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Educating Illinois: A Look at the Evidence-Based Funding Formula, Volume II

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Educating Illinois: A Look at the Evidence-Based Funding Formula, Volume II

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Key Terms

Adequacy Target – is the dollar amount that a district needs to cover the cost of 34 different educational inputs or "elements" identified in the "Evidence-Based Funding for Student Success Act," or "EBF."
Percent of Adequacy – is the portion of a district's Adequacy Target that is currently covered from state and local funding sources.
Corporate Personal Property Replacement Tax – is a tax levied on the net income of all corporations (whether formed as an "S" or "C" corporation), partnerships, limited liability companies, trusts, and public utilities. The Corporate Personal Property Replacement Tax is collected by the state of Illinois, but paid to local governments to replace revenue that local governments lost when their power to impose personal property taxes on business entities was eliminated.
Equalized Assessed Value – is the product of the assessed value of the real property (both land and improvements) multiplied by the "State Equalization Factor" (as determined by the Illinois Department of Revenue), that is available for a school district to tax, and is a component of the Local Capacity Target calculation under the EBF.
Local Capacity Target – is the dollar amount of its Adequacy Target that the school district in question should cover from its own, local resources, based on the "**Equalized Assessed Value**" or "**EAV**" of the real property available for a district to tax, compared to the EAV available to all other districts.
Local Resources – is the total dollar amount of local revenue the EBF deems a school district has available to fund education in a given school year, inclusive of LCT and CPPRT
Base Funding Minimum – is a hold-harmless provision in the EBF to replace five state grants received in FY 2017 (Gross General State Aid + Stop Loss Grant, English Learner Education, Special Ed Personnel, Special Ed Funding for Children, and Special Ed Summer School) and recalculated every fiscal year to include the additional state funding or Tier funding received in the prior years.
Final Resources – is the aggregate dollar amount the EBF deems a school district currently has available to fund education that is comprised of all state and local funding (LCT + Base Funding Minimum). No federal funding is included in this computation.
Adequacy Gap – is the dollar amount differential between a district's Adequacy Target for a fiscal year and its Final Resources for said fiscal year.
Target Ratio – is the maximum Percent of Adequacy a district may have to qualify as a Tier 1 district.
Average Student Enrollment – is the three-year average of student enrollment in a school district.
Property Tax Relief Grant – is a grant created under Section 2-3.170 of the EBF that a school district can apply for to reduce the property tax burden for its taxpayers. Each district is ranked in order of priority for receiving a Property Tax Relief Grant by dividing said district's "Adjusted Operating Tax Rate" by the "Average Operating Tax Rate" (as those terms are defined in the EBF) for all districts of the same organization type.

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Table of Acronyms

Evidence Based Funding for Student Success Act	EBF
Base Funding Minimum	BFM
Local Capacity Target	LCT
Equalized Assessed Value	EAV
Average Student Enrollment	ASE
English Learners	EL
Low-Income	LI
Chicago Public Schools	CPS
Corporate Personal Property Replacement Tax	CPPRT
Property Tax Relief Grant	PTRG

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1. Introduction to the Evidence-Based Funding Formula

In 2017, Illinois replaced one of the least-equitable public education funding formulas in the country with the "**Evidence-Based Funding for Student Success Act**," or "**EBF**."[1] The EBF represents best practice in school funding for numerous reasons—key among them is the formula ties the dollar amount taxpayers invest in schools to covering the cost of those educational practices which research shows actually enhance student achievement. Investing public resources in funding educational practices that work makes all the sense in the world.

The EBF defines the amount of evidence-based funding each school district should receive as its "**Adequacy Target**."[2] The determination of a district's Adequacy Target under the EBF involves quantifying the dollar amount that district needs to cover the cost of 34 different educational inputs or "elements" identified in the legislation. These elements are comprised of two major categories:

(i) the research and/or evidence-based practices that enhance student achievement, including everything from class size and professional development, to the number of core teachers, guidance counselors, and Tier 2 interventionists a particular district needs based on the unique student population it serves, and
(ii) general operational costs incurred by all districts, like maintenance and back office expenses, which are predicated on statewide averages.

The EBF then costs out these 34 elements for each school district, with formulaic adjustments that account for its total enrollment, as well as the number of low-income, special needs, and English learner ("**EL**") students it serves. Because the EBF adds additional funding based on a district's concentration of low-income, English learner, and special needs students, the formula ensures school funding will be equitable in distribution, as well as adequate in amount.

Given the variance in labor market costs across a state as diverse as Illinois, the EBF provides that each district's Adequacy Target be adjusted to account for regional cost factors. However, to ensure districts in lower cost areas of Illinois remain competitive for attracting and retaining highly qualified faculty and staff, a floor is placed on the regional cost adjustment of 90 percent.[3]

After determining a district's Adequacy Target, the EBF identifies how much of a school district's Adequacy Target is already being covered by that district's "**Base Funding Minimum**" ("**BFM**") and should be covered by its "**Local Capacity Target**" ("**LCT**").

The BFM is the full dollar amount of all state funding for education which the district in question received in the immediately preceding fiscal year. Hence in FY 2023, a district's BFM is the total amount of state funding that district received in FY 2022. Under the EBF, a district's BFM increases by the amount of any new EBF formula funding said district receives from the state in a year.

The LCT for each district is the dollar amount of its Adequacy Target that the school district in question should cover from its own, local resources. A district's LCT is based primarily on the "**Equalized Assessed Value**" or "**EAV**" of the real property available for said district to tax, versus the EAV available to all other districts. Under the EBF, low property wealth districts, which often have high property tax rates, are not expected to contribute as much towards the cost of covering their respective Adequacy Targets as are higher wealth districts. This helps promote equity in education funding, as districts with lesser EAVs end up qualifying to receive more formula funding from the state under the EBF than do districts with greater EAVs.

After determining each district's LCT and BFM, the EBF then creates a procedure for calculating how close or far that school district is from having total resources equivalent to its Adequacy Target. This is determined by adding the dollar values of a district's BFM in a year to its LCT and Corporate Personal Property Replacement Tax ("**CPPRT**") revenue for that year. Next, this sum is divided by that district's Adequacy Target for the year in question. The resultant quotient is the district's "**Percent of Adequacy**" for the fiscal year in question. Simply put,

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a district's Percent of Adequacy identifies what portion of its Adequacy Target said district has already covered in state and local funding. Federal funding is not included in the calculation.[4]

To determine priority for receipt of new, year-to-year state level funding made available under the EBF in a given fiscal year, the EBF sorts school districts into four groups—Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, and Tier 4—based on each respective school district's Percent of Adequacy. Tier 1 districts have the lowest Percentages of Adequacy, and hence the greatest funding gaps between their existing state and local resources and their Adequacy Targets.

The range of districts falling within Tier 1 under the EBF is dynamic and changes from year-to-year based on a formula. The cut-off point—as in the Percent of Adequacy—for qualifying as a Tier 1 district under the EBF is called the "**Target Ratio**."[5] In FY 2024, the Target Ratio to qualify as a Tier 1 district was a Percent of Adequacy of 77 percent or less.[6]

Tier 2 districts are those which have a greater portion of their respective Adequacy Targets covered in current state and local resources than do Tier 1 districts, but still have Percentages of Adequacy that are less than 90 percent.[7] Tier 3 districts have between 90 and 100 percent of their Adequacy Targets covered in current state and local resources, while Tier 4 districts have current state and local resources which exceed their respective Adequacy Targets.[8]

After each district's Tier is identified, the EBF prioritizes the distribution of any new state-level formula funding in a fiscal year as follows: 50 percent to Tier 1 districts; 49 percent to Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts on a pro-rata basis; nine-tenths of one percent to Tier 3 districts, and one-tenth of one percent to Tier 4 districts.[9]

To achieve "full funding" under the EBF, the state has the responsibility to cover 90 percent of the aggregate gap (the "**Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap**") between:

(i) the total amount of state and local funding received by all school districts that are currently in either Tier 1 or Tier 2; and
(ii) the sum of all Adequacy Targets for all school districts currently in Tier 1 or Tier 2.[10]

Tier 3 districts already have state and local resources that cover at least 90 percent of their Adequacy Targets, while Tier 4 districts already have state and local resources which exceed their respective Adequacy Targets. The excess funding held by Tier 3 or Tier 4 districts does not reduce the aforesaid Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap.

Note that full funding of the EBF is not set at 100 percent of the Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap. This is primarily for two reasons. First, federal funding for K-12 education in the state generally covers anywhere from seven percent to 10 percent of all K-12 funding needs.[11] Once a district has 90 percent of its Adequacy Target covered by state and local resources, it is expected that federal funding will bring that district up to having almost 100 percent of its Adequacy Target covered.

Second, when all districts reach at least Tier 3, the funding distribution mechanism under the EBF changes from its current methodology, to providing nearly all new, year-to-year Tier funding to districts in Tier 3. This in turn should increase the rate at which most districts with combined state and local resources that still fall below 100 percent of their Adequacy Targets, reach the 100 percent funded threshold.

2. Key Findings

2.1 Aggregate Adequacy Funding Under the EBF

- In FY 2024, ISBE determined an Adequacy Target for each of the 927 distinct organizational units which have the responsibility to provide public education to students in Illinois.[12] Not all of these organizational units are traditional public school districts. For example, Regional Offices of Education and Laboratory Schools are included in the EBF's definition of organizational units.[13] This report focuses solely on the 851 organizational units that are public school districts.

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- In the first year of implementation of the EBF—FY 2018—$366 million in new Tier funding was distributed to school districts.[14] Since then, approximately $300 million in new Tier funding was distributed to districts in each of the subsequent fiscal years, except FY 2021, when K-12 funding was held level in nominal dollars with FY 2020 appropriations.[15]
- Overall, from FY 2018 through FY 2024, the state increased formula funding for K-12 under the EBF by $1.8 billion. Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts collectively received 99 percent—or $1.78 billion—of that new Tier funding, with 86.3 percent going to districts in Tier 1, and 12.7 percent to districts in Tier 2.[16]
- Tier 3 and 4 districts received the remaining one percent of new Tier funding since FY 2018.[17]
- Meanwhile, property tax revenue for K-12 also increased over this time period, by some $2.4 billion overall, and $2.1 billion in Tiers 1 and 2, collectively. This further reduced the statewide Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap[18]
- Considered collectively, the aforesaid increased state and local funding, combined with other factors, resulted in a consequent increase in the Target Ratio, or cutoff point for qualifying as a Tier 1 district, which is expressed as a Percent of Adequacy.
- The Tier 1 Target Ratio was 65 percent in FY 2018—but by FY 2024, the Tier 1 Target Ratio increased to 77 percent.[19] This is a positive development, because it allows districts with greater Percentages of Adequacy to qualify for Tier 1 and receive a greater share of new Tier funding from the state than if they were in Tier 2.
- Also, primarily due to increased local funding, the total number of Tier 3 and Tier 4 districts increased on a year-to-year basis, while the total number of Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts decreased.[20]
- Funding of the EBF is making a positive difference in the fiscal capacity of school districts statewide. In FY 2018, 657, or 77 percent, of all districts in Illinois were underfunded. Seven years into the implementation of the EBF things have improved, with the number of underfunded districts declining to 525, or 62 percent, of all districts.[21]

2.2 Districts and Demographics by Tier and Geographic Region

- From FY 2018 to FY 2022, over 50 percent of total, statewide "**Average Student Attendance**" or "**ASE**" were enrolled in Tier 1 districts, which had the least adequate funding levels. Meanwhile, Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts collectively educated over 80 percent of all students, while only 20 percent of total statewide ASE attended school districts in Tiers 3 and 4, which had adequate or better funding under the EBF.[22]
- The major shift of ASE from Tier 1 into Tier 2 that occurred in FY 2023 was the consequence of Illinois' largest school district—Chicago Public Schools ("**CPS**")—moving from Tier 1 to Tier 2. This had a significant impact on ASE distribution, decreasing aggregate Tier 1 ASE below 50 percent for the first time.[23]
- The shift of CPS from Tier 1 to Tier 2 also impacted distribution of ASE by race and ethnicity. After that shift occurred in FY 2023, Tier 1 districts ended up educating 38 percent of all white students in the state, 33 percent of all Black students in the state, 39 percent of all Latinx students in the state, 17 percent of all Asian students in the state, and 43 percent of all students who identify as 2 or more races or ethnicities.[24]
- By FY 2024, Tiers 1 and 2 lost 40 and 31 districts respectively, with Tier 3 gaining 46 districts and Tier 4 gaining 25. Tier 1 schools in FY 2024 educate 35 percent of all white students, 21 percent of all Black students, 33 percent of all Latinx students and students who identify as 2 or more races, and 18 percent of all Asian students.
- For comparison, in FY 2022, Tier 1 districts, which then included CPS, educated over 50 percent of the state's total student population, including 69 percent of all Black students, 66 percent of all Latinx

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students, and 29 percent of all Asian students.[25] Tier 1 districts educated a similar share of students by race and ethnicity in each fiscal year preceding FY 2022 during the implementation of the EBF.[26]

- Of the 291 districts designated as Tier 1 in FY 2024, 215 located in Downstate Illinois; 38 are located in the "**Collar Counties**" (which are comprised of the following counties: DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will); and another 38 are located in suburban Cook County.[27]
- Overall, 564 of the 851 districts in the state are located in Downstate Illinois, while Cook County and the Collar Counties account for another 143 districts each.[28] CPS is comprised of just one district.
- CPS educates the greatest portion of Black students in the state—38 percent.[29]
- Downstate districts educate the greatest portion of white students in the state—52 percent—as well as the greatest portion of students that identify as being 2 or more races—56 percent.[30]
- CPS and the Collar Counties on average educate the greatest portion of Latinx students in the state—27 and 31 percent, respectively.[31]
- The Collar Counties on average educate the greatest portion of Asian students in the state—48 percent.[32]
- CPS educates four percent of the total white student population in the state. White students, however, account for 11 percent of CPS's aggregate in-district student population.[33] Meanwhile, Latinx students make up 47 percent of CPS's in-district student population, with Black students accounting for 36 percent, and Asian students accounting for five percent.[34]
- While the majority of students in suburban Cook County and the Collar Counties identify as white, fully 68 percent of the students attending school in Downstate districts identify as white—which is the greatest portion of in-district students identifying as any of the main racial or ethnic groups in any region of Illinois.[35]
- In both Cook and the Collar Counties, students identifying as Latinx make up the second largest portion of total student ASE, after the white student population, while in CPS most students identify as Latinx.[36]

2.3 Distribution of New Tier Funding Per Pupil

- From FY 2018 through FY 2024, the average, annual per pupil distribution of new Tier funding made to districts located in Downstate Illinois was $186, which was the greatest per pupil distribution of such funding made in any region of the state.[37]
- Over that same time period, CPS received an average, annual per pupil distribution of new Tier funding of $128, which was the smallest of any region, while districts in Cook County and the Collar Counties came in at $149 and $176, on average, per pupil respectively.[38]
- Although CPS received the smallest average per pupil allocation of new Tier funding, it nonetheless consistently had one of the largest per pupil Adequacy Funding Gaps of any region until FY 2023, when a spike in local revenue helped close the gap. This trend of increased local revenue continued into FY 2024.
- The data confirm that the EBF's distribution model effectively assures that most new Tier funding the state invests in any given year goes to educating low-income students.[39]
- In fact, from FY 2018 through FY 2024, nearly 68 percent of all new Tier funding has gone to low-income students, making them the primary beneficiaries of new Tier funding under the EBF.[40] On a per pupil basis, the average annual new Tier funding for low-income students from FY 2018 to FY 2024 was approximately $185.[41]
- English learners have also benefited under the legislation, gaining an estimated 17 percent of new Tier funding each year. On a per pupil basis, EL students have received an average of $207 in annual new Tier funding from FY 2018 to FY 2024.[42]

