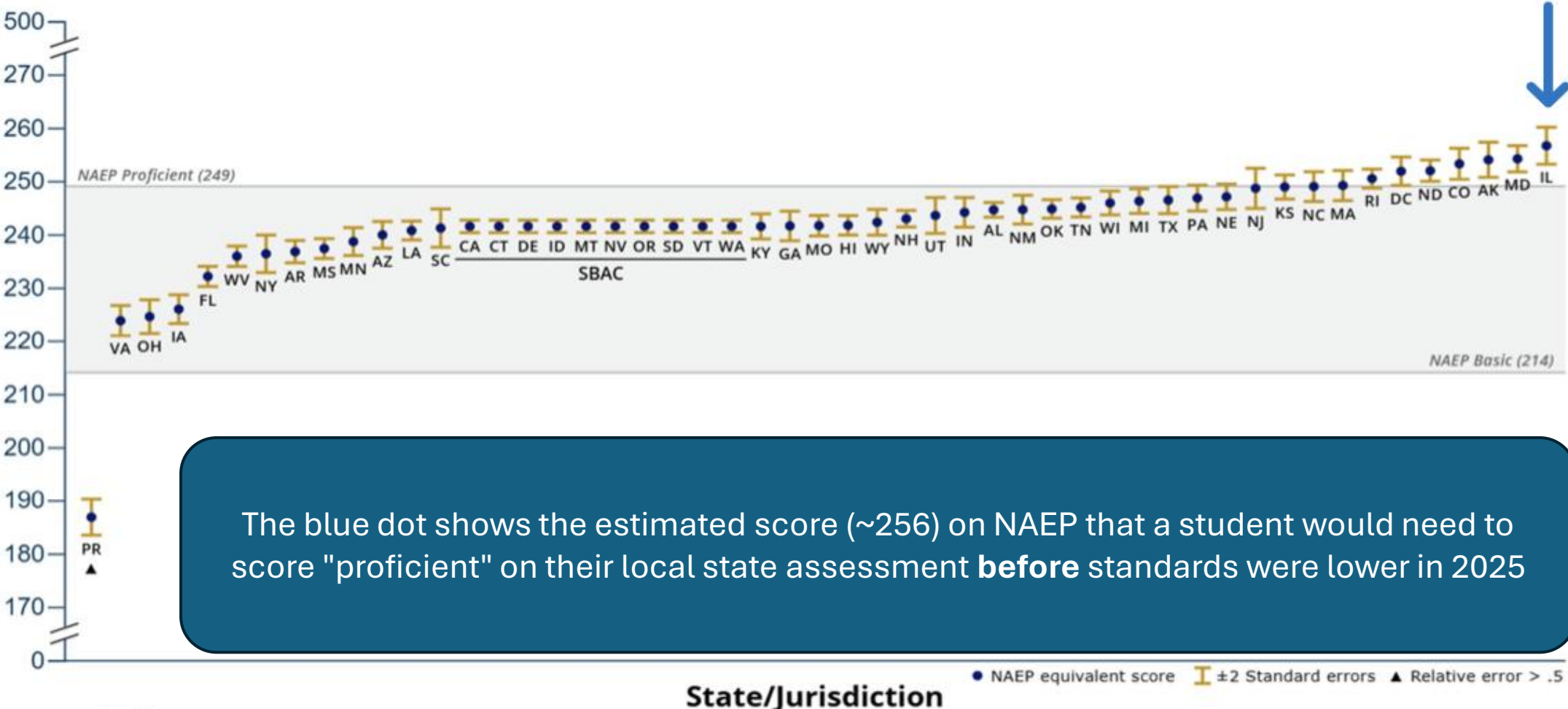
About **33%** students are proficient in **reading** and **32%** in **math** on NAEP, compared with **52%** in **reading** and **~38%** in **math** on IAR



Performance Data

National Assessment of Education Proficiency

In 2025, Illinois lowered IAR “proficient” standards to better align with NAEP-defined readiness. This increased reported proficiency rates without a change in underlying student performance.



The blue dot shows the estimated score (~256) on NAEP that a student would need to score "proficient" on their local state assessment before standards were lower in 2025

State/Jurisdiction

● NAEP equivalent score I ±2 Standard errors ▲ Relative error > .5



IAR Proficiency Standards After 2025

The chart below shows exactly how much Illinois lowered its proficiency standards in 2025 across each subject and assessment

