



Senate Bill 1 – Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE BASED MODEL?

The evidence based model is the logical extension of the theory of student equity. The first definitions of student equity relied on local district decision making and assumed that equal per pupil expenditures would result in equal educational opportunity. Over time researchers and practitioners realized that students are different and that allowances had to be made for these differences. In funding terms that meant that schools had to provide different kinds of educational services for different students. Providing different services meant that equity of opportunity had to include the concept of inequity in the cost of students' educations. Alan Odden (University of Wisconsin at Madison) and Larry Picus (University of Southern California) studied schools that achieved above average student performance (on state achievement tests) while spending an average amount of money. They analyzed the structure of those schools in terms of the services students were provided. Based on that research they identified a mix of student services that was correlated with above average student performance.

IS THE ILLINOIS EVIDENCE BASED FUNDING MODEL (EBM) IN SENATE BILL 1 IDENTICAL TO THE ODEN AND PICUS MODEL?

No. The model contained in Senate Bill (SB) 1 was developed as a collaboration between the Illinois Association of School Administrators, the Illinois Association of School Business Officials, and Advance Illinois. Some of the essential elements in the bill are unique to Illinois. The distribution model is not based on the work of Oden and Picus and is a product of the Illinois collaboration.

HOW DOES THE EBM IN SB 1 COMPARE TO THE OLD ILLINOIS FUNDING FORMULA?

The prior formula, actually a set of formulae, relied on a series of different funding streams. General State Aid was computed for each district. The theory was that this provided equally for the basic educational needs of each child. Services such as special education, transportation, and English learners were funded based on a series of reimbursement formulae. SB1 funds all of the same services but rolls all of the grants, except special education extraordinary services and transportation, into a single formula utilizing weighted student counts to calculate the dollars required to fund each service. This results in a unique adequacy target, the cost of educating the students district-wide, for each school district in the state.

IS THE MODEL FULLY FUNDED?

No. The framers of the bill have testified that an additional \$3.5 to 4.0 billion dollars are required to fully fund the model (that is, in addition to the FY17 grant amounts). Inflation will, over time, increase the cost of funding the model. An inflation adjustment is built into the Act. Cost estimates have been based on the addition of \$350 million new dollars per year being appropriated. This is before monies are included for the normal cost of CPS teacher pension payments and the CPS hold-harmless. It will take about 10 years of appropriations including those CPS dollars and annual adjustments for inflation to fully fund this model.

WHAT IF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATES LESS MONEY THAN THE \$350 MILLION IN ANY YEAR?

The Act provides a pro-ration formula that is designed to put most of the available funds into districts the farthest from their adequacy targets.

WILL EFAB CONTINUE TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT THE AMOUNT OF MONEY NEEDED TO FULLY FUND THE STATE'S SCHOOLS?

No. EFAB (the Education Funding Advisory Board) is eliminated under the Act. EFAB is replaced with a Professional Review Panel. The panel membership is much larger than EFAB. IEA will have two seats on the panel. The idea is to bring all stakeholders, including various reform groups, to a continuing discussion about the revision of the evidence based funding model and accountability moving forward.

IS AN ACCOUNTABILITY MODEL INCLUDED IN SB 1?

A specific model is not defined. However, the State Superintendent is charged with developing a 5-year strategic plan that will, among other things, accomplish the “application and enhancement of the current financial accountability measures, the approved State plan to comply with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, and the Illinois Balanced Accountability Measures in relation to student growth and elements of the Evidence-Based Funding model.”

DOES SB 1 RETAIN CURRENT SPECIAL EDUCATION AND BILINGUAL REQUIREMENTS?

Yes. None of the statutes defining the required services for students requiring special education services or bilingual services change. The funding mechanism for these services does change. The district shall receive funding (based on average teacher salaries as calculated by ISBE) for one FTE teacher position for every 141 students in average enrollment in K-12, one FTE instructional assistant for every 141 ASE, and one FTE psychologist for every 1,000 ASE. These numbers are applied on a pro-rata basis; for example, if the district has an ASE of 282, the district will receive funding for 2 FTE teachers and 2 FTE instructional assistants plus funding for .282 of the average salary of a psychologist (282/1,000). English Learner costs and the cost of vocational education is covered in a similar manner. The Act requires the State Board of Education to monitor districts to ensure the federal maintenance of effort rules are met for these programs.

DOES SB 1 INCLUDE A PROPERTY TAX FREEZE?

No.

DOES SB 1 SHIFT THE NORMAL COST OF TEACHER PENSIONS TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS?

No. However, if the normal cost is shifted to districts, via a different bill, then funding for the cost of that shift is included in the formula. The language of the Act may be read to say that the additional dollars required by a cost shift will be added to the annual new money. However, any money for school funding is always subject to appropriation.

IS CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING CHANGED?

Yes. The prior language in statute allowed district approved charter schools (except those created by referendum under 27A-6.5) to be funded at not less than 75% nor more than 125% of the school district per capita tuition charge. SB1 changes that to not less than 97% nor more than 103%.