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- The largest percentage share of new Tier funding—about 38 percent—went to students who identified as Latinx during the first two years of the EBF's implementation, FYs 2018 and 2019. However, starting in FY 2022 this shifted. By FY 2024, the percentage share of total EBF funding distributed to white students—44 percent—exceeded the total funding share of 36 percent for Latinx students.[43]
- Meanwhile the percentage share of total, new Tier funding distributed to Black students remained relatively stable from FY 2018 until FY 2022, hovering between 20 percent and 21 percent, then declined noticeably in FY 2023 to 17 percent and again in FY 2024 to 14 percent. The primary reason for the reduction in percentage share of new Tier funding going to Black students was the recategorization of CPS as a Tier 2 district in FY 2023, after having been categorized as a Tier 1 district in all prior years.
- That said, the data nonetheless confirm that the EBF distribution model has begun to help redress historic funding inequities by race and ethnicity that pertained under the state's former approach to school funding. In fact, since inception of the EBF, overall 99 percent of new Tier funding under the EBF has gone to educating, on average, 87 percent of the Black students in the state and 83 percent of all of the Latinx students in the state.[44]
- In FY 2022, while CPS was still a Tier 1 district, only 29 percent of all Asian students attended schools in Tier 1 districts, which are the least funded districts in the state. That was by far the lowest percentage of any of the major racial or ethnic groups attending Tier 1 schools. Overall, 39 percent of all white students, the second lowest percentage of any major ethnic or racial group, attended Tier 1 schools in FY 2022, while fully 69 percent of all Black and 66 percent of all Latinx students attended Tier 1 schools in FY 2022.[45]
- Those demographic splits changed materially starting in FY 2023, when CPS first moved from Tier 1 into Tier 2, and continue today given that CPS remains in Tier 2. In particular, Tier 1 schools went from educating 69 percent of all Black students in FY 2022, to 21 percent in FY 2024.[46] Similarly because of the shift of CPS from Tier 1 to Tier 2, Tier 1 went from educating 66 percent to 33 percent of all Latinx students, and 29 percent to 18 percent of all Asian students.[47] Meanwhile the percentage of all white students attending Tier 1 schools remained relatively stable over this sequence, going from 33 percent in FY 2022 to 35 percent in FY 2024.[48]

2.4 Adequacy Funding Gaps

- One clear sign that the EBF is working as intended is the $2.62 billion reduction in the statewide Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap that occurred over the FY 2018 through FY 2024 sequence, during which time the Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap declined from $5.21 billion in FY 2018 to $2.59 billion in FY 2024.[49]
- The Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap in Tier 1 districts has decreased every year since the inception of the EBF in FY 2018. It went from $4.09 billion or 79 percent of the total, to $1.56 billion or 60 percent of the total in FY 2024.[50] It should be noted that $363 million of the decline in the portion of the Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap attributable to Tier 1 that occurred between FY 2022 and FY 2023 (from $3.45 to $2.16 billion) was due to the shift of CPS from Tier 1 into Tier 2 during that period.[51]
- The Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap for Tier 2 districts, as well as the average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap for Tier 2 districts, worsened between FY 2022 and FY 2023, increasing from $1.02 to $1.52 billion, but again, this was because of the shift of CPS into Tier 2.[52]
- In FY 2024, Tier 2's Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap decreased back to FY 2022 levels at $1.02 billion.[53]
- CPS had an average Adequacy Funding Gap of nearly $1.1 billion between FY 2018 and FY 2024. This is about $400 million less than the average Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap for Downstate Illinois during the same time period.[54]

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- However, on average Downstate had an average ASE of 643,284 from FY 2018-FY 2024, while CPS had an average ASE of 351,603. The average, annual per pupil funding gap of $3,185 realized by CPS over this period was materially greater than the average, annual per pupil funding gap of $2,554 realized by Downstate districts.[55]
- As of FY 2024, CPS is responsible for educating over 321,000 students, the vast majority of whom—76 percent—are low-income and/or non-white (89 percent).[56]
- Downstate Illinois, on the other hand, is currently—and always has been—the largest region in the state. As of FY 2024, Downstate includes some 564 different school districts, which collectively educate some 620,000 students, many of whom—49 percent—are low-income and/or white (68 percent).[57]
- Given that Downstate districts educate the majority, or 34 percent, of the total ASE in the state in FY 2024, and that 74 percent of all Tier 1 districts are located Downstate, it is not surprising that the dollar value of the Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap is greater in Downstate than any other region.[58]
- From the inception of the EBF in FY 2018 through FY 2022, CPS had the greatest annual per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap of any region. Then from FY 2022 to FY 2024, CPS realized unprecedented annual increases in local resources of $686 million, coupled with a decrease in student enrollment of 9.55 percent.[59]
- Those changes CPS realized at the local level had distributional consequences. For instance, in FY 2023, the per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap in both Cook County and the Collar Counties for the first time became greater than the per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap in CPS.[60] In FY 2024, CPS's per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap dropped again, this time making it the lowest in the state, falling below even Downstate, which had consistently ranked as the lowest per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap of any region over the full FY 2018 through FY 2023 sequence.[61]
- Low-income and EL students face large Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gaps, which is not surprising given that 80 percent of EL students are educated in Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts, and 83 percent of low-income students are educated in Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts.[62]
- From the perspectives of race and ethnicity, in FY 2024, Asian students on average face the smallest annual per pupil Adequacy Funding Gaps of $1,770.[63] Coming in a close second were Black students, who collectively face an average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap in FY 2024 of $1,784—an amount which is fully $844 or 32 percent less than the $2,628 per pupil Adequacy Gap Black students faced in FY 2023.[64]
- White students face an average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap of $1,945 in FY 2024.[65]
- Latinx students on average face the greatest annual per pupil Adequacy Funding Gaps of $2,096.[66]
- FY 2024 marks the first time Black students in Illinois will have a lesser per pupil Adequacy Gap on average than white students.[67]
- This remarkable, and positive, turn of events is primarily due to the dramatic increase in local revenue generated by the CPPRT for CPS over the past two fiscal years. In FY 2022, CPS collected $193 million in CPPRT. By FY 2024, that amount jumped to $687 million, an incredible increase of 256 percent.[68]
- While the reduction in the Adequacy Funding Gaps for Black students attributable to the significant growth in CPPRT revenue for CPS that has occurred over the last two fiscal years is a positive development, those reductions are in all likelihood not sustainable. That is because the Illinois Department of Revenue projects that CPPRT revenue will begin to flatten out and then start declining in value in the future.[69] If and when the CPPRT revenue for CPS declines in amount, the corresponding Adequacy Funding Gaps for Black students will start to worsen.

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- The good news is the data confirm that the EBF is working as intended in three key ways:
  - First, the EBF is helping make up for the state's historic underfunding of schools attended by Black and Latinx students, and effectively countering the structural racism inherent in the state's former approach to school funding.
  - Consider that in FY 2018—the first year of the EBF—the average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap faced by Black students was $3,770, or $1,985 more than the $1,784 it is this year in FY 2024. Similarly, the average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap faced by Latinx students in FY 2018 was $3,958 or $1,862 more than the $2,096 it is in FY 2024.[70]
  - Second, the EBF is helping reduce the average per pupil funding gap faced by both low-income and EL students. Consider that in FY 2018—the first year of the EBF—the average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap faced by low-income students was $3,695, or $1,775 more than the $1,920 it is this year in FY 2024. Similarly, the average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap faced by EL students in FY 2018 was $3,918, or $1,765 more than the $1,952 it is in FY 2024.[71]
  - Third, the EBF is benefiting students of all races, as in the aggregate, $691 million or 47 percent of all new Tier funding from FY 2018 through FY 2024 has been distributed to white students—which is the largest share going to any race—closely followed by the 45 percent share received by Latinx student.[72]
- Other factors that have impacted the decline in average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gaps since the inception of the EBF include the unprecedented increase statewide in "**Corporate Personal Property Replacement Tax**" ("**CPPRT**") revenue of 279 percent or $1.89 billion that occurred between FY 2018 and FY 2024, the 17 percent or $2.40 billion statewide growth in and local property tax revenue during the same time period, and the 7.3 percent decrease in statewide student enrollment that has occurred since FY 2018, during which time ASE declined from 1,959,356 to 1,815,942 students.[73]

2.5 Distribution of Tier Funding by Low-Income Quintile

- The data further confirm that the EBF is working as intended when analyzed by the amount of new Tier funding received by districts predicated on the concentration of low-income students they educate.
- To make this analysis, all districts, other than CPS, were sorted into quintiles (each an "**LI Quintile**"), based on the percentage of low-income students they served. Districts serving the smallest percentage of low-income students were assigned to LI Quintile 1, and those serving the greatest percentage were assigned to LI Quintile 5. CPS, due to its size, was evaluated separately.
- CPS on a stand-alone basis has a student population that is 76 percent low-income.
- Overall, including distributions to CPS, $1.2 million, or 70 percent, of the $1.8 billion in total new Tier funding distributed under the EBF, has gone to districts that have student populations that are 58 percent or more low-income.[74]
- That distribution makes perfect sense from an equity standpoint, given that the per pupil Adequacy Funding Gaps are greatest for districts with student populations that are 58 percent or more low-income, inclusive of CPS.[75]

3. Adequacy Analysis

3.1 The Four As: Adequacy Targets, Average Student Enrollment, Adequacy Funding Gaps, and Percent of Adequacy

Under the EBF, a district's "**Adequacy Target**" represents the total cost of implementing the research-based educational practices which should allow that district to:

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- provide all students with a high-quality education that offers the academic, enrichment, social and emotional support, technical, and career-focused programs each student needs to succeed academically;[76]
- ensure all students receive the education they need to graduate from high school with the skills required to pursue post-secondary education and training for a rewarding career;[77] and
- reduce the achievement gap between at-risk and non-at-risk students by raising the performance of at-risk students and not by either reducing academic standards, or harming the performance of non-at-risk students.[78]

The EBF contains cost adjustments based on the unique demographics of the students attending each district, to ensure a district's final Adequacy Target includes the dollar amount of resources needed to invest appropriately in educating all of its low-income, EL, and special needs students.[79]

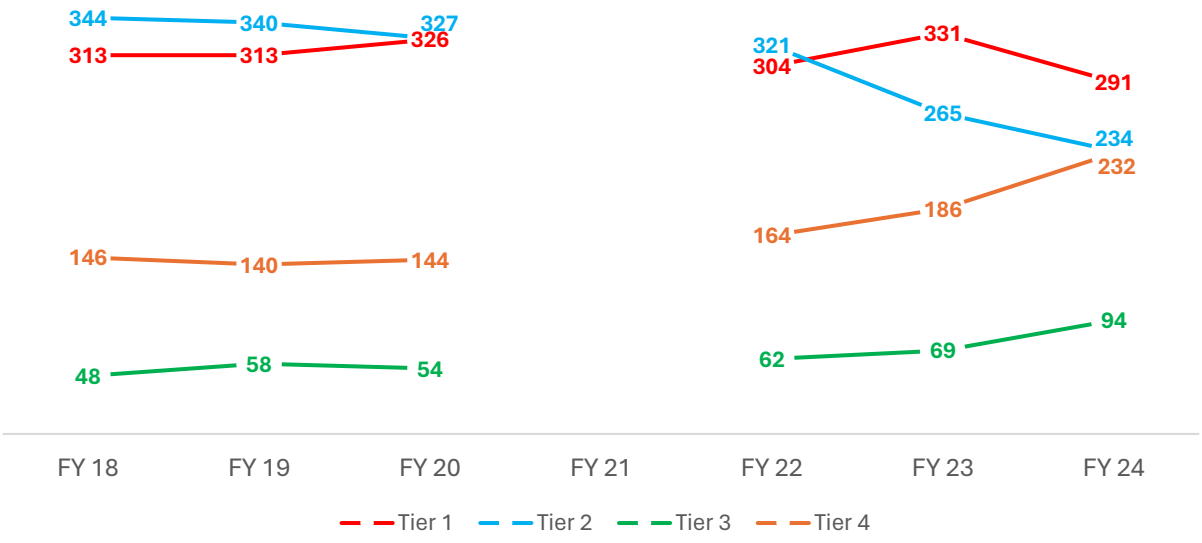
Of course, if a district that has historically been underfunded finally attains the resources needed to satisfy its Adequacy Target, student outcomes will still take some time to yield results. The research indicates that to start seeing measurable improvement in results, it generally takes ten years.[80] In FY 2024, ISBE determined the Adequacy Target for each of the 929 organizational units in Illinois.[81] Of those 929 organizational units:

- 851 are public school districts
- 76 are Regional Offices of Education ("**ROEs**")
- 2 are Laboratory schools ("**Lab Schools**")

The analysis in this Report focuses solely on the 851 school districts for which ISBE made Adequacy Target calculations under the EBF. ROEs and Lab Schools are excluded because they do not submit data for use in the Illinois Report Card, and Illinois Report Card data is needed to analyze how changes in K-12 funding implemented under the EBF impact different student populations across demographic lines.

Figure 1 identifies the number of districts that were in each Tier during each fiscal year in which the EBF has been implemented. Also to be noted is that the state did not increase year-to-year K-12 funding under the EBF in FY 2021 (a development which is analyzed in Section 3.2 of this Report). Because of that ISBE did not make Tier calculations for FY 2021.[82]

Figure 1
Number of Districts by Tier, FY 2018 – FY 2024



Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

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Figure 1 shows the movement of districts across Tiers. The past two years, FY 2023 and FY 2024 saw more dramatic changes in number of districts in the various Tiers than in any previous years.[83] This increased movement among the Tiers was due to the interplay of several factors, including differentials in state and local resource growth, changes in enrollment, and changes in concentrations of low-income students.

Overall, Figure 1 shows that from FY 2018 through FY 2024, the total number of Tier 3 and Tier 4 districts has increased. The total number of Tier 1 districts also increased over the first six years of the EBF, before declining in FY 2024.[84] Meanwhile the number of districts in Tier 2 declined from 344 in FY 2018 to 234 in FY 2024.[85]

The increase in Tier 1 districts (districts that are furthest from their respective Adequacy Targets), and associated decrease in Tier 2 districts until FY 2024 may seem counterintuitive, given that over this period the state increased funding for K-12 under the EBF by $1.8 billion, and Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts collectively received 99 percent—or $1.78 billion—of that new state level funding.[86] So how exactly did the number of districts furthest from adequate funding manage to increase, while the number of slightly better funded districts that qualified for Tier 2 manage to decrease, despite districts in those two Tiers receiving the vast majority of new state funding?

The answer is simple: all the factors that combined to cause the movement of districts among the Tiers over the last two fiscal years did so because they combined to alter one of the most important considerations used to determine the ultimate Tier designation for a district—the cutoff point for qualifying as a Tier 1 district under the EBF.