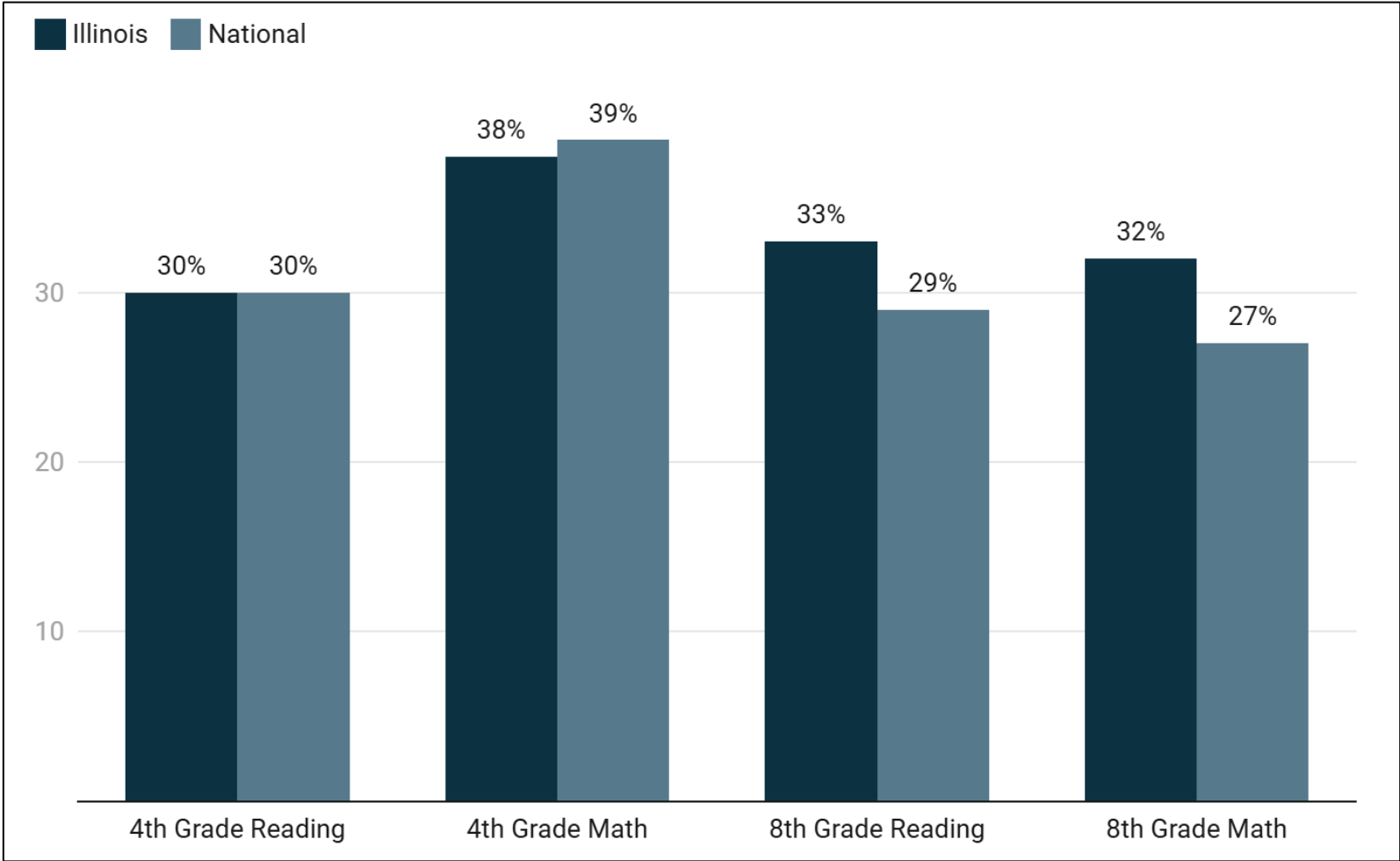
		English		Math		Science	
		Old	New	Old	New	Old	New
IAR & ISA	Grade 3	750	735	750	732		
	Grade 4	750	737	750	740		
	Grade 5	750	739	750	740	799	812
	Grade 6	750	741	750	742		
	Grade 7	750	743	750	745		
	Grade 8	750	745	750	745	799	812
ACT	Grade 9*	N/A	14	N/A	17	N/A	14
	Grade 10*	N/A	15	N/A	18	N/A	16
	Grade 11*	N/A	18	N/A	19	N/A	19



Performance Data

Illinois vs National Average

Even after lowering proficiency standards in Illinois and slightly outperforming the national average, most Illinois students do not meet NAEP proficiency standards



The percent of fourth and eighth grade students meeting or exceeding proficient standards in reading and math on the National Assessment of Educational Progress in 2024



Proficiency and Demographics

Illinois Assessment of Readiness results for students in grades 3rd-8th by demographic factors shows a wide distribution in proficiency

