Reflecting on a Historic Triumph

2017 Annual Report
STOP TALKING

WE MATTER

Our Kids DESERVE Funded Schools.
Dear Friend,

2017 was a banner year for Advance Illinois.

Our unique brand of policy analysis, community engagement, communications, and legislative strategy allowed us to do what was once thought impossible: fix Illinois’ broken school funding system. For decades, Illinois ranked worst-in-the-nation for equitable school funding. Over five years of arduous advocacy, Advance Illinois and the diverse partners of the Funding Illinois’ Future coalition and Fix the Formula campaign successfully pushed for legislation that brought about historic school funding reform.

**Illinois’ new funding system is equitable.** It recognizes the individual needs of all students in rural, urban, and suburban areas across the state and accounts for each district’s property wealth. The system then drives resources to the most underfunded schools. Our state now has the foundation to ensure students’ zip codes do not determine the quality of their education.

**This is just the beginning.** The new school funding system is vital in supporting all students throughout their school career and beyond. In the midst of the school funding campaign, we continued our efforts to help Illinois achieve its goal of having 60% of adults with a postsecondary degree or certification by 2025. To do this, we focused on key levers of the education continuum, including kindergarten transitions, teacher quality, college and career readiness, and school improvement under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). At the same time, we kicked off a statewide listening tour as part of our organization’s 10th anniversary activities. The feedback gathered from communities across the state will help us develop a robust agenda for the next 10 years.

Our funding victory has shown us what’s possible when we combine thoughtful policy and strategy, timely and actionable communications, and tireless advocacy. We look forward to sharing our 10-year agenda and more game-changing initiatives in the months ahead.

Thank you for your partnership in this work,

John A. Edwardson  
Co-Chair, Advance Illinois

Marin Gjaja  
Co-Chair, Advance Illinois

Ginger Ostro  
Executive Director, Advance Illinois
What It Took To Win

CRAINS
CHICAGO BUSINESS
YOUR VIEW
Fitting the school funding formula: Illinois CEOs’ next rallying cry

It’s not an overstatement to say that the economic success of our state, and of our citizens, hinges on our progress toward a healthy state public education system. Our next generation of business leaders is entering kindergarten today. The schools they attend must prepare them with the skills they need to complete the postsecondary degrees and credentials that employers demand.

I saw this need firsthand at CDW, even though nearly two-thirds of our co-workers had a four-year college degree. As a result, we invested in specialized training for thousands

John Edwards is the chair of Advance Illinois and the reduced-price lunch is now 41 percent. While 90 percent of students are graduating high school in Illinois, just 40 percent are ready for college and an even smaller percentage complete their degree.

The story is similar throughout the state. In 2013 percent of Illinois school districts is 2015, more than half of the students are coming from low-income homes, up from 13 percent in 2005. Research shows it costs more to educate low-income students, many of whom start school academically behind and may require extra learning time. Research also shows that

Dear House Representative
JEHAN GORDON-BOOTH

$2,697,256

VOTE YES on SB1
Thank you Senator Lightford for SB1947

Unfair K-12 funding shortchanges the state's neediest students

For every $1 spent on a non-low-income student, Ohio spends $1.22 on a low-income student. Illinois spends $0.81.

Graph showing the funding disparity between low-income and non-low-income students.
2017 Wins

**Influenced the state’s new ESSA plan** to ensure the new accountability system would be fair, clear and supportive and include a supports and intervention system that provides meaningful help for struggling schools to improve.

**Supported the development and implementation of the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey** commonly known as KIDS. This comprehensive, statewide measure of kindergarten readiness was implemented during the 2017-18 school year.

**Organized a diverse group of stakeholders** to understand the teacher shortage in Illinois and align on key short-term and long-term goals.

**Led a campaign to reform Illinois’ education funding system.** The Governor signed SB1947 into law on Aug. 31, 2017.

**Strengthened Illinois’ 60 by 25 Network** by educating communities on how to bring together education institutions, businesses and nonprofits to form a more comprehensive system that helps students prepare for life after high school.
Financials

**Revenue**
- Foundations: $1,751,257
- Corporations: $169,500
- Individuals: $126,212
- Other: $44,000
- Total Revenue: $2,090,969

**Expenses**
- Program Related: $1,947,913
- Fundraising: $271,874
- General Administration: $152,488
- Total Expenses: $2,372,275

*Per GAAP requirements, revenue includes restricted and multiyear pledges recognized in FY2017 and for which corresponding expenses will be incurred in subsequent years.*
Supporters

MAJOR DONORS

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