



October 23, 2017

## **Breaking News! Comptroller releases fourth quarter mandated categorical payments**

Illinois Comptroller Susana A. Mendoza announced today that the fourth quarter mandated categorical payments from the 2016-17 school year totaling \$421 million are being released. Mendoza said the reimbursement payments for items such as transportation and special education should show up in school district accounts within the next couple of days.

"Illinois' school children should never have to pay the price for adults' failure to budget," Mendoza said in a press release. "Today's payment brings the state almost up to speed on the schools' categorical funds, a major improvement from where we were when I took office in December. I will continue to prioritize education."

The release pointed out that Mendoza has been able to send out five of the "quarterly" payments in less than 11 months to help catch the state up on its obligations to schools. She also said she hopes to be able to make the first two FY18 mandated categorical payments by the end of the calendar year.

The school funding reform plan passed this summer transfers some of the payments that have been part of the quarterly categorical funding into the General State Aid payments that go out twice a month and which are now current. The most recent General State Aid payment of \$276 million was sent to schools around the state last Friday (October 20).

The comptroller's release also included comments from two superintendents.

"For PPS, these funds are important in assisting with the collective capacity of our schools to more equitably meet the educational needs of our students," said Peoria Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Sharon Desmoulin-Kherat. "We are thankful that our state's new funding formula will be more inclusive of all of these funds, hopefully eliminating the delay of payments we have dealt with for many years, so that we can more effectively and efficiently serve our 13,200 students."

"We are really pleased the Comptroller's office has prioritized school funding," said Dr. Ehren Jarrett, Superintendent of Rockford Public Schools. "The loss of the fourth quarter categorical payment would have been a \$6 million hit for our district. We look forward to continued movement in this direction as we work through our Fiscal Year 2018 budget."

The State of Illinois is in the process of selling \$6 billion worth of tax-exempt bonds to provide an infusion of cash to start paying down unpaid bills that have

risen to more than \$14 billion.

We have been working with the comptroller the past couple of months to push for the payment of the mandated categoricals from last year because, while the regular state aid payments are being made on time, districts likely won't see the additional \$350 million from the new state school funding system until after the first of the year. We greatly appreciate Comptroller Mendoza recognizing how important these payments are, especially for the neediest districts in the state.

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