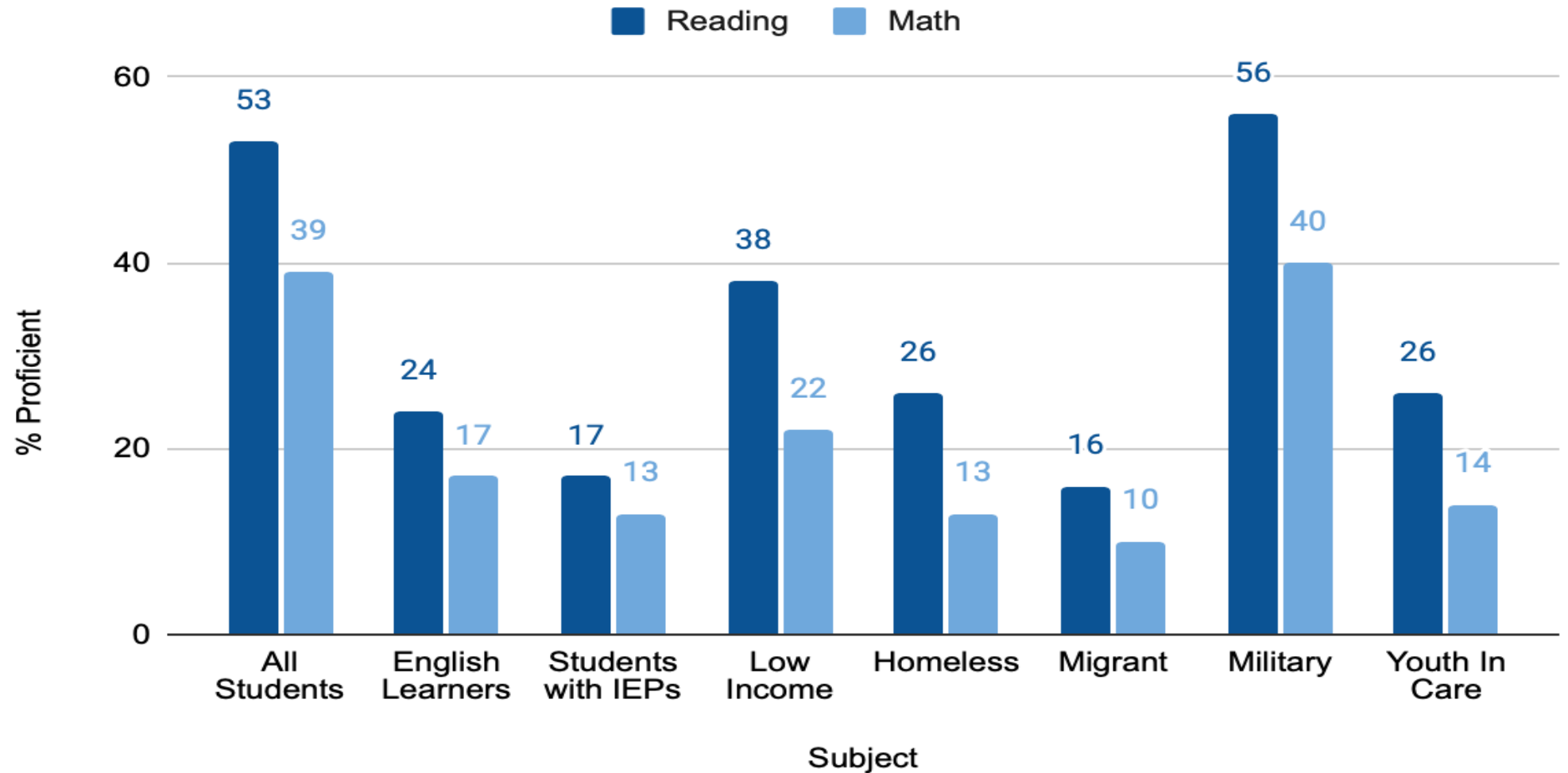


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Funding Data

Total School Spending

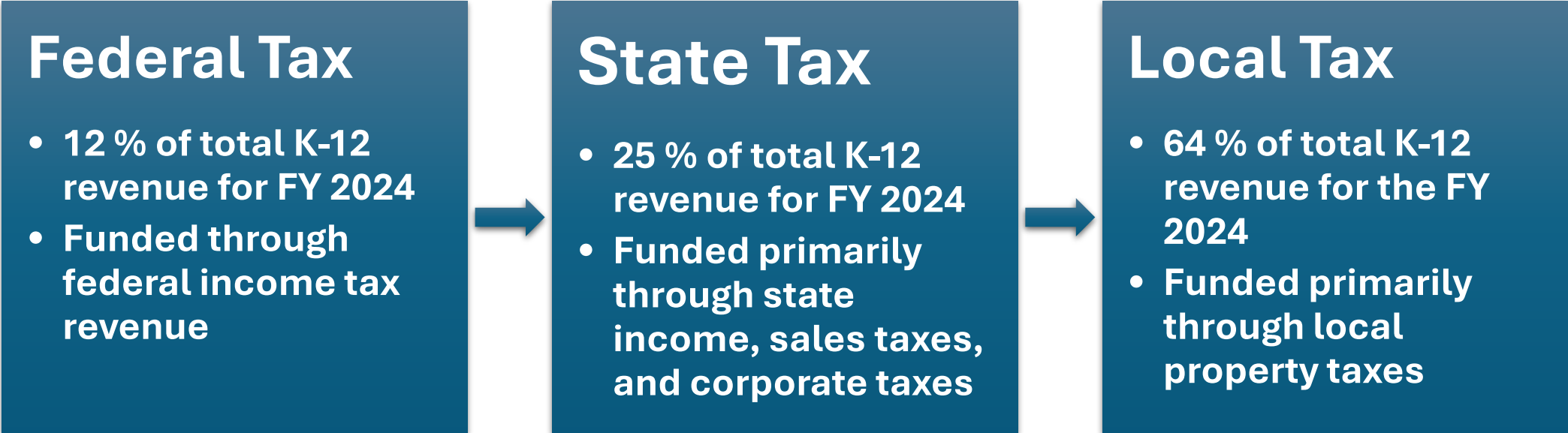
Property Taxes Paid 52% (\$21.2B) of the \$40B School Spend

(FY 2021 Data)

State	Total Local \$	Total State \$	Total Federal \$	Total All Sources	Total Local \$/Total All Sources
Illinois	\$21,299,050,000.00	\$16,117,573,000.00	\$3,197,010,000.00	\$40,613,633,000.00	52%
Pennsylvania	\$18,884,468,000.00	\$13,056,288,000.00	\$3,263,192,000.00	\$35,203,948,000.00	54%
Florida	\$16,993,413,000.00	\$14,072,267,000.00	\$4,763,710,000.00	\$35,829,390,000.00	47%
New York	\$45,053,845,000.00	\$29,093,368,000.00	\$3,567,409,000.00	\$77,714,622,000.00	58%
Texas	\$37,119,774,000.00	\$27,559,808,000.00	\$9,349,671,000.00	\$74,029,253,000.00	50%
New Jersey	\$17,606,591,000.00	\$16,224,441,000.00	\$1,899,244,000.00	\$35,730,276,000.00	49%
Connecticut	\$7,230,414,000.00	\$4,484,299,000.00	\$671,481,000.00	\$12,386,194,000.00	58%
Nebraska	\$2,901,592,000.00	\$1,596,679,000.00	\$497,506,000.00	\$4,995,777,000.00	58%
Vermont	\$37,980,000.00	\$1,739,914,000.00	\$206,938,000.00	\$1,984,832,000.00	2%
New Hampshire	\$2,199,293,000.00	\$1,093,913,000.00	\$252,513,000.00	\$3,545,719,000.00	62%
Ohio	\$14,174,122,000.00	\$10,983,197,000.00	\$2,681,945,000.00	\$27,839,264,000.00	51%
Wisconsin	\$5,871,847,000.00	\$5,747,313,000.00	\$6,708,045,000.00	\$18,327,205,000.00	32%
Michigan	\$7,230,861,000.00	\$13,498,567,000.00	\$2,943,912,000.00	\$23,673,340,000.00	31%