This cut-off point, which is the maximum "Percent of Adequacy" a district can have to be included in Tier 1, and hence be eligible to share in the greatest portion of new state funding in a given year, is defined in the EBF as the "**Target Ratio**."[87] The Target Ratio is dynamic. As funding under the EBF changes each year, so does the Target Ratio. As shown in Figure 2, in FY 2018, the first year of EBF implementation, the Target Ratio cutoff to qualify for inclusion in Tier 1 was a Percent of Adequacy of just 65 percent.[88] By FY 2024 that Target Ratio had increased to 77 percent.[89]

Figure 2
Target Ratio, FY 2018 – FY 2024

	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Target Ratio	65%	66%	67%	68%	73%	77%

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

Between FY 2023 and FY 2024, the number of Tier 1 districts declined by 40 districts, from a total of 331 down to 291. This was the greatest decrease in the number of districts included in Tier 1 since the inception of the EBF, and it occurred despite a four percentage point increase in the Target Ratio.[90] During that same period, Tier 2 lost 31 districts, going from 265 to 234, while Tiers 3 and 4 gained 46 and 25 districts respectively.[91] This overall movement of districts among the Tiers is a positive development, as it means more districts are moving into one of the "fully funded" categories of having 90 percent or more of their respective Adequacy Targets in current state and local resources, and concomitantly fewer districts below the 90 percent threshold deemed to be full funding under the legislation.

While state contributions to K-12 funding are undoubtedly making a dent in Adequacy Gaps in public schools across Illinois, another key factor in funding the formula is the significant recent growth in the **"Corporate Personal Property Replacement Tax"** or **"CPPRT."** The CPPRT is a local tax levied on business profits.[92] Revenue from the CPPRT is included in each district's Final Resources, together with that district's LCT and BFM.[93] In FY 2023, the aggregate amount of CPPRT revenue included in the calculation of Final Resources for all school districts was $1.27 billion or 76 percent greater than in FY 2022.[94] Then in FY 2024, aggregate CPPRT included in the calculation of Final Resources for all school districts grew by $1.30 billion or 102 percent from FY 2023 levels.[95] (For more information about this recent surge in CPPRT revenue, please see CTBA's report: "**Issue Brief: CPPRT and K-12 Education Funding in Illinois**")

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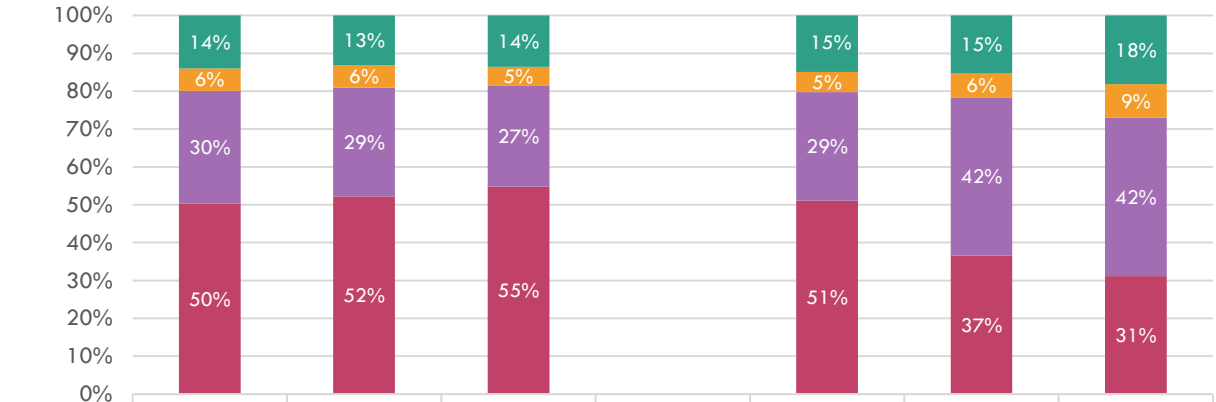
A word of caution, however, this highly unprecedented spike in CPPRT revenue is in all likelihood making school districts appear to be better funded now than they will be in the near future, because CPPRT is not expected to remain this high. In fact, the Illinois Department of Revenue is already projecting that CPPRT revenue will begin to decrease and fall back in line with historical levels.[96]

Under the EBF, a district's student enrollment is based on a three-year rolling average ("**Average Student Enrollment**" or "**ASE**").[97] This is done to create a smoothing effect intended to eliminate extreme fluctuations in funding due to yearly changes in enrollment.[98]

Figure 3
Percent of ASE by Tier, FY 2018 – FY 2024shows how the percentage of total ASE in each Tier has changed since inception of the EBF in FY 2018. From FY 2018 through FY 2022, over 50 percent of total ASE attended Tier 1 districts, with the least adequate funding levels. Meanwhile, since the inception of the EBF through FY 2024, Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts have collectively educated over 70 percent of all students, while only 30 percent of ASE attended districts that had adequate or better funding under the EBF.[99]

Figure 3
Percent of ASE by Tier, FY 2018 – FY 2024



	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24
Tier 4	274,235	256,770	261,505		282,466	283,358	329943.9
Tier 3	116,211	114,054	95,009		101,535	118,730	160153.5
Tier 2	582,116	559,060	514,910		542,660	769,166	760448.5
Tier 1	986,794	1,016,112	1,055,796		969,633	675,888	565396.5
Statewide	1,959,356	1,945,996	1,927,220		1,896,293	1,847,142	1,815,942.2

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

The major shift of ASE from Tier 1 into Tier 2 that occurred in FY 2023 was not a statewide phenomenon but rather the consequence of Illinois' largest school district—Chicago Public Schools ("**CPS**")—moving from Tier 1 to Tier 2. This had a significant impact on ASE distribution, decreasing aggregate Tier 1 ASE below 50 percent for the first time, while simultaneously making Tier 2 the largest Tier by student population.[100]

While a number of factors, including a decline in both total enrollment and low-income enrollment, contributed to the shift of CPS from Tier 1 into Tier 2, the main reason for this shift was the year-to-year increases in the district's CPPRT revenue that occurred between FY 2022 and FY 2024.[101] Over that two year sequence, CPS's CPPRT revenue jumped from $193 million in FY 2022 to $687 million in FY 2024, an aggregate growth of 252 percent.[102] As with other districts, this surge in local revenue had a major impact on CPS's Percent of Adequacy, and consequently on its Tier placement.

One trend that bears watching is the decline in overall student population that is occurring in Illinois. As shown in **Figure 4,** from FY 2018 through FY 2024, Illinois realized a decline in ASE of approximately 143,414 students, or 7.3 percent of total ASE.[103]

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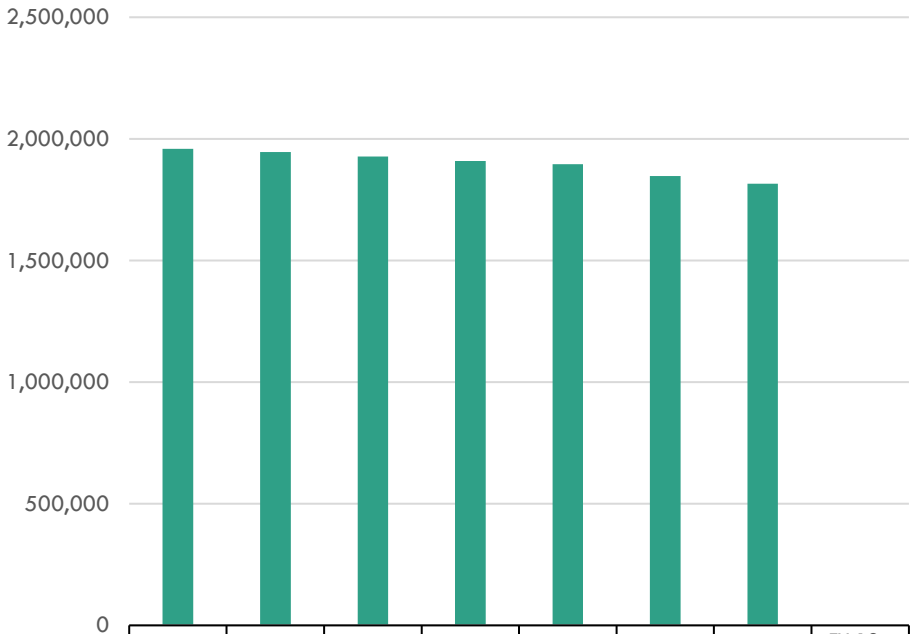
Figure 4
Total Statewide ASE Change, FY 2018 – FY 2024



	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 18 - FY 24 Change
Total Statewide ASE	1,959,356	1,945,996	1,927,220	1,909,361	1,896,293	1,847,142	1,815,942	-7.3%
Total Change in ASE from Prior Year		(13,361)	(18,775)	(17,859)	(13,068)	(49,151)	(31,200)	(143,414)

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

Alongside a declining trend in ASE since FY 2018, there have also been somewhat larger decreases in ASE starting in 2020, when the global COVID-19 pandemic was at its height.[104] This enrollment decline has had a meaningful impact on formula funding, as every year since the implementation of EBF, the state has had fewer students enrolled in public school.

As indicated previously, a district's Adequacy Target as determined under the EBF is based in large part on its ASE, as well as the specific demographics of said ASE. Because of this, the formula automatically reduces a district's Adequacy Target as it loses ASE, and increases it as ASE grows. The EBF also adjusts the Adequacy Target calculation for changes in demographic composition, such as low-income or English learner enrollment.

This means taxpayers do not have to be concerned that the formula will artificially inflate the cost of educating students. It also means a portion of the reduction in the Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap that has been realized since FY 2018 is due to the aforesaid decline in enrollment, rather than increased funding from state or local resources.

As shown in **Figure 5**, from FY 2022 to FY 2024, the greatest year-over-year ASE decline geographically occurred in CPS, and the greatest decline in ASE by race/ethnicity occurred among white students.

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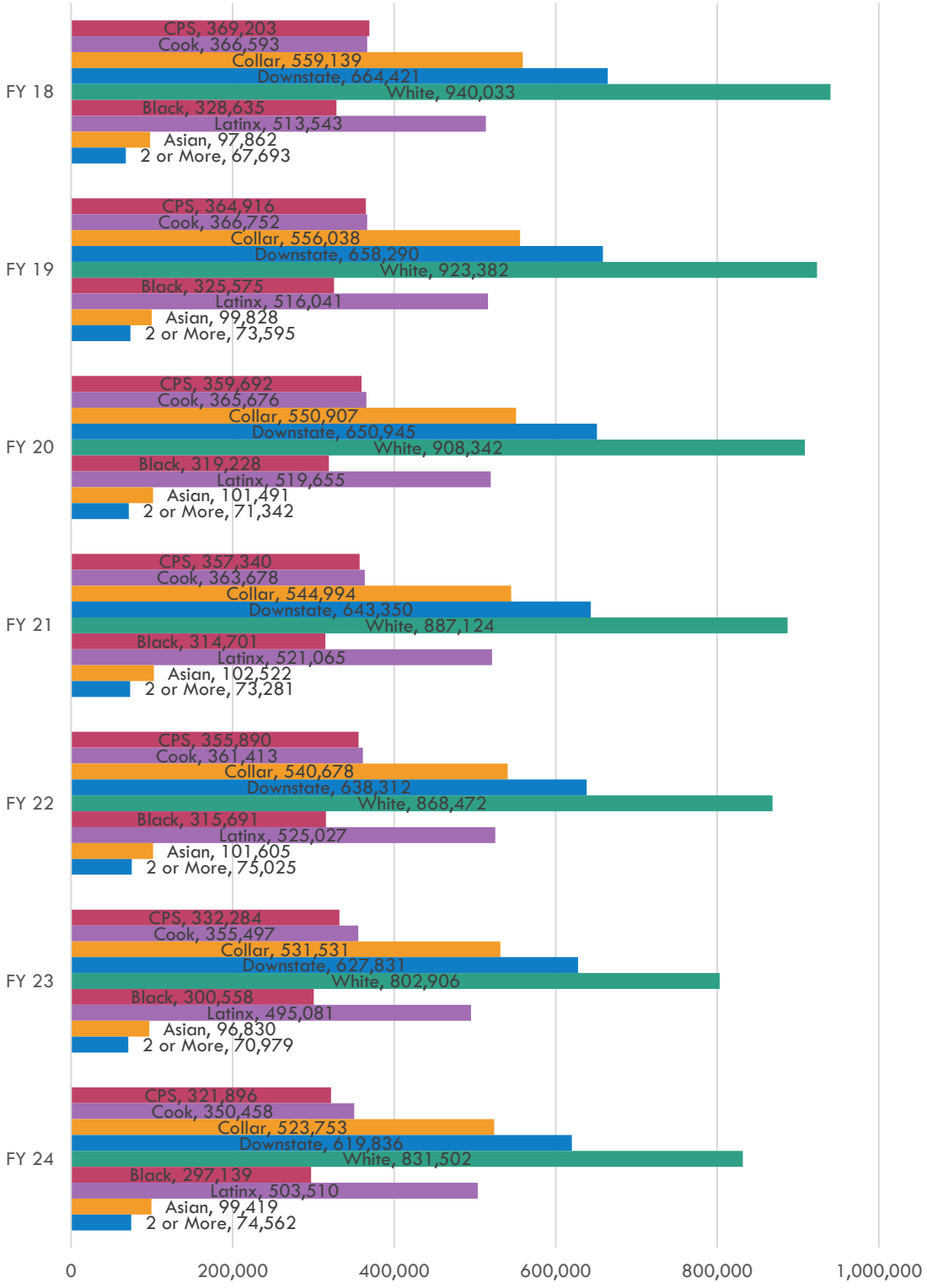
Figure 5
ASE by Region, Race & Ethnicity, FY 2018 – FY 2024



Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

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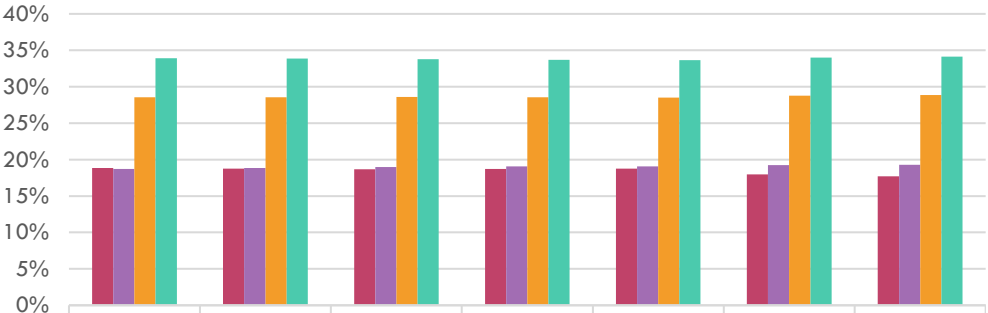
However, the *proportion* of ASE by region has remained relatively stable over time, as did the proportion of ASE by race and ethnicity, as shown in **Figure 6** and **Figure 7**.

