



Fwd: Capitol Watch: Governor Unveils FY25 Budget Proposal

1 message

Jason Bauer <jbauer@panaschools.com>
To: Ruth Gibson <ruth.gibson@panaschools.com>

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February board meeting

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: IASA <iasa@iasaedu.org>
Date: February 21, 2024 at 3:55:21 PM CST
To: jbauer@panaschools.com
Subject: Capitol Watch: Governor Unveils FY25 Budget Proposal
Reply-To: iasa@iasaedu.org



Governor Unveils FY25 Budget Proposal: Continues to Prioritize Education

Happy Budget Day!

With the delivery of Governor Pritzker's combined State of the State and State Budget Address, it is evident that a resolute commitment to enhancing educational opportunities has been affirmed. We know that all of our members are educational leaders who are deeply invested in the betterment of your communities; therefore, we are pleased to highlight the promising outcomes unveiled in the Governor's FY25 budget recommendation.

Overview of Education Budget Recommendation

Highlighted increases in Governor Pritzker's FY25 recommended education budget compared to the current FY24 enacted appropriations are as follows:

- \$350 million Evidence-Based Funding
- \$75 million Early Childhood Block Grant
- \$31 million Mandated Categorical Programs
- \$10 million Career Technical Education

Evidence-Based Funding

In his address, the governor proposed that the FY25 budget include an \$8.6 billion appropriation for Evidence-Based Funding — an increase of \$350.2 million over FY24. The \$350 million includes \$300 million in tier funding, and \$50 million for Property Tax Relief Grants.

Since its passage in 2017, the state has invested approximately \$2.1 billion additional dollars into public education through the formula, helping school districts develop innovative programs, balance budgets, hire additional staff and address infrastructure needs. As we know, there is still a long way to go to fully fund the formula, but today was another step in the right direction.

Early Childhood Block Grant

In keeping with the Governor's commitment to bolster early childhood services and education, an additional \$75 million has been recommended for allocation through the Early Childhood Block Grant program. This allocation is expected to fund 5,000 new seats for Preschool for All programs in areas of high need across the state. In his speech, the Governor reiterated his continued commitment to this increase each year until his goal of every child having access to high quality, free preschool is achieved by 2027.

Mandated Categoricals (MCATS)

In recent years, there has been a discernible increase in reimbursement claims from school districts for mandated categoricals, primarily driven by the rising costs associated with transportation. This fiscal year, the proration levels, particularly for special education transportation, stand at nearly 71%, marking one of the lowest levels seen in recent memory. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has taken note of this reduction in proration levels and has made substantial recommendations to address this issue.

The agency has proposed a \$165 million increase in funding for Mandated Categorical Grants (MCATs), with specific allocations of \$112 million for special education transportation and \$24 million for regular transportation. However, the budget proposal unveiled today falls significantly short of ISBE's recommended increases, with a \$31 million increase allocated for all four programs.

Governor Pritzker's proposal includes a \$30 million increase for special education transportation reimbursement over FY24 levels, falling \$82 million short of ISBE's proposal. It is crucial to highlight that ISBE's recommended funding levels would restore proration levels to around 85%, whereas funding at the Governor's recommended level would perpetuate proration levels similar to those experienced this year by school districts.

Furthermore, the Governor's recommendation for regular transportation reimbursement does not feature an increase over FY24 levels, implying that districts may need to prepare for ever lower proration percentages next fiscal year. Additionally, the line item for private tuition maintains flat funding from FY24 levels.

Other Budget Items

Career and Technical Education programs saw an additional \$10 million in recommended funding. The Teacher Vacancy Pilot Program, which was enacted last year and aims to attract and retain educators in the field, was also included in the funding proposal at the same levels as last fiscal year - \$45 million. Of particular note is that a few programs that were developed using federal COVID funds were not included in the budget recommendation, suggesting those programs may sunset when federal dollars are no longer available. Those programs include the REACH and SEL Hub programs.

For those interested, the full Operating Budget proposal can be found [here](#), and the Budget in Brief can be found [here](#).

Budget Timeline

Now that the Governor has laid out his vision for the state's fiscal priorities over the next year, it is time for the General Assembly to begin budget hearings and negotiations. Those

will take place over the next several months, culminating with a final budget enacted before adjournment in May. We will be closely watching as those discussions unfold, and advocating for the fiscal priorities that are essential to our members.

Thank you, as always, for your dedication to ensuring educational success for all Illinois students!

Sincerely,

Your Government Relations Team



Madeline McCune
Director of Government Relations



Emily Warnecke
Chief of Staff

IASA | [2648 Beechler Court, Springfield, IL 62703-7305](#)

[Unsubscribe jbauer@panaschools.com](mailto:jbauer@panaschools.com)

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