How Your Taxes Pay for Schools

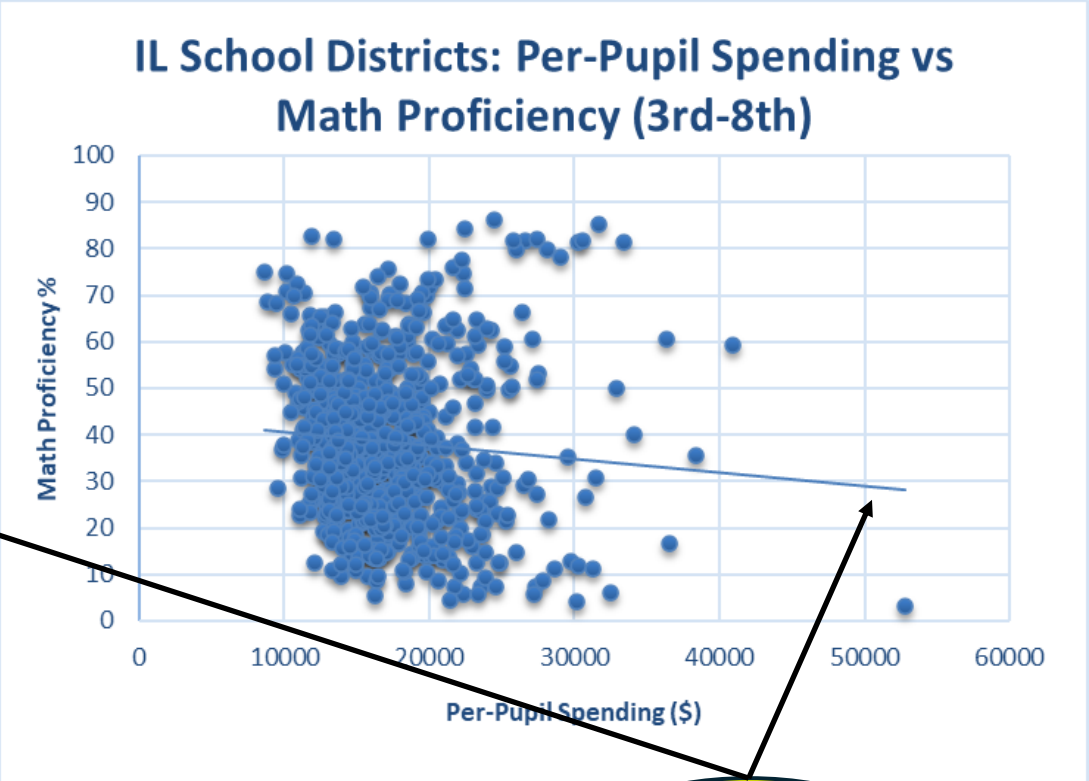
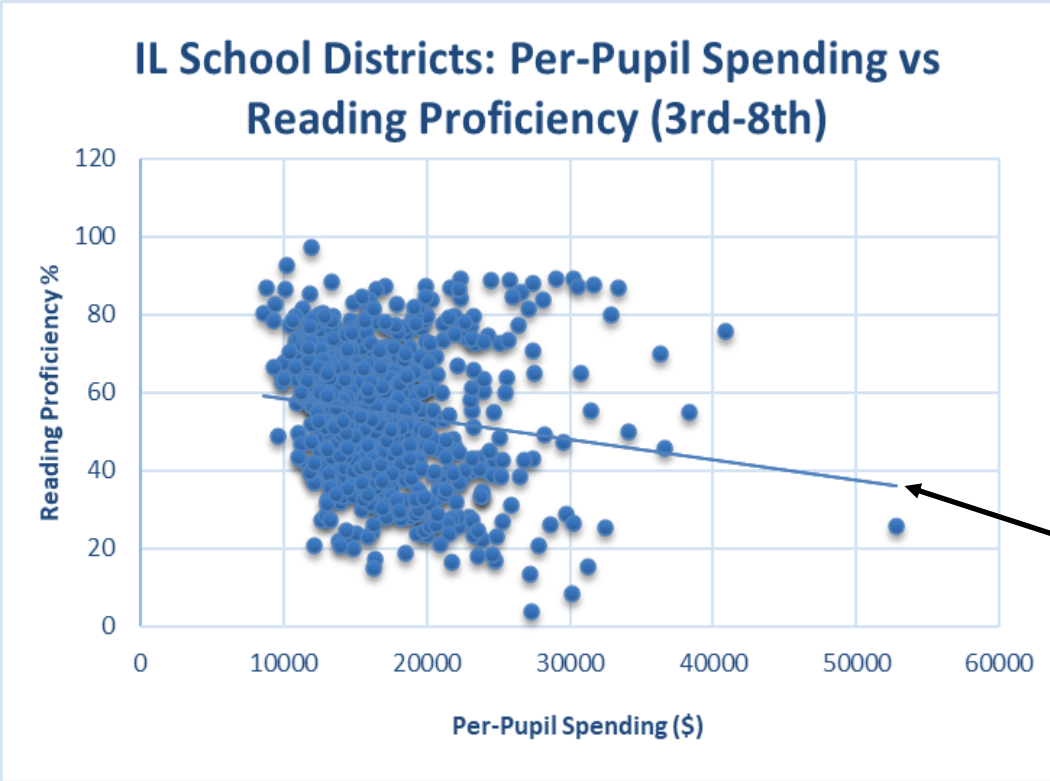


Up from 52% in FY2021



\$ Per Student and Performance

Across Illinois elementary-serving districts, higher per-pupil spending does not predict higher math or reading proficiency. Achievement outcomes vary widely at all funding levels, indicating that factors other than total spending drive performance differences.



All Illinois elementary and unit districts. High school only districts removed.