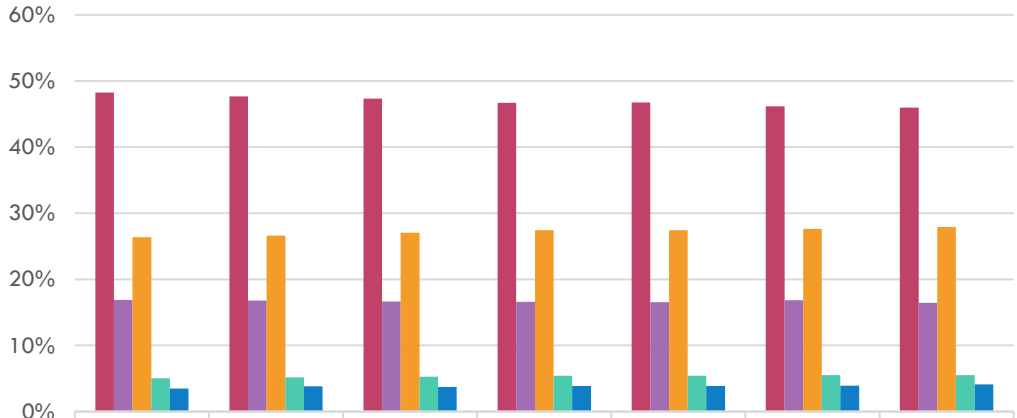
Figure 6
Proportion of ASE by Region, FY 2018–FY 2024



	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24
CPS	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	18%	18%
Cook County	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%
Coollar Counties	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%
Downstate Districts	34%	34%	34%	34%	34%	34%	34%

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

Figure 7
Proportion of ASE by Race/Ethnicity, FY 2018–FY 2024



	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24
White	48%	48%	47%	47%	47%	46%	46%
Black	17%	17%	17%	17%	17%	17%	16%
Latinx	26%	27%	27%	27%	27%	28%	28%
Asian	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	6%	6%
2 or More	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

The decline in ASE has been relatively uniform on a pro-rata basis, both geographically across the state and demographically among the student population. For example, despite realizing the greatest decline in ASE of any region, CPS continued to represent roughly 19 percent of the total statewide ASE annually over the FY 2018 through FY 2023 sequence, dropping only one percentage point in FY 2024.[105]

Recall that, as shown in **Figure 3**, roughly 50 percent of total statewide ASE attended schools in a Tier 1 district each year from the inception of the EBF in FY 2018 until FY 2022. Then in FY 2023, CPS, by far and away the largest school district in the state from a student enrollment standpoint, shifted from Tier 1 into Tier 2. As a consequence

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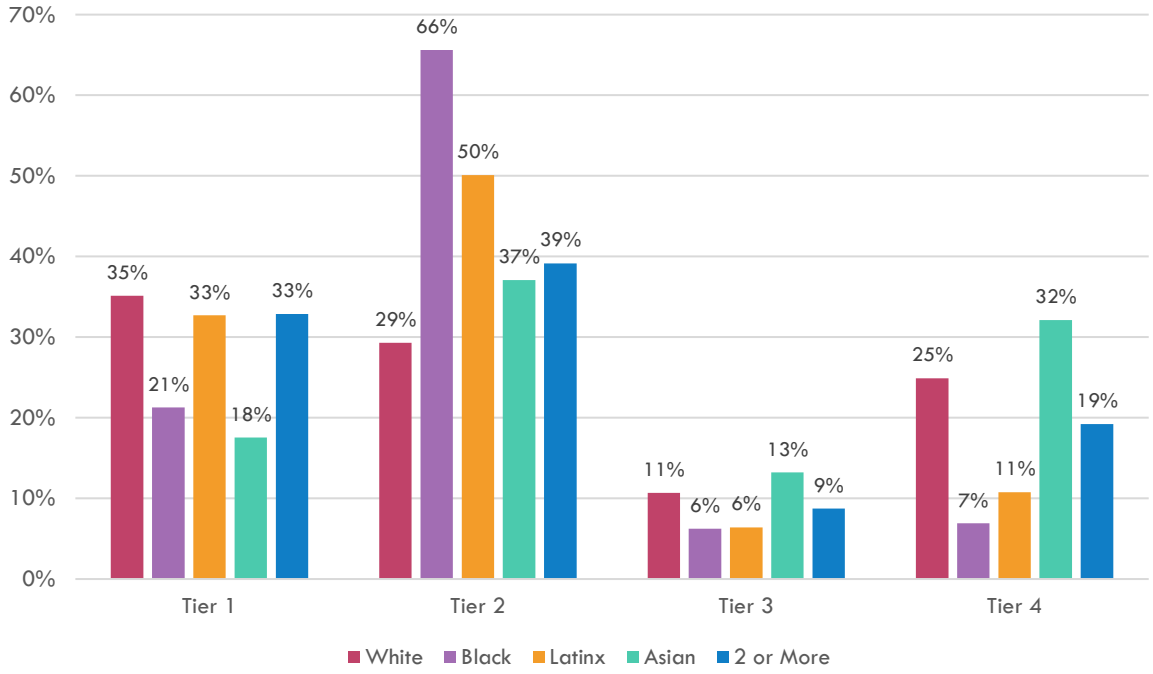
of that shift, Tier 2 became the Tier with the greatest ASE for the first time, and continues to be the largest Tier from an enrollment perspective in FY 2024.[106]

As it turns out, CPS not only has the greatest overall student enrollment of any district in Illinois, but also the greatest enrollment of Black and Latinx students.[107] This means the shift of CPS from Tier 1 into Tier 2 also caused a significant realignment of ASE by race and ethnicity among the Tiers.

Figure 8 delineates the percentage of total student population by race and ethnicity educated in each of the Tiers in FY 2024. For instance in FY 2024, Tier 1 districts collectively educate 31 percent of the total student population in Illinois (shown in **Figure 3**), and also educate **35 percent of all white students** in the state, **21 percent of all Black students** in the state, **33 percent of all Latinx students** in the state, **18 percent of all Asian students** in the state, and **33 percent of all students who identify as 2 or more races or ethnicities.**[108]

Figure 8
Percentage of Total ASE Statewide by Race/Ethnicity & Tier, FY 2024



Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2024

This is in stark contrast to how the racial and ethnic breakdown of ASE by Tier looked in every prior year, from inception of the EBF through FY 2022, before CPS shifted into Tier 2. In FY 2022, Tier 1 districts, which then included CPS, educated over 50 percent of the state's total student population. From a demographic standpoint, in FY 2022 Tier 1 districts educated 69 percent of all Black students, 66 percent of all Latinx students, and 29 percent of all Asian students, as shown in Figure 8.[109] In each of the other years prior to FY 2023, the distribution of students within Tier 1 by race and ethnicity was similar to the distribution thereof in FY 2022.[110] This means the vast majority of Black and Latinx students in Illinois have historically attended the poorest funded districts in the state.

Figure 9 shows the geographic distribution of districts by Tier. Any break down of districts within Tier by geographic distribution will be referred to in this Report as a "**regional analysis**." For instance, of the 291 districts designated as Tier 1 in FY 2024: 215 are located in Downstate Illinois; 38 are located in the "**Collar Counties**"—which include districts in DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties; and another 38 districts are located in suburban **Cook County**.[111] **CPS**—which due to its large student population is counted as its own region to avoid skewing the data—was a Tier 1 district until FY 2023, when it became a Tier 2 district.[112]

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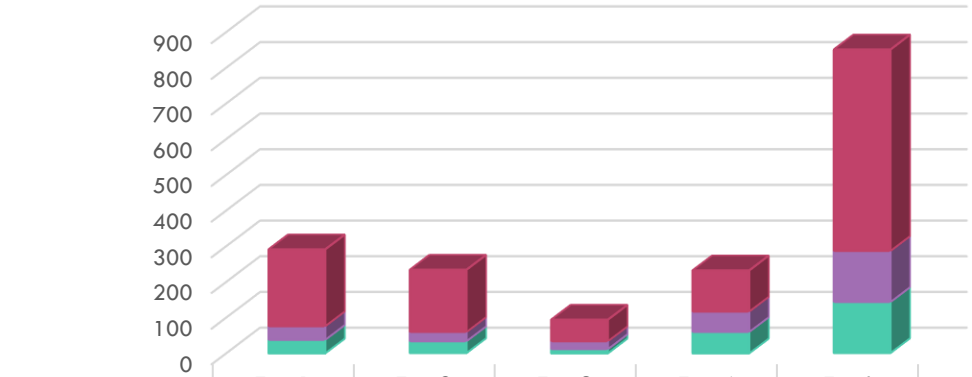
Figure 9
Tier Analysis by Region, FY 2024



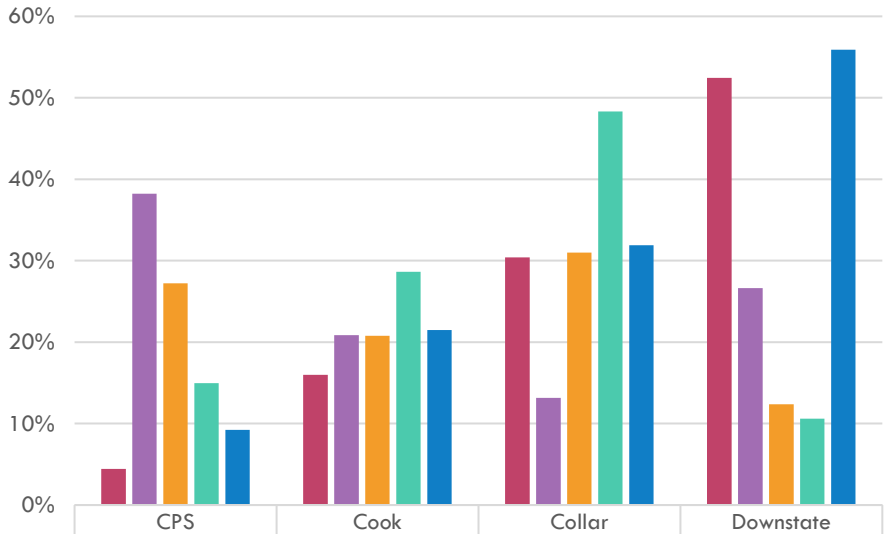
	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Total
Downstate Districts	215	174	60	115	564
Collar Counties	38	26	22	57	143
Cook County	38	33	12	60	143
CPS	0	1	0	0	1

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

Overall, Downstate Illinois accounts for 564 of the total number of current districts, while Cook County and the Collar Counties account for another 143 districts each.[113] CPS is comprised of just one district.

Figure 10 shows average racial and ethnic distribution of total student population in Illinois by geographic region in FY 2024.

Figure 10
Percentage of Total Statewide ASE, by Race & Ethnicity Distributed by Region, FY 2024



	CPS	Cook	Collar	Downstate
% of White students in state	4%	16%	30%	52%
% of Black students in state	38%	21%	13%	27%
% of Latinx students in state	27%	21%	31%	12%
% of Asian students in state	15%	29%	48%	11%
% of 2 or more races in state	9%	21%	32%	56%

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2024

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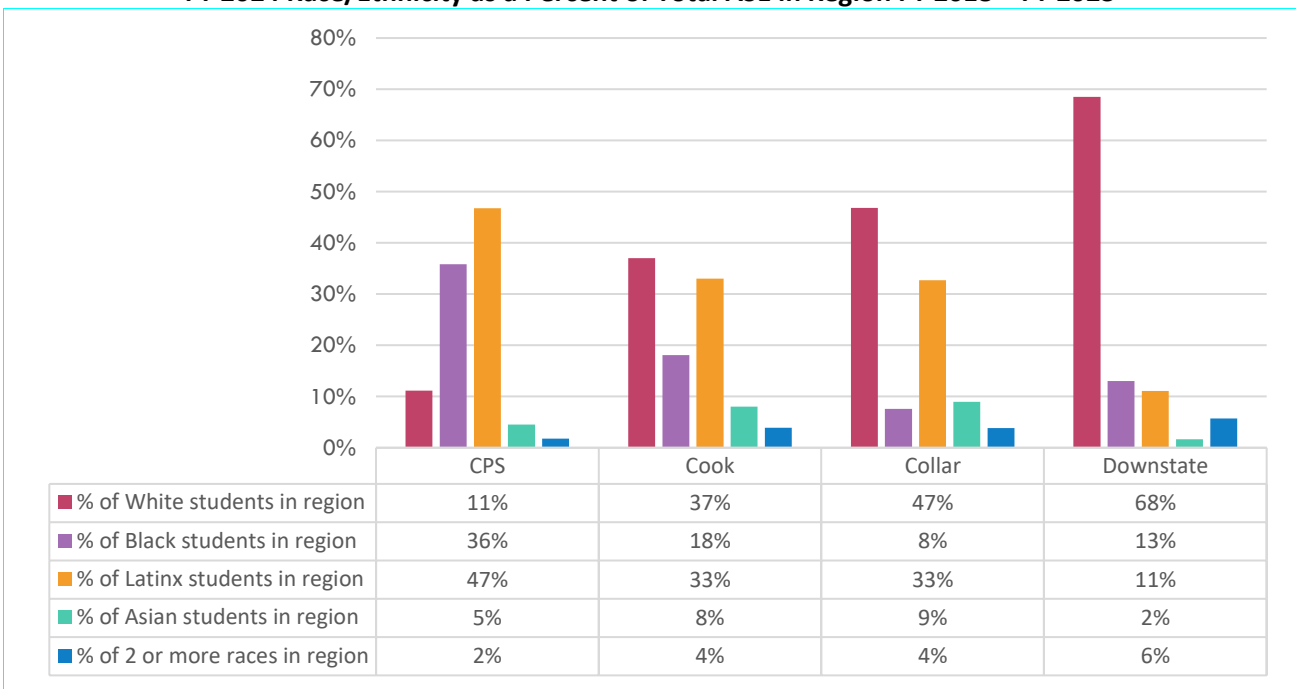
As **Figure 10** highlights, that, on average:

- CPS educates the greatest portion of Black students in the state—38 percent;[114]
- Downstate educates the greatest portion of white students in the state—52 percent—as well as the greatest portion of students that identify as being 2 or more races—56 percent.[115]
- The Collar Counties educate the greatest portion of Latinx students in the state—31 percent, closely followed by CPS at 27 percent;[116] and
- the Collar Counties educate the greatest portion of Asian students in the state—48 percent.[117]

As opposed to **Figure 10,** which depicts distribution of total statewide student population by region, **Figure 11** shows the racial and ethnic distribution of student population ***within*** each discrete geographic region in FY 2024. For instance, while CPS only educates four percent of the total white student population in the state, white students account for 11 percent of CPS's aggregate in-district student population.[118] Meanwhile, Latinx students make up 47 percent of CPS's in-district student population, while Black students account for 36 percent, and Asian students 5 percent.[119]

Figure 11
FY 2024 Race/Ethnicity as a Percent of Total ASE in Region FY 2018 – FY 2023



	CPS	Cook	Collar	Downstate
% of White students in region	11%	37%	47%	68%
% of Black students in region	36%	18%	8%	13%
% of Latinx students in region	47%	33%	33%	11%
% of Asian students in region	5%	8%	9%	2%
% of 2 or more races in region	2%	4%	4%	6%

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2023

While the majority of students in suburban Cook County and the Collar Counties identify as white, fully 68 percent of the students attending school in Downstate districts identify as white—which is the greatest portion of in-district students identifying as any of the main racial or ethnic groups in any region of Illinois.[120] In both Cook and the Collar Counties, students identifying as Latinx make up the second largest portion of total student ASE, after the white student population, while in CPS most students identify as Latinx.[121]

3.2 Percent of Adequacy Analysis

As outlined previously in this Report, a district's final Percent of Adequacy determines its Tier assignment. Districts in Tier 1 and Tier 2 have the lowest overall funding levels in the state, with each holding less than 90 percent of the state and local resources needed to satisfy their respective Adequacy Targets.[122] Because of that, the EBF prioritizes 99 percent of all new formula funding from the state in a fiscal year to be distributed to districts in these two Tiers. Tier 1 districts receive the first 50 percent of all new state formula funding in a given fiscal year, and then the next 49 percent of such funding is shared by Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts on a pro rata basis.

