



Rep. Kay Sponsors Legislation to Prevent Chicago Schools from Obtaining More Education Dollars than Metro East

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In response to the Chicago Public School System (CPS) being overpaid by nearly \$235 million in Block Grant funds for the 2011-2012 school year, State Representative Dwight Kay (R-Glen Carbon) has co-sponsored a package of education funding accountability bills that will prohibit the overpayment from happening in the future, and ensure Chicago schools do not receive preferential treatment over Metro East schools.

According to the Illinois Policy Institute, in 2013, a majority of more than \$500 million in special state education subsidies related to property wealth went to just 40 districts – all in Cook County and its collar counties. Chicago's take of the total was more than \$280 million. In contrast, downstate districts received just 3 percent of the \$500 million.

“I find it quite disturbing that Chicago schools received nearly twice the grant funds it claimed it needed,” said Rep. Dwight Kay. “With Illinois schools struggling to pay their bills, it is unconscionable for Chicago schools to receive a larger percentage of grant money. The schools in our great state should be on equal footing when it comes to grants. Reforming how Chicago schools obtain grant funding is an important step in restoring faith in this process.”

For the last 18 years, CPS was not obligated to report Block Grant spending, which made it very difficult for the State Board of Education to track the efficiency of how CPS was spending the money. Two years ago the Legislature ordered CPS to begin reporting grant expenditures, but CPS failed to comply with reporting mandates. It was only recently that the report was received and the discrepancy was discovered.

According to Rep. Kay, by law, Chicago schools are allowed to receive their Block Grant money up front while every other school in the state is reimbursed for the services

they have provided. “The simple fact that \$483.7 million in grants were provided to Chicago schools and only \$249 million went to benefit students indicates that severe overpayment exists,” said Rep. Kay. “The taxpayers of Illinois deserve better.”

Bills co-sponsored by Rep. Kay’s ‘Education Funding Accountability’ package include:

Making Chicago Public Schools Funding Requirement Procedures the Same as All Other School Districts (House Bill 3690)

Repealing the preset allocation that CPS receives in Block Grants would require them to submit claims for spending to the State Board of Education, thus mirroring the requirements of every other district in the state.

Requiring Chicago Public Schools to Submit Claims for Special Education Funding (House Bill 3691)

Removing special education services from the Chicago Block Grant would require the district to submit claims for annual reimbursement just like every other school district in Illinois. CPS received \$222.8 million more for Special Education than actual claims in 2011-2012.

Holding Chicago Public Schools Accountable for Refusal to Submit Claims in a Timely Manner (House Bill 3692)

This proposal would withhold all federal and state funding due to CPS in the event that the district does not comply with the reporting procedures outlined in PA 97-238, which created the reporting requirements for Block Grant funding. Funding would be restored when compliance is achieved. CPS was not compliant with the disclosure requirement, forcing the State Superintendent of Education to threaten the withholding of funds and a designation of non-recognition status for the district.

“The disparity between the grants requested by CPS and the services provided demands CPS grant funding reform,” said Rep. Kay. “This legislation will zero in on the apparent overfunding of CPS Block Grants and the lack of compliance with reporting requirements.”