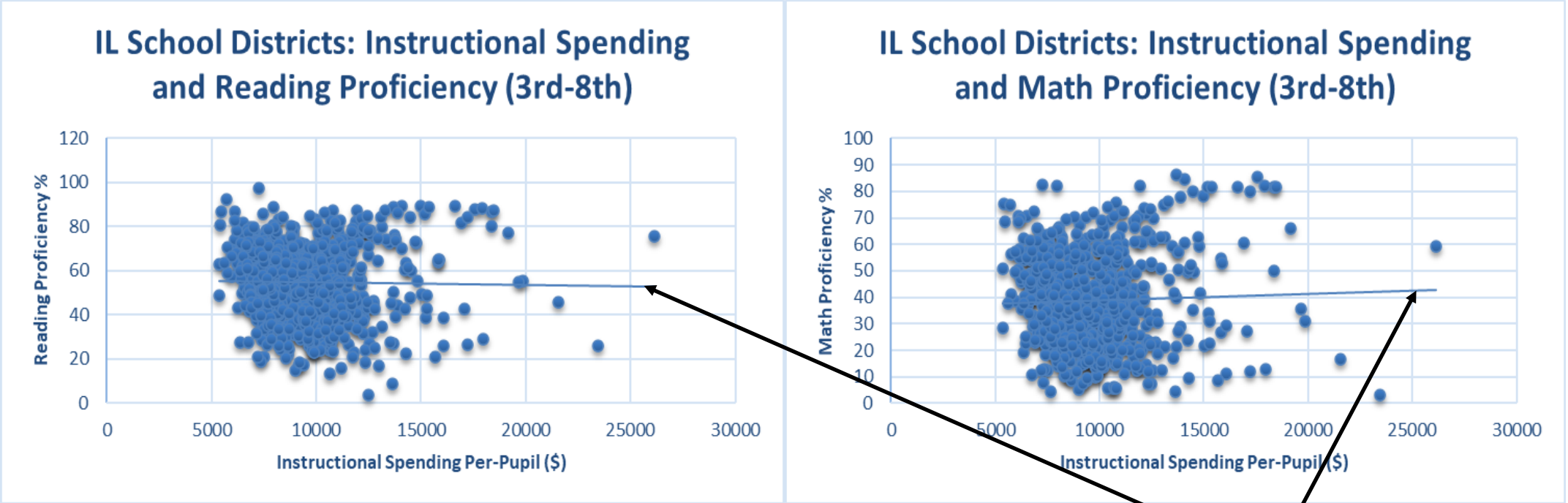
Trend Line



Instructional Spending and Performance

(Operational Costs Removed)

Higher spending does not automatically translate into better outcomes. Much of the disconnect is explained by non-instructional costs. Once those are removed, instructional spending is by itself, still not a strong predictor of achievement.



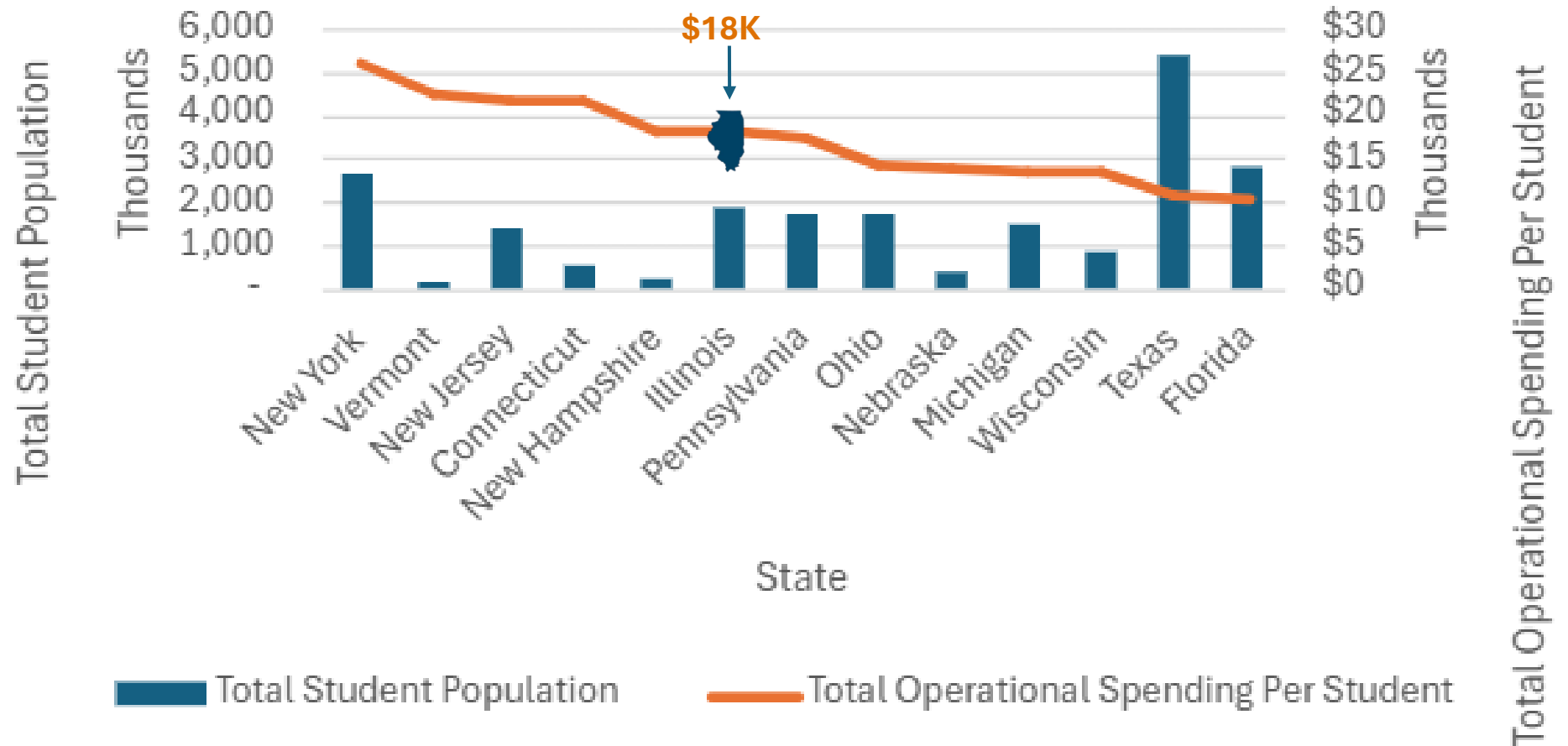
All Illinois elementary and unit districts. High school only districts removed.