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Tier 3 districts have between 90 percent and 100 percent of the state and local resources needed to reach their respective Adequacy Targets.[123] Under the EBF as interpreted by ISBE, a district is considered "fully funded" when it qualifies for Tier 3 and reaches 90 Percent of Adequacy. To be consistent with ISBE's interpretation of the EBF, in this Report when a district reaches the 90 Percent of Adequacy benchmark in combined local and state resources, that district will count as being fully funded under the EBF.

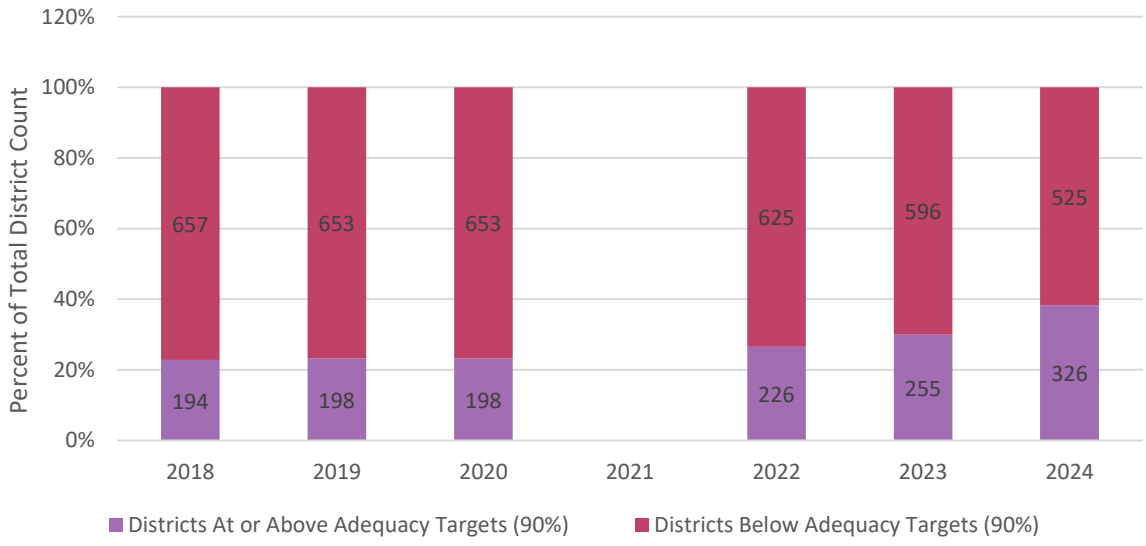
ISBE's interpretation that a district is "fully funded" under the EBF when its Percent of Adequacy reaches 90—rather than 100—percent is rational, given that the Percent of Adequacy is predicated solely on state and local resources—and does not include any federal funding a district receives. Since the federal government covers, on average, about seven to eight percent of K-12 funding in Illinois annually, a district that has 90 percent of its Adequacy Target covered by state and local resources is in all likelihood close to or above 100 percent funded once federal dollars are considered.[124] Districts in Tier 3 share in 0.9 percent of all new, year-to-year Tier funding.[125]

Tier 4 districts are the best funded districts in the state, with each having resources that exceed 100 percent of their respective Adequacy Targets. Tier 4 districts share in just 0.1 percent of all new, year-to-year Tier funding.

Once all districts reach at least Tier 3—and are therefore deemed fully funded by ISBE—the distribution model as it exists today will adjust automatically under the EBF, given there will no longer be any prioritized distributions for Tier 1 or Tier 2 districts, which will no longer exist.[126]

As shown in **Figure 12**, the number of districts below 90 Percent of Adequacy to date has decreased since implementation of the EBF, while the number of districts above 90 Percent of Adequacy has increased. This indicates the EBF has been working as intended to enhance K-12 funding equitably in Illinois.

Figure 12
Count of Districts Above & Below 90% of Adequacy, FY 2018 – FY 2024



Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

In FY 2018 657 districts, or 77 percent of all districts in Illinois, were underfunded. Six years into the implementation of the EBF, this has shifted, and the number of underfunded districts has declined to 525, or 62 percent, of all districts.[127]

Figure 13 identifies how the reduction in districts below Adequacy between FY 2018 and FY 2024 has impacted students, broken down by race and ethnicity.

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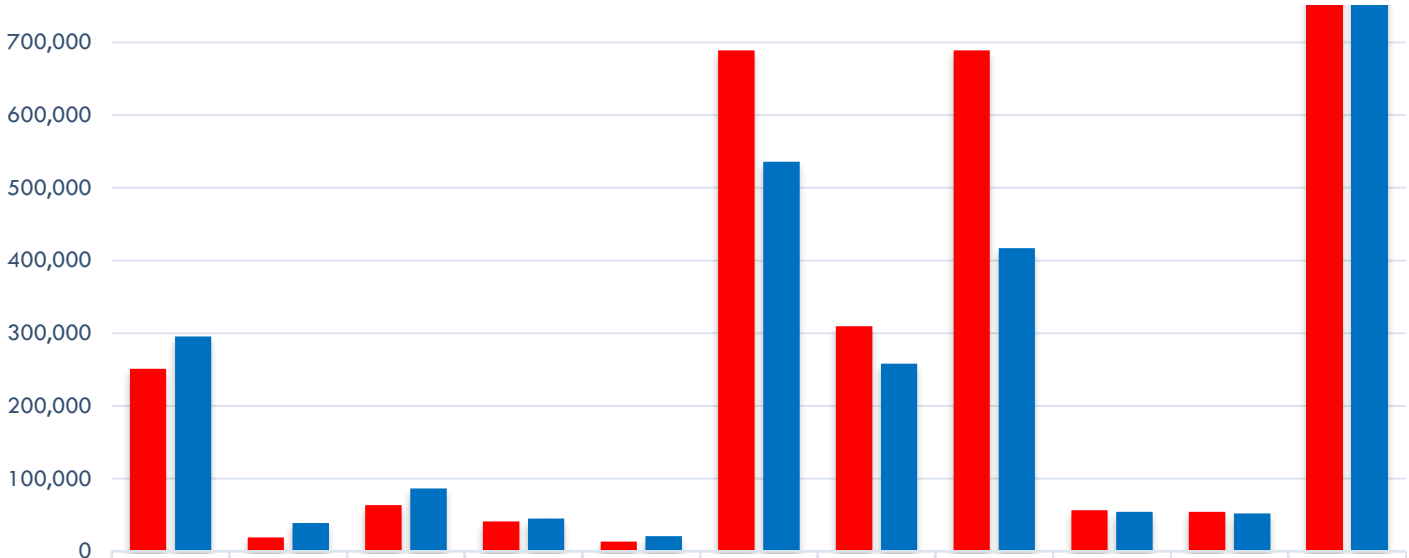
Figure 13
ASE by Race/Ethnicity Organized by Districts Above & Below 90% Adequacy Target, FY 2018 & FY 2023

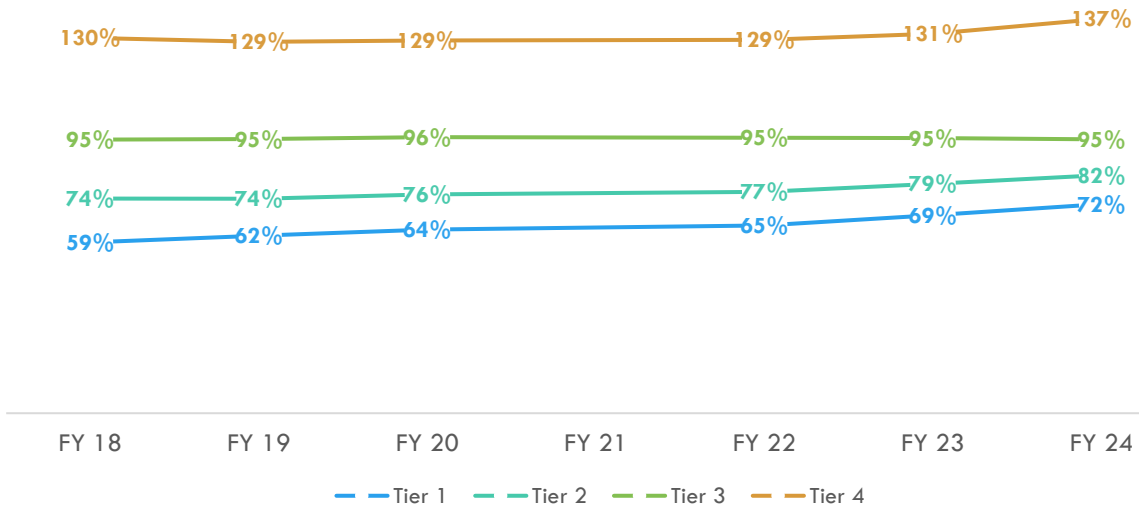


	Districts At or Above Adequacy Targets (90%)					Districts Below Adequacy Targets (90%)					
	White	Black	Latinx	Asian	2 or More	White	Black	Latinx	Asian	2 or More	Statewide Total
FY 18	251,188	19,086	63,665	41,252	13,309	688,845	309,549	688,845	56,610	54,384	1,947,76
FY 24	295,693	39,027	86,529	45,072	20,867	535,809	258,112	416,981	54,348	52,019	1,806,13

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

Even more evidence that the EBF is functioning as intended is shown in **Figure 14**, which highlights that Tier 1 districts—those with the lowest funding levels in the state—have, on average, realized the greatest growth in Adequacy levels since the inception of the legislation.

Figure 14
Average Percent of Adequacy by Tier, FY 2018 – FY 2024



Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

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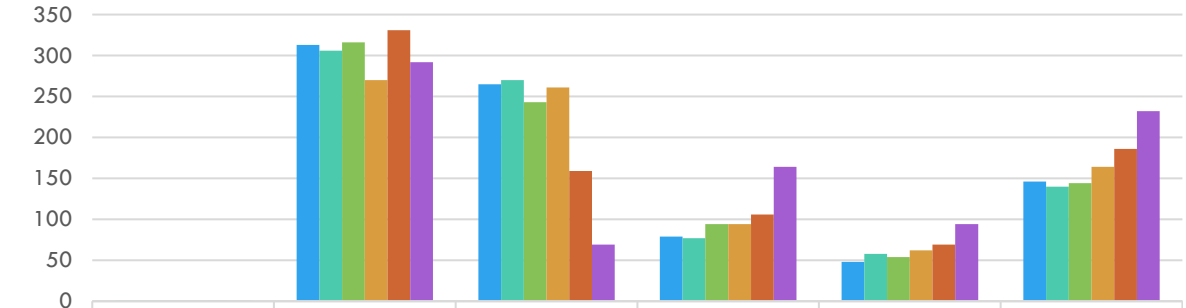
As noted previously, the Target Ratio, or cutoff point for qualifying as a Tier 1 district, is expressed as a Percent of Adequacy. The Target Ratio is dynamic, and changes each year based on numerous factors such as increases or decreases in state and local funding levels, and changes in enrollment. As shown in **Figure 15**, the Tier 1 Target Ratio was 65 percent in FY 2018—but by FY 2024, the Tier 1 Target Ratio had increased to 77 percent.[128] This of course means that slightly better funded districts that were categorized initially as Tier 2 districts, and so did not receive the greatest priority in funding, now do receive such priority because they qualify as Tier 1 districts.

Figure 15 sorts districts within each Tier by "**Adequacy Band**." Adequacy Band is the range of Percentages of Adequacy in which a district falls in a given fiscal year.[129] The bands shown in **Figure 15** are: Band 1—districts falling at or below the Target Ratio; Band 2—districts above the Target Ratio but below 80 percent funded; Band 3—districts at least 80 percent funded but below 90 percent funded; Band 4—districts above 90 percent funded but below 100 percent funded; and Band 5—districts above 100 percent funded.

Figure 15
Number of Districts by Adequacy Band, FY 2018 – FY 2024



	Tier 1 Target Ratio	Band 1: At or Below Tier 1 Target Ratio	Band 2: Above Tier 1 Target Ratio to 79.99%	Band 3: 80-89.99%	Band 4: 90-99.99%	Band 5: >100%
FY 18	65%	313	265	79	48	146
FY 19	66%	306	270	77	58	140
FY 20	67%	316	243	94	54	144
FY 22	68%	270	261	94	62	164
FY 23	73%	331	159	106	69	186
FY 24	77%	292	69	164	94	232

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

Because the Target Ratio for Tier 1 is dynamic, the number of Tier 1 districts will fluctuate year-over-year. However, as the Tier 1 Target Ratio increases over time, Adequacy Bands 2 and 3, which are comprised of Tier 2 districts, should continue to narrow, while Adequacy Band 4, which is comprised of Tier 3 districts, should continue to grow.[130]

4. New Annual Tier Funding

4.1 Year-over-Year Growth in New Tier Funding

To ensure no district would lose state-level funding on a year-to-year basis simply because Illinois was replacing its prior "foundation-level" approach to school funding with the evidence-based approach under the EBF, legislators decided to include a "hold harmless" provision in the statute. Under this provision, which is dubbed the "**Base Funding Minimum**" or "**BFM**" in the legislation, no district is supposed to receive a year-to-year reduction in state funding during any fiscal year in which both: (i) the EBF itself is not fully funded; and (ii) the amount of state formula funding distributed is at least equal to the prior year's level of funding.[131]

The initial dollar value of BFM each district was supposed to receive in FY 2018, the first year the EBF was implemented, was the sum of the following state-level funding items that district realized in FY 2017, which was the last year of K-12 funding under Illinois' prior, foundation-level formula: (i) General State Aid; (ii) Stop Loss

