



**Dr. James M. Gay**  
Superintendent

## CONSOLIDATED HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 230

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In public education, there should not be “winners and losers.” Yet, the proposed 2016-17 budget proposal from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) creates winner and loser school districts.

By Constitution, the State of Illinois has the primary responsibility for financing public education, yet only provides 20.5% of education funding state-wide and only 9.8% to District 230. Our local taxpayers are responsible for 88.4% of the District 230's funding. They provide \$314 million in property taxes to support the high school district and our partner elementary districts. On top of that, they send approximately \$400 million in income and sales taxes to the State. Of these taxes, our community only sees a \$42.4 million return to District 230 and its partner elementary schools in State education funding.

Rolling the funding for Students Requiring Special Education Services into the formula, as the ISBE proposal includes, would cause District 230 to lose approximately half of the State funding for this purpose. In 2015, the State only contributed 18% of the cost of mandated Special Education services in District 230. The district's taxpayers are already supporting these services for our students at a rate more than five times higher than what the State funds. The proposed budget shifts an even greater burden onto our taxpayers.

District 230 is a middle class school district. Low-income students represent 26% of our student body. Our community supports our schools through local taxes as well as state taxes. Our district and our taxpayers have done the right things. We have posted balanced budgets for the past 12 years while requesting 0% increases in tax levies in four of the past five years. We have been responsible, yet our taxpayers stand to lose even more in State funding based on the budget proposal by the Illinois State Board of Education.


This loss, and the potential loss of other categorical grants such as transportation, would require significant cuts to educational programs and opportunities or force the district to seek increased revenue from other sources such as fees and taxes to maintain programming at current levels. It is not right for the State to force these decisions on the school district when we are doing the right thing financially. At the same time, the ISBE proposal provides \$65 million in additional funding to Chicago Public Schools.

In Governor Bruce Rauner's State of the State Address he made specific points about property tax relief and school funding reform “without taking money away from other districts.” This is inconsistent with ISBE's budget proposal. This proposal would take money away from school children and shift additional burden onto District 230 taxpayers.

The District 230 School Board and Administration agree that school funding needs to be reformed in Illinois. We believe that every child deserves access to high quality education that prepares them for their future. However, we do not believe that improving education for some should be at the expense of others. A solution is needed. The ISBE proposed budget as it is currently written is not the right solution.

Sincerely,

  
Richard Nogal  
School Board President

  
Dr. James M. Gay  
Superintendent