Trend Line



Funding Data

Spending Per Child and Student Population





Funding Data

Federal Funding Programs

Title I

Provides funding to school districts serving higher concentrations of students from low-income households to improve academic outcomes.

Title II

Supports teacher and principal preparation, professional development, and educator effectiveness.

Title III

Supports language instruction and academic achievement for English learners and immigrant students.

Title IV

Supports student academic enrichment, including school safety, well-rounded education, and educational technology.

Individuals With Disabilities Act

Supports special education and related services for students with disabilities to help states meet federally required standards.

Career and Technical Education

Supports career and technical education programs aligned with workforce and postsecondary readiness.



State of Illinois - Evidence Based Funding (EBF)

Purpose of Evidence Based Funding is to direct more resources to under-resourced districts by determining how much funding each district needs to adequately educate students and help all schools reach adequate funding levels.

The state contribution to Evidence-Based Funding is composed of:



Tier Funding will vary depending on a district’s final Percent of Adequacy.

Key Components of the Formula

Base Funding Minimum

- Guarantees each district keeps at least its prior year state funding level.

Adequacy Target

- Estimates total funding needed for district to adequately educate its students.

Local Capacity Target

- Calculates how much revenue a district is expected to raise from local resources

Adequacy Percentage

- Shows how close a district is to its funding target by comparing available resources to need.



Funding Data

What the Tiers Mean

- Tier 1 – Furthest from adequacy
- Tier 2 – Below adequacy
- Tier 3 – Near adequacy
- Tier 4 – At or above adequacy

Key Principles

- ✓ Lower adequacy % - more state assistance
- ✓ High adequacy % - less state assistance

**EBF tier totals reflect the units included in the funding formula for a given fiscal year rather than a single statewide district count.*

Evidence Based Funding (EBF) - Tier

Number of Organizational Units by EBF Tier Assignment

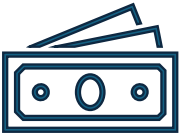
	FY 19	FY 20	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26
Tier 1	314	372	355	384	340	369	286
Tier 2	341	343	330	275	248	219	313
Tier 3	58	55	62	72	99	93	96
Tier 4	140	151	175	196	242	247	239
Total	853	921	922	927	929	928	934

Tier	Target Ratio	State Assistance
Tier 1	< 75.6% (FY 26)	Furthest away from adequacy, more state assistance
Tier 2	≥ 75.6% and < 90%	
Tier 3	≥90% <100%	
Tier 4	≥100%	Greater than adequacy, least amount of state assistance.

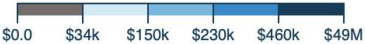


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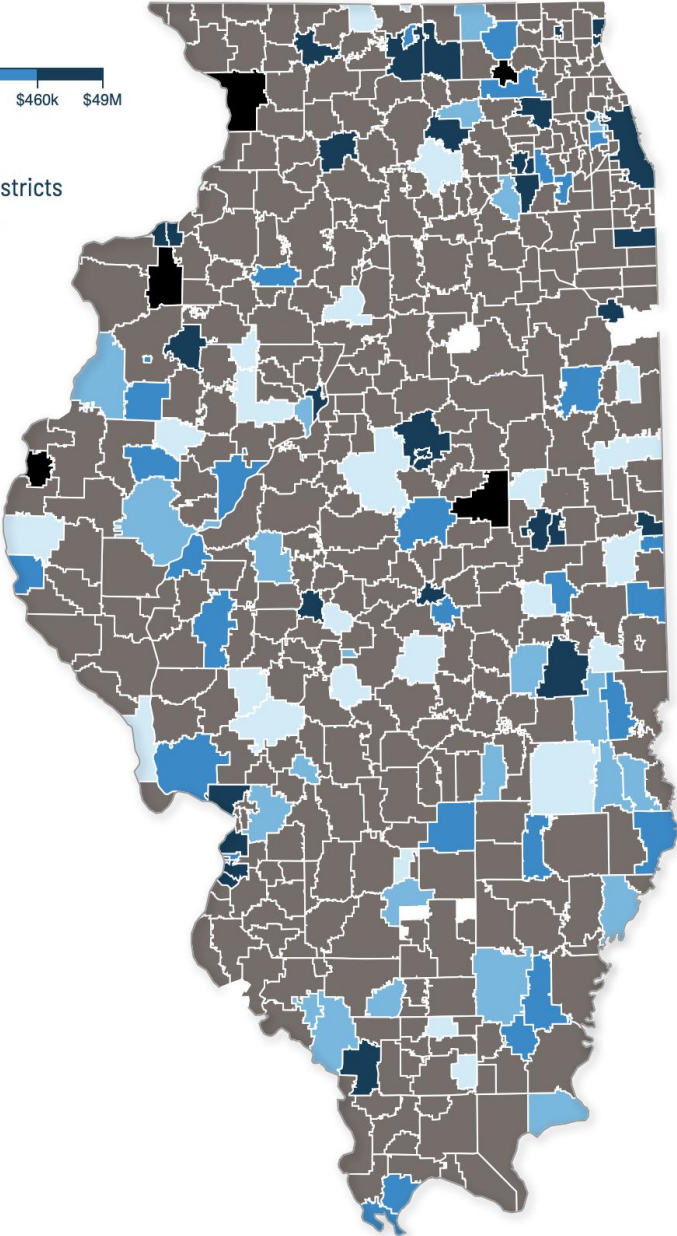
State Improvement Funds Resulting From EBFs



958 schools received improvement funds totaling **\$143,605,198**



- Elementary School Districts
- High School Districts
- Unit School Districts



Every Student Succeeds Act Section 1003A

- Administrative costs limited to 3%
- Majority of funds used for direct student services
- Priority to schools identified for comprehensive and targeted support.