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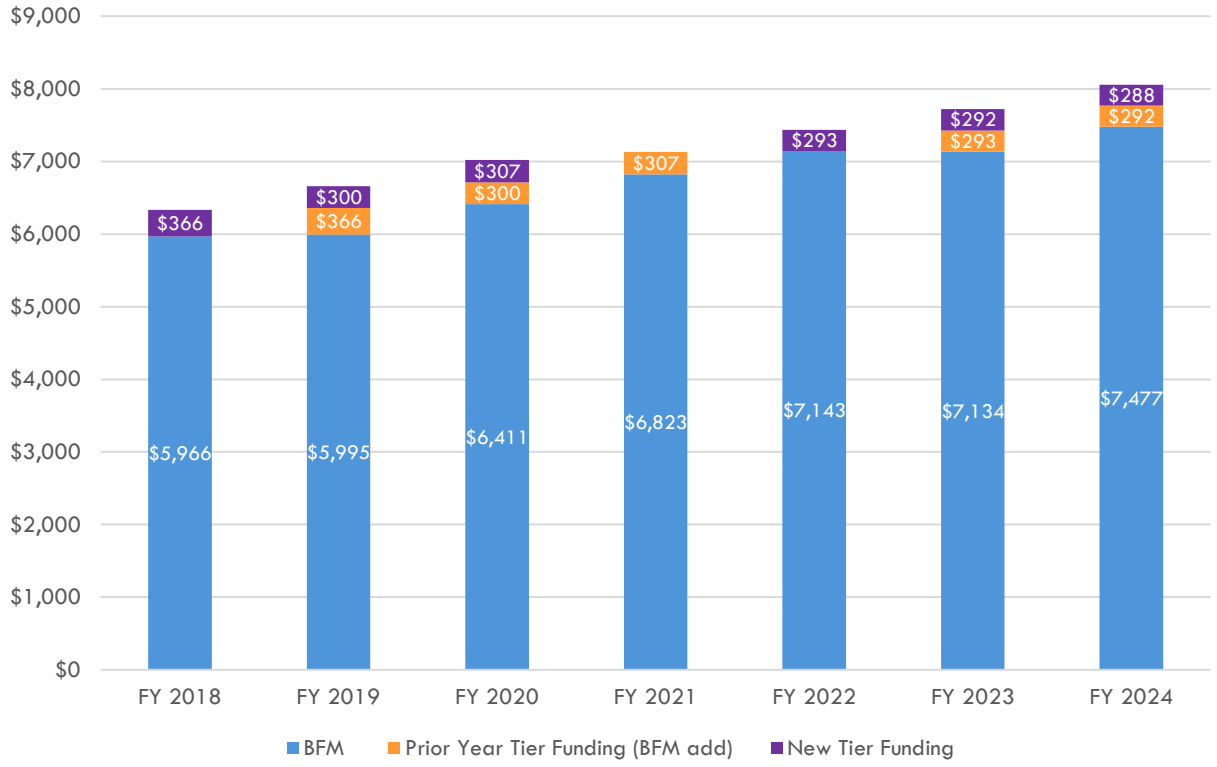
Grant (if applicable); (iii) English Learner Education funding; (iv) Special Ed Personnel funding; (v) Special Ed Funding for Children; and (vi) Special Ed Summer School funding.[132]

Each year a districts' BFM is recalculated to include any additional **Tier funding** received by said district.[133] In the second year of implementation, and all subsequent years thereafter, each district's BFM is a dollar amount that is equal to the sum of its BFM from the prior fiscal year, plus the amount of any new Tier funding that district received in said prior Fiscal Year.[134] **Figure 16** shows the change in the aggregate BFM dollar amount from FY 2018—the first year of EBF implementation—through FY 2024.

Figure 16
EBF Funding, FY 2018 - FY 2024



Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

As shown in Figure **16**, there was no new Tier funding in FY 2021, and so FY 2022 had no prior year funding to include in the BFM for that year.

4.2 Distribution of New Tier Funding

The EBF establishes two ongoing funding metrics for state-level investments in K-12 Education. First, the EBF sets a target of increasing year-to-year new Tier funding for K-12 Education by at least $300 million (the "**Minimum Target Level**").[135] Note that the Minimum Target Level is $50 million less than the $350 million amount actually specified in Section (g) of the EBF. The reason for this is the "**Property Tax Relief Grant**" or "**PTRG**" established in paragraph 9.5 of Section (g) of the legislation.

Under the statute, the dollar amount of any year-to-year increase in funding the state appropriates to the EBF in a given fiscal year that is in excess of $300 million, up to and including $350 million, is dedicated to the PTRG—not to formula funding. This creates up to $50 million for property tax relief under the EBF for each fiscal year. The statute further provides, however, that if any of the funding dedicated to the PTRG is not actually used for property tax relief in a given year, then such unused PTRG revenue will be distributed to school districts as additional formula funding.[136]

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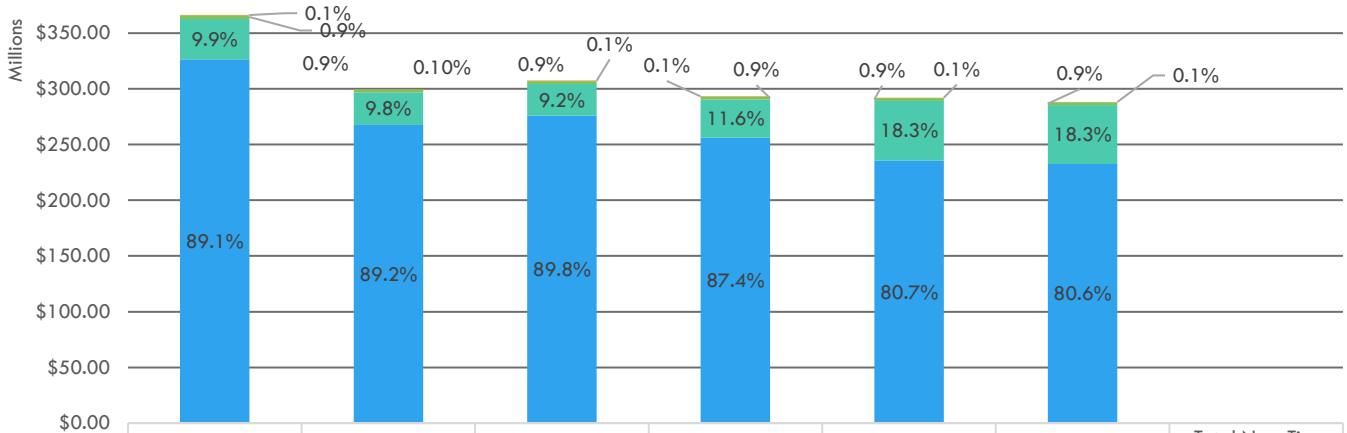
This effectively reduces the state's Minimum Target Level from the $350 million specified in statute to $300 million each fiscal year—and is precisely how the EBF has been interpreted by ISBE since the EBF was first implemented in FY 2018.[137]

Illinois satisfied the Minimum Target Level for increased year-to-year state funding of K-12 Education in each of the first three fiscal years—FY 2018, 2019, and 2020—during which the EBF was implemented.[138] However, due to a combination of the decline in General Fund revenue caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and Illinois' structurally flawed tax policy, that streak of satisfying the annual Minimum Target Level increase was broken in FY 2021 when K-12 funding was held level with FY 2020, in nominal, non-inflation-adjusted dollars.[139] The state did get back to satisfying the Minimum Target Level of $300 million in new K-12 funding in FY 2022. In both FY 2023 and Y 2024, the state has continued the practice of increasing new Tier funding under the EBF by at least $300 million.[140]

As indicated previously, all new Tier funding made available under the EBF is distributed primarily to districts furthest from their respective Adequacy Targets, with fully 99 percent of such new funding going to districts in Tiers 1 and 2. Tier 3 districts, which have state and local resources totaling anywhere from 90 to 100 percent of their respective Adequacy Targets, then share in 0.9 percent—less than one percent—of new year-to-year state funding, while Tier 4 districts, which each have state and local resources that exceed their respective Adequacy Targets, share just one-tenth of one percent of any new year-to-year state formula funding under the EBF.

Figure 17 confirms that the formula is working as intended, with Tier 1 districts having received 86.3 percent of all new Tier funding since FY 2018, Tier 2 districts having received 12.7 percent, and Tier 3 and 4 districts having received the remaining one percent of new Tier funding since FY 2018.[141]

Figure 17
Distribution of New Tier Funding, FY 2018 – FY 2024, FY 2018 – FY 2024



	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 22	FY23	FY24	Total New Tier Funding
Total	$366,462,635.3	$299,884,234.8	$307,415,874.7	$293,327,950.0	$292,163,548.2	$288,362,310.9	$1,847,616,554
Tier 4	$366,609.27	$300,021.71	$312,344.47	$299,356.73	$299,599.09	$299,478.82	$1,877,410.09
Tier 3	$3,299,489.75	$2,700,200.97	$2,810,963.09	$2,699,999.67	$2,690,920.25	$2,696,677.83	$16,898,251.56
Tier 2	$36,166,319.65	$29,364,328.93	$28,292,471.96	$34,067,229.49	$53,479,406.46	$52,855,279.00	$234,225,035.4
Tier 1	$326,630,216.6	$267,519,683.2	$276,000,095.2	$256,261,364.1	$235,693,622.4	$232,510,875.2	$1,594,615,857

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

In the first year of implementation of the EBF—FY 2018—$366 million in new Tier funding was appropriated, all of which went to formula funding because no property tax relief grants were made.[142] However, the full $50 million in Property Tax Relief Grants was funded in each of FY 2019 through FY 2024.[143] That in turn left approximately $300 million in new Tier funding to be distributed to districts in each fiscal year.

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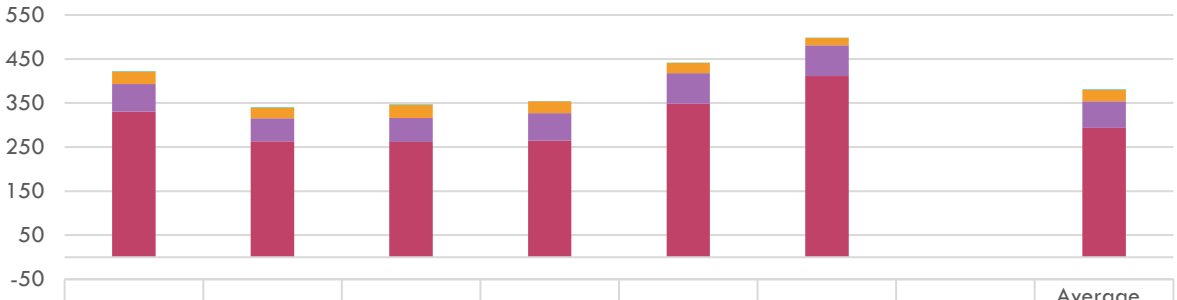
Given that Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts collectively received 99 percent of all new Tier funding since the first year of implementation of the EBF, it is not surprising that students educated in Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts also received the largest portion of new Tier funding when measured on a per pupil basis, shown in **Figure 18**.

Figure 18
Annual Per Pupil Distribution of New Tier Funding, FY 2018 – FY 2024



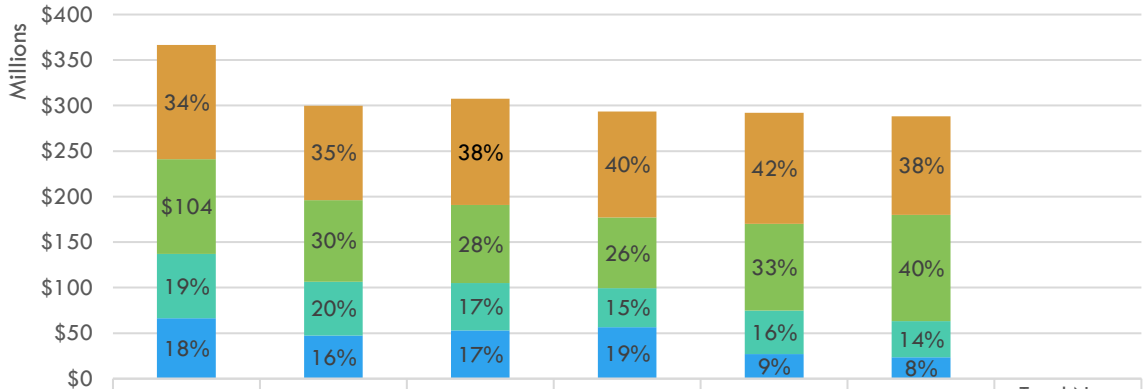
	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	Total Per Pupil New Tier Funding	Average, Annual Per Pupil New Tier Funding
Statewide	$187	$154	$160	$155	$158	$159	$814	$163
Tier 4	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$6	$1
Tier 3	$28	$24	$30	$27	$23	$17	$131	$26
Tier 2	$62	$53	$55	$63	$70	$70	$302	$60
Tier 1	$331	$263	$261	$264	$349	$411	$1,469	$294

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

4.3 Distribution of New Tier Funding by Region

As detailed previously in Section 2.1 of this Report, the greatest number of Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts during the first six years of implementation of the EBF were located in Downstate Illinois. Downstate districts, therefore, have received the greatest share of new Tier funding since the EBF was implemented, as shown in **Figure 19.**

Figure 19
Distribution of New Tier Funding by Region, FY 2018 – FY 2024



	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 22	FY23	FY24	Total New Tier Funding
Total	$366,462,635	$299,884,235	$307,415,875	$293,327,950	$292,163,548	$288,362,311	$1,847,616,5
Downstate Districts	$125,203,263	$103,622,412	$116,716,389	$116,314,837	$122,198,134	$108,511,270	$692,566,304
Collar Counties	$104,294,717	$89,700,312	$85,669,918	$77,588,922	$95,034,697	$116,522,250	$568,810,817
Cook County	$70,581,609	$59,145,103	$51,952,891	$42,770,293	$47,918,420	$39,971,502	$312,339,818
CPS	$66,383,046	$47,416,408	$53,076,677	$56,653,898	$27,012,298	$23,357,290	$273,899,616

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

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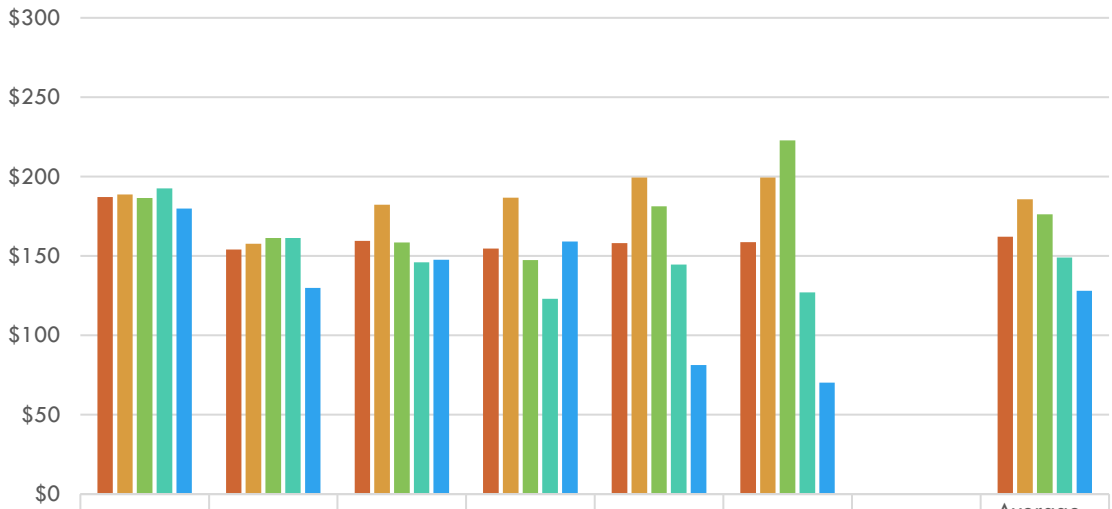
However, the aggregate dollar amount of total new Tier funding each region received in and of itself does not provide a full picture of how K-12 funding is being distributed under the EBF, given that each region of the state varies in number of districts, number of students, and number of students by race, ethnicity, and income status.

