Understanding the Math of Funding Inequity: A Comparison of Funding Proposals and Their Impact on Equity

Overview

There is a crippling truth that plagues our state's education system: Illinois spends less on low-income children than it does on wealthier children. Study after study shows that Illinois has one of the most regressive funding systems in the country. To overcome the growing disparities in our education system, Illinois must make equity a priority by investing more state dollars in education and better targeting state dollars to Illinois' neediest students.

We consider an equitable state funding system to be one that 1) gets resources to districts based on their students' needs; 2) consistently takes into account school districts' local resources when allocating state dollars; 3) uses a single, straightforward model; and 4) funds all districts in the same way, which includes pension parity.

In this analysis, we evaluate legislative proposals on how well they address the first two components of an equitable funding system: equity based on student need and equity based on local resources. Prioritizing both types of equity is important for ensuring that Illinois' neediest districts are given the supports they need to educate our students.