Examples of Direct Student Services

- Academic tutoring
- Credit recovery programs
- Transportation



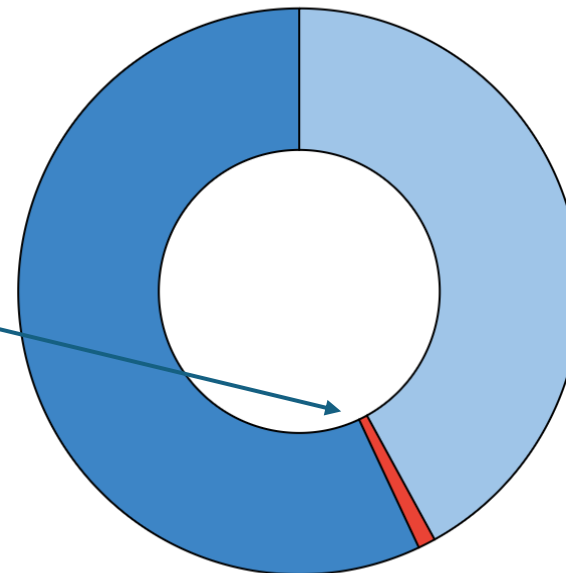
Funding Data

Unfunded vs Funded Mandates

Unfunded	Funded	Indirect Costs
<p>State of Illinois imposes additional costs. Appropriation does not fully cover costs. Local education agencies must make up the shortfall.</p>	<p>Have an appropriation allocated to fully fund the initiative.</p>	<p>State of Illinois imposes additional duties carried out by existing staff, create additional costs that are offset by savings, or create an additional cost that is recovered from external financial aid.</p>

Only 1% of State Mandates are Directly Funded

Unfunded vs Funded Mandates
1982-2022



- Unfunded Mandates - 42%
- Funded Mandates - 1%
- Mandates with Indirect Costs - 57%



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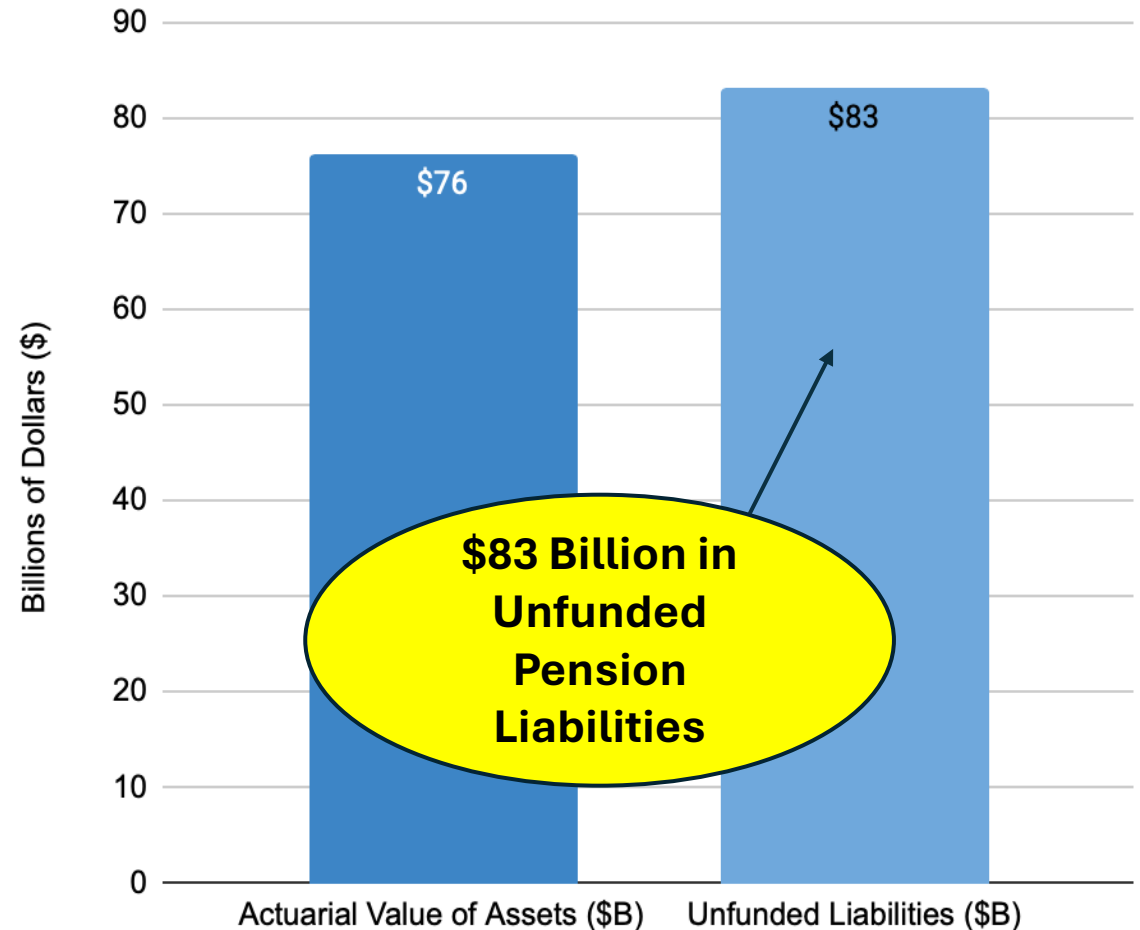


Teacher Pension System

- TRS members are
 - Certified under the provisions of the School Code of Illinois
 - Employed in an Illinois public common or charter school that is located outside the city of Chicago
 - Employed in a position requiring certification by the Illinois State Board of Education
- TRS funding status
 - Actuarial Assets: \$76 billion
 - Unfunded Liabilities: \$83 billion
 - Funded Ratio: 47.8%

Teacher Retirement System (TRS)

TRS Funding Status

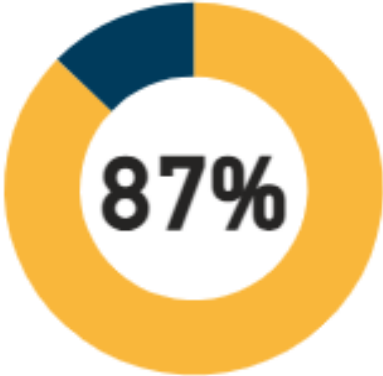




Educators in IL

Educator Shortages as of 2025

In Illinois, many educator positions are filled with alternative methods such as hiring a retiree, substitute, modifying responsibilities, outsourcing, and virtual options.