Breaking down the distribution of regional funding under the EBF on a per pupil basis reveals some interesting data points. For instance, from FY 2018 through FY 2024, the average, annual per pupil distribution of new, year-to-year Tier funding under the EBF made to Downstate districts was $186, which was the greatest per pupil distribution of such funding made in any region of the state.[144]

Conversely, over that same time period CPS received an average annual per pupil distribution of new Tier funding under the EBF of $128, the lowest of any region.[145] Moreover, after CPS shifted from being a Tier 1 district in FY 2022 to being a Tier 2 district in each of FY 2023 and FY 2024, the dollar value of its annual share in new state funding also decreased from pre-FY 2023 levels.[146] Districts in Cook County and the Collar Counties came in at $149 and $176, on average, per pupil respectively over this sequence.[147]

Figure 20 shows per pupil distribution of new Tier funding by region for each year in which there was a distribution of new Tier funding under the EBF.

Figure 20
Annual Per Pupil Distribution of New Tier Funding by Region, FY 2018 – FY 2024



	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	Total Per Pupil New Tier Funding	Average, Annual Per Pupil New Tier Funding
Statewide	$187	$154	$160	$155	$158	$159	$972	$162
Downstate Districts	$189	$158	$182	$187	$199	$199	$1,114	$186
Collar Counties	$187	$161	$159	$147	$181	$223	$1,058	$176
Cook County	$193	$161	$146	$123	$145	$127	$895	$149
CPS	$180	$130	$148	$159	$81	$70	$768	$128

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

The regional per pupil analysis paints a clearer comparative picture of where new Tier dollars are going under the EBF. One interesting data point that emerges from the regional analysis is that, **while CPS received the smallest average per pupil allocation of new Tier funding, it nonetheless consistently had one of the largest per pupil Adequacy Funding Gaps of any region.**

4.4 Distribution of New Tier Funding by Race & Ethnicity

The distribution of new Tier funding under the EBF by race and ethnicity shows that the statute is working to redress historic inequities created by the state's prior K-12 funding system. But like the regional data, just

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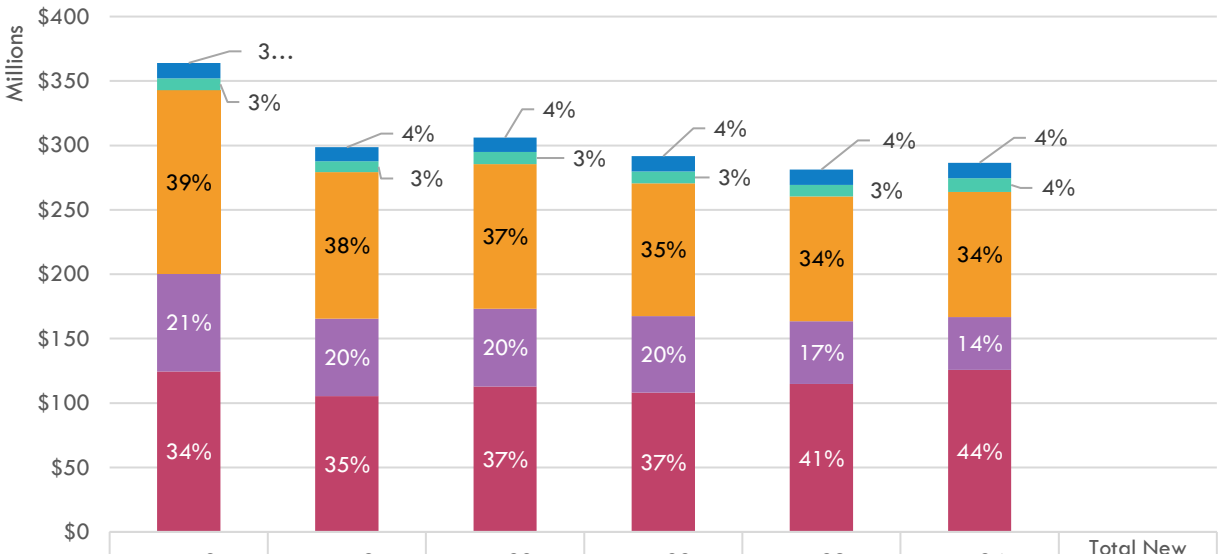
considering percentage share in aggregate new Tier funding by race and ethnicity does not provide a complete picture of how well the EBF is working.

For instance, as shown in **Figure 21**, the largest share of new Tier funding went to students who identified as Latinx during the first two years of the EBF's implementation, FYs 2018 and 2019. However, by FY 2022, the share of total EBF funding distributed to white students exceeded total funding distributed to Latinx students.[148]

Figure 21
Distribution of New Tier Funding by Race/Ethnicity, FY 2018 – FY 2024



	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 22	FY23	FY24	Total New Tier Funding
2 or More	$11,922,171	$10,948,318	$11,251,870	$11,875,920	$11,921,972	$11,899,550	$69,819,802
Asian	$9,269,132	$8,379,507	$9,236,934	$9,227,044	$9,008,529	$10,711,028	$665,924,305
Latinx	$142,547,457	$113,781,825	$112,373,982	$103,143,561	$96,777,038	$97,300,442	$665,924,305
Black	$75,801,607	$60,014,743	$60,406,350	$59,248,022	$48,794,035	$40,935,261	$345,200,017
White	$124,503,973	$105,425,065	$112,821,066	$108,140,868	$114,733,166	$125,718,500	$691,342,637

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

Meanwhile the share of total, new Tier funding distributed to Black students remained relatively stable from FY 2018 until FY 2022, then dipped noticeably in FY 2023, and again in FY 2024. The primary reason for that reduction in share of new Tier funding going to Black students was the movement of CPS to Tier 2 in FY 2023, and the significant CPPRT revenue growth CPS realized in FY 2023 and FY 2024.

Reviewing per pupil distribution of new Tier funding under the EBF by race and ethnicity provides a clear picture of how the EBF is working to counter the historic inequities that pertained under the state's former, foundation-level approach to funding public education. As shown in **Figure 22,** per pupil distributions of new Tier funding have annually been greater for Latinx and Black students than for white students.[149]

Asian students, on the other hand, have consistently received per pupil distributions of new Tier funding that are less than the per pupil distributions made to the other major racial/ethnic groups.[150] One key reason for this differential is that, as of FY 2024, 32 percent of all Asian students attend school in Tier 4 districts, which are the best funded districts in the state, having more than 100 percent of their respective Adequacy Targets in state and local resources.[151] This is by far the greatest percentage of any race or ethnicity attending Tier 4 schools, followed by white students with 25 percent.[152]

On the other hand, only 18 percent of Asian students attended schools in Tier 1 districts in FY 2024, which are the poorest funded districts in the state. **That is by far the lowest percentage of any of the major racial or ethnic groups attending Tier 1 school.[153] Overall, Tier 1 districts educate 35 percent of all white students, 21 percent of**

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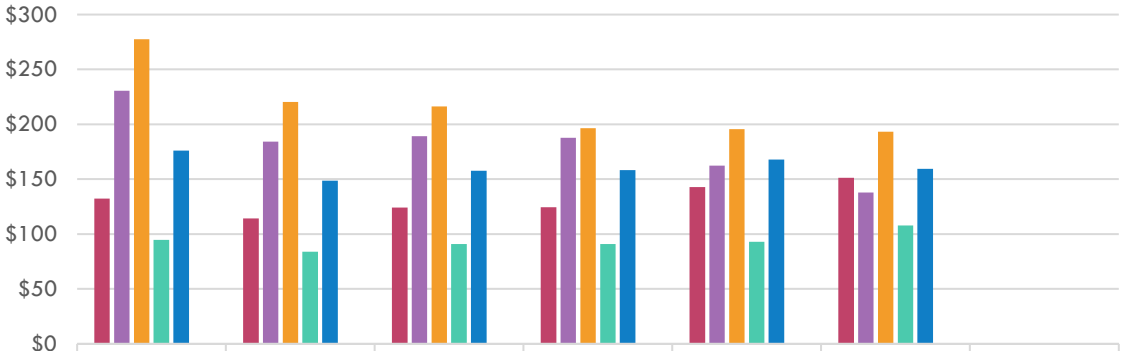
all Black and 33 percent of all Latinx students.[154] Meanwhile an additional 66 percent of all Black and 50 percent of all Latinx students attended a Tier 2 school in FY 2024.[155]

Considered in the aggregate, **99 percent of new Tier funding under the EBF has gone to districts that educate, on average, 87 percent of the Black students in the state and 83 percent of all of the Latinx students in the state.[156]**

Figure 22
Annual Per Pupil New Tier Distribution by Race/Ethnicity, FY 2018 – FY 2024



	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	Total Per Pupil New Tier Funding
White	$132	$114	$124	$125	$143	$151	$789
Black	$231	$184	$189	$188	$162	$138	$1,092
Latinx	$278	$220	$216	$196	$195	$193	$1,299
Asian	$95	$84	$91	$91	$93	$108	$561
2 or More	$176	$149	$158	$158	$168	$160	$968
Statewide	$187	$154	$159	$155	$159	$159	$973

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

Given the distribution of Asian students—as opposed to students from the other major ethnic and racial groups--across the four Tiers, it is understandable that the average per pupil distribution of new Tier funding has consistently been lower for Asian students than their peers.

The fact that the average per pupil distribution of new Tier funding in FYs 2018-2023 was greater for Black and Latinx students than the corresponding average per pupil distribution for white students is an outcome that is both logical and needed in Illinois—because, as detailed more fully in Section 5 of this Report, the Adequacy Funding Gaps by race/ethnicity that were created under the state's prior school funding formula for Black and Latinx students were much greater on a per pupil basis than were the per pupil Adequacy Funding Gaps created for white students.[157]

This means the distribution model under the EBF has helped compensate for the state's historic underfunding of schools attended by Black and Latinx students, and that the EBF has effectively begun to counter the structural racism inherent in the state's former approach to school funding.

However, FY 2024 is the first year a break from that trend has occurred, with average new Tier funding per pupil for white students coming in at a greater amount than the average per pupil new Tier funding for Black students.[158] There are numerous reasons for this, but key among them is the shift of CPS from Tier 1 into Tier 2, as well as the substantial growth in CPPRT revenue realized by CPS over the last two fiscal years.[159]

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Considered together, those items reduced the share in new Tier funding allocable to CPS. Because CPS educates 38 percent of all Black students in Illinois, this in turn contributed to reducing the average per pupil distribution of new Tier funding allocable to Black students.[160] However, as indicated previously, IDOR projects that CPPRT revenue will begin to flatten out and trend back down to historical levels in the next few years, which in turn will substantially impact CPS and the significant number of Black and Latinx students who attend that school district.

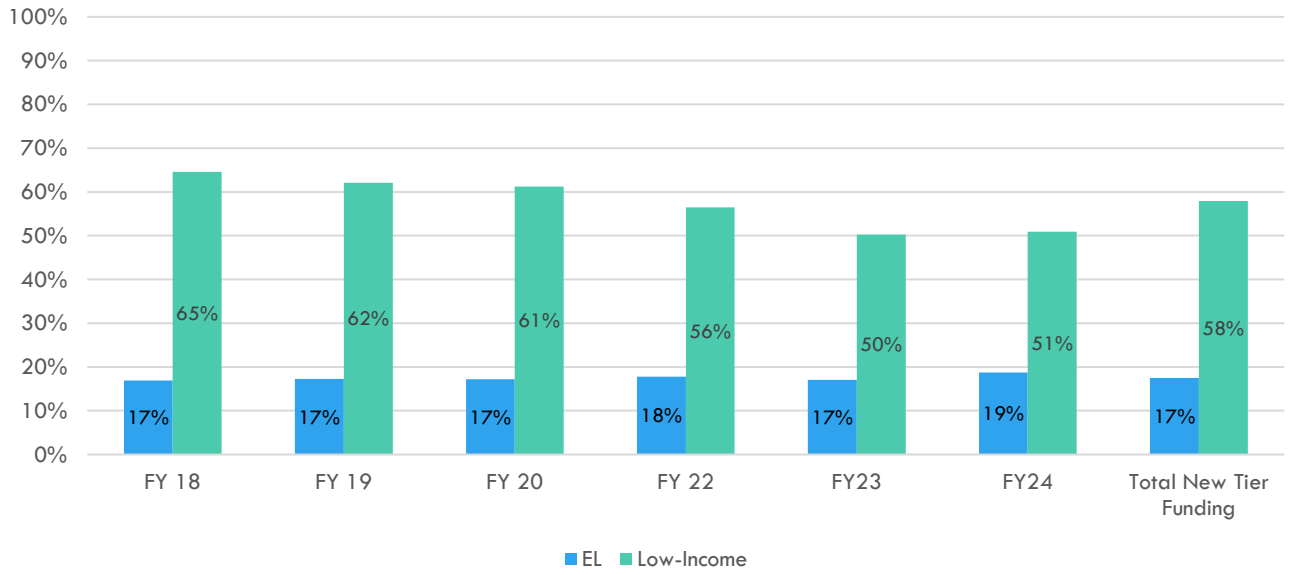
The data also demonstrate that **the EBF is likewise working to the benefit of white students who attend districts that have resources below their respective Adequacy Targets, given that the greatest overall share in new Tier funding under the EBF to date has gone to white students,** who comprise the greatest number of students of any racial group attending underfunded districts.[161] This makes the EBF one of those rare policy initiatives that generates a true win-win scenario system-wide.