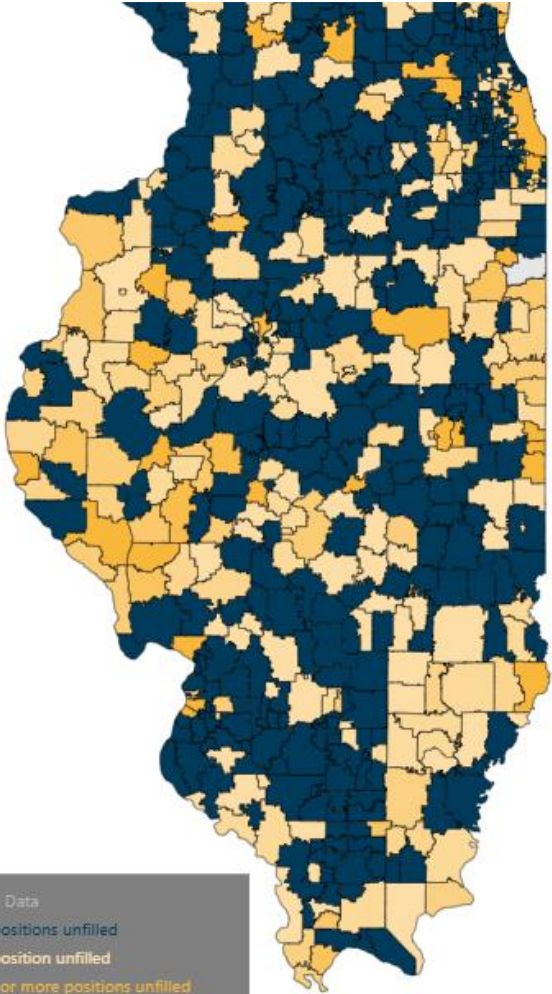
Educator Shortage Problems

87% of 742 responding education leaders* reported problems with teacher** shortages.

67% of 742 responding education leaders* reported that less than 50% of teacher** applicants held proper credentials.

Causes of Educator Shortages

129 of 644 education leaders suggested supporting alternate certifications that could to increase the candidate pool.





The State of Education in Illinois

Illinois shows a pattern of higher education spending with uneven student performance.

Taxpayer Spending



- High property tax rates
- Increasing operational costs
- 99% Unfunded Mandates

Education Quality



- Lower proficiency standards
- Lower assessment scores
- Educator Shortage

Education outcomes are best reviewed using **multiple measures**, including state tests, national assessments, attendance, and readiness indicators.



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Legislation

Illinois Bills Filed in 104th Assembly Legislation

Bill Title	Description
HB3011	Requires each newly elected or appointed community college trustee to take and file an oath of office before beginning their duties.
SB1227	Requires school boards, beginning in 2025-2026 school year, to post and regularly update curriculum lists and approval procedures on websites, notify parents and guardians, and face penalties for noncompliance.
SB1605	Allows grants for agriculture teacher costs and counts agriculture courses toward career technical education requirements.
SB1646	Creates an Illinois income tax credit for eligible early childhood teachers and assistants earning \$75,000 or less, starting at \$1,000 in 2026 and increasing with inflation.
SB1647	Creates an Illinois tax credit of up to \$1,500 per child for custodians paying eligible preschool expenses, beginning with tax years starting January 1, 2026.
SB2991	Requires at least a one-year expulsion for students found responsible for sexual assault or attempted sexual assault at school or a school related event, unless lawfully modified.



Legislation

Illinois Bills Filed in 104th Assembly Legislation

Bill Title	Description
SB1867	Allows multiple approved educator assessments and permits teacher preparation programs to use any evidence-based assessment aligned with State standards instead of a single test.
SB1915	Requires written parent notification when a student in grades 1-3 is identified with a significant reading deficiency or signs of dyslexia, based on assessments or teacher observation
SB2340	Requires ISBE to publish annual public report detailing student transfers, withdrawals, approvals, denials, and net enrollment changes by district
SB2821	Requires school districts to publicly post information on instructional materials and activities for each school on the district website
SB3301	Allows districts to waive the 2-year foreign language graduation requirement if staffing shortages are documented and approved by State Superintendent
SB96	Amends the School Code to require school boards to allow students who live in the district but attend nonpublic schools to participate in district sponsored extracurricular athletics
SB1210	Allows school districts to offer an optional firearm safety course for grades 9-12, including hunting safety instruction.



Legislation

Illinois Bills Filed in 104th Assembly Legislation

Bill Title	Description
SB1227	Requires school boards to post on their website a list of instructional curriculum and procedures used to document, review, and approve it.
SB 1605	Allows agricultural courses to meet the career and technical education requirement and permits districts to apply for grants covering up to 50% of an agriculture teacher's salary.
HB 1787	Requires school districts to provide substitute personnel with training on evacuation and law enforcement lockdown drills, with in-person training when available.
HB 3377	Requires school districts to annually report to ISBE funding, expenditures, services, and the activities funded, and any supplemental funding received.



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THANK YOU!