4.5 Distribution of New Tier Funding by Low-Income & EL Status

One of the core rationales behind the Tier-based distribution model created in the EBF was to prioritize the allocation of new Tier funding to those districts that were furthest from having resources that satisfied their respective Adequacy Targets. Given the disproportionate share of the total ASE of low-income students attending Tier 1 and Tier 2 schools—63 percent and 28 percent, respectively—the EBF's distribution model also assured that most new Tier funding in any given year would go to districts educating a significant portion of the low-income students attending Illinois public schools.[162]

As shown in **Figure 23**, both low-income and English Learner students benefit from the EBF. The total percentage of New Tier Funding going towards educating these populations is calculated by: (i) multiplying the percentage of a district's total student population that is comprised of each low-income and English Learner students respectively, times (ii) the total New Tier Funding received by said district in a given fiscal year. From FY 2018 to FY 2024, 58 percent of New Tier Funding has gone towards closing the funding gaps of low-income students, and 17 percent for English Learner students. [163]

Figure 23
Percentage of Total New Tier Funding Dedicated to Educating EL & Low-Income Students, FY 2018 – FY 2024



Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

When analyzed on a per pupil basis, the data show that funding for EL students has improved significantly since the EBF replaced Illinois' prior, foundation formula. In fact, as shown in **Figure 24**, an average of $207 per pupil in new Tier funding each year went to the education of EL students, while an average of approximately $185 per pupil has been appropriated to the education of low-income students.[164]

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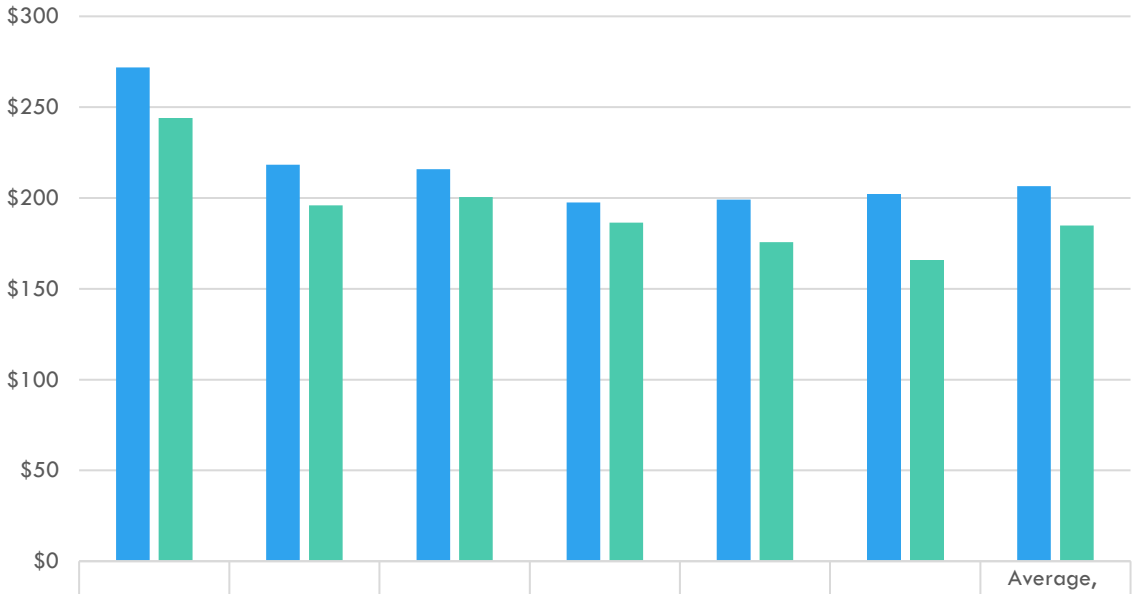
Figure 24
Annual Per Pupil Amount of New Tier Funding Dedicated to Educating EL & Low-Income Students, FY 2018 – FY 2024



	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 22	FY 23	FY 2024	Average, Annual Per Pupil New Tier Funding
EL	$272	$218	$216	$197	$199	$202	$207
Low-Income	$244	$196	$201	$186	$176	$165	$185

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

5. Adequacy Funding Gaps

5.1 Adequacy Funding Gaps by Tier

Figure 25 shows the respective Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gaps for Tiers 1 and 2 from FY 2018 through FY 2024, and the statewide Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap for Illinois. One clear sign that the EBF is working as intended is the $1.87 billion reduction in the statewide Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap that occurred over the FY 2018 through FY 2024 sequence, during which time the Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap declined from $5.21 billion in FY 2018 to $2.59 billion in FY 2024.[165]

Note that even though the districts in Tier 3 have less than 100 percent of their respective Adequacy Targets in combined state and local resources, a district is deemed to be fully funded under the EBF when it reaches 90 percent of its Adequacy Target in state and local resources.[166] Since all districts in Tier 3 have between 90 and 100 percent of their Adequacy Targets currently funded, districts in Tier 3 have no Adequacy Funding Gap under the EBF, and in fact on average have a very small surplus. Tier 4 districts have resources which exceed 100 percent of their respective Adequacy Targets under the EBF, and also have surpluses, not gaps.

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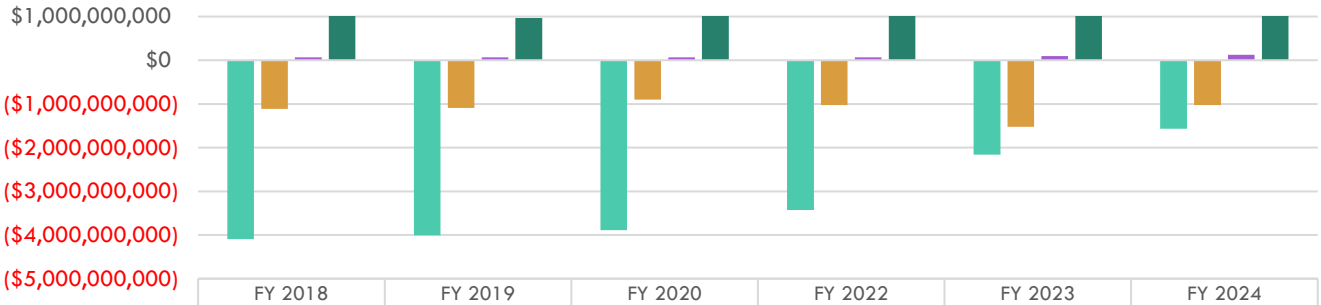
Figure 25
Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap or Surplus by Tier, FY 2018 – FY 2024



	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Tier 1 (Gap)	($4,092,714,194	($4,004,146,748	($3,888,888,140	($3,426,731,670	($2,163,406,111	($1,564,951,419
Tier 2 (Gap)	($1,114,650,223	($1,089,512,268	($902,363,983)	($1,024,174,571	($1,520,537,721	($1,024,173,496
Tier 3 (Surplus)	$62,829,488	$68,106,284	$64,133,103	$64,958,510	$97,783,987	$121,296,863
Tier 4 (Surplus)	$1,136,326,505	$969,421,028	$1,024,881,540	$1,220,940,276	$1,396,763,116	$1,875,947,904

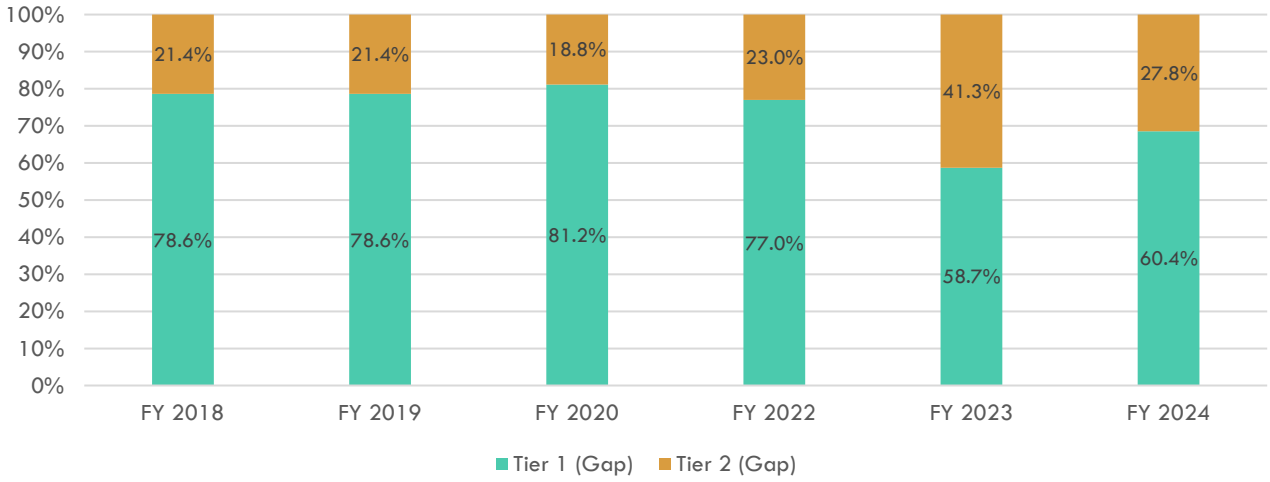
Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

Figure 25 also shows that the surpluses for Tier 3 and Tier 4 increased slightly between FY 2018 and FY 2024, while the Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap for Tier 1, as well as for the state as a whole, decreased over that time period. **This shows that the EBF is not a "Robin Hood" approach to education funding equity, in that it does not take resources away from well-funded districts to invest in poorly funded districts. In simple terms, the EBF builds the bottom and middle up, without tearing the top down.**

Interestingly, the Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap for Tier 2 actually worsened between FY 2018 and FY 2023, but this was primarily because CPS moved from Tier 1 into Tier 2, and not because of any decline in funding for Tier 2 districts. In fact, if CPS is not included in the calculation, then the Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap for Tier 1 districts declined by $448 million over this sequence, while the Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap for Tier 2 districts declined by $455 million.[167]

Figure 26 identifies the relative portion of the statewide Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap in Tier 1 versus Tier 2 over the FY 2018 through FY 2024 sequence. The significant jump in the portion of the Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap attributable to Tier 2, as well as the decline in the portion of the Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap attributable to Tier 1, that occurs between FY 2022 and FY 2023 is once again due to the shift of CPS from Tier 1 into Tier 2 during that period.[168]

Figure 26
Percent of Statewide Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap for Tier 1 & 2, FY 2018 – FY 2024



Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

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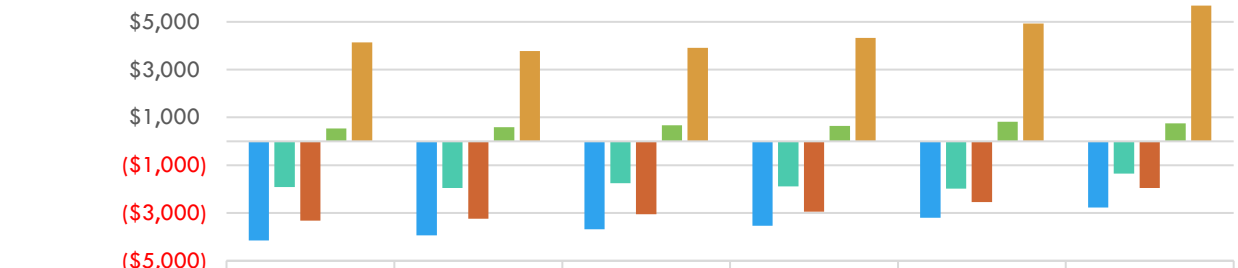
Figure 27 shows the per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap or surplus by Tier. Not surprisingly, Tier 1 consistently had the greatest per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap, while Tier 4 consistently had the greatest per pupil Adequacy surplus.

Figure 27
Annual Per Pupil Adequacy Funding Gap or Surplus by Tier, FY 2018 – FY 2024



	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 22	FY 23	Fy 24
Tier 1 (Gap)	($4,147)	($3,941)	($3,683)	($3,534)	($3,201)	($2,768)
Tier 2 (Gap)	($1,915)	($1,949)	($1,752)	($1,887)	($1,977)	($1,347)
Total Per Pupil Gap	($3,319)	($3,234)	($3,050)	($2,943)	($2,549)	($1,953)
Tier 3 (Surplus)	$541	$597	$675	$640	$824	$757
Tier 4 (Surplus)	$4,144	$3,775	$3,919	$4,322	$4,929	$5,686

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

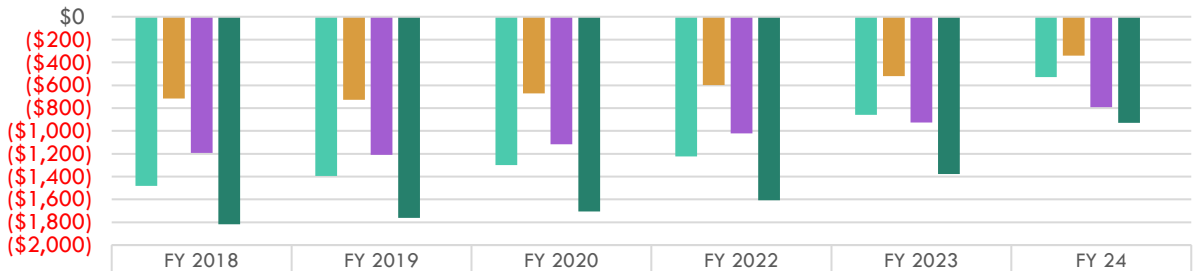
Figure 27 also shows the average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap for districts in Tier 1 consistently lessened over the FY 2018 through FY 2024 period. However, the average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap increased for Tier 2 districts between FY 2022 and FY 2023. But rather than indicate a flaw in the EBF distribution model, this increase was largely caused by the shift of CPS from Tier 1 in FY 2022 into Tier 2 in FY 2023**.**

In FY 2024, the average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gaps decreased to the lowest it has ever been for both Tier 1 and Tier 2.[169]

5.2 Adequacy Funding Gaps by Region

Figure 28 shows the dollar value of the Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap broken down by region.

Figure 28
Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap by Region, FY 2018 – FY 2024



	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 24
CPS	($1,480,830,299)	($1,394,044,654)	($1,299,501,490)	($1,223,398,105)	($860,431,287)	($526,919,184)
Cook County	($716,792,169)	($727,806,377)	($671,291,444)	($599,707,138)	($521,185,144)	($341,527,487)
Collar Counties	($1,192,446,337)	($1,210,003,252)	($1,115,767,800)	($1,021,033,917)	($925,280,727)	($790,875,367)
Downstate Districts	($1,817,295,612)	($1,761,804,734)	($1,704,691,389)	($1,606,767,081)	($1,377,046,673)	($929,802,876)
Total Statewide Gap	($5,207,364,417)	($5,093,659,016)	($4,791,252,123)	($4,450,906,241)	($3,683,943,831)	($2,589,124,914)

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

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Note that CPS had an average Adequacy Funding Gap of nearly $1.3 billion during each of the first six years of EBF implementation. This is about $400 million less than the average Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap for Downstate Illinois during the same time period.[170] Of course, CPS is a region that consists of just one district, responsible for educating roughly 322,000 students, the vast majority of whom—76 percent—are low-income and/or non-white (89 percent).[171]

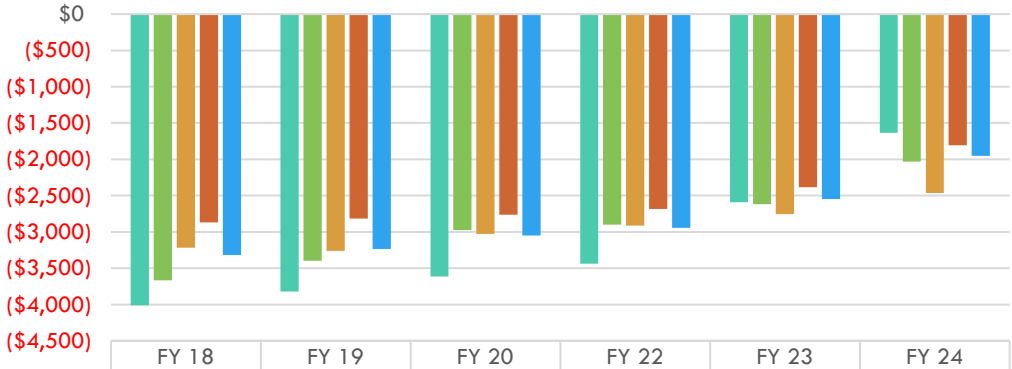
Downstate Illinois, on the other hand, includes some 564 different school districts, which collectively educate 620,000 students, many of which—48 percent—are low-income and/or white (68 percent).[172] Given that Downstate districts educate 34 percent of the total ASE in the state, and that 74 percent of all Tier 1 districts are located Downstate, it is not surprising that the dollar value of the Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap is greater in Downstate than any other region.[173]

However, the dollar value of the Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap by region does not provide a complete picture of the severity of that Adequacy Funding Gap actually faced by districts. This is because Downstate districts, which educate more students than any other region of Illinois, are therefore likely to have the greatest Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap of any region. An analysis of the Adequacy Funding Gap per pupil in each region provides a better understanding of the severity of the funding gap faced by districts in that region.

From the inception of the EBF in FY 2018 through FY 2022, CPS had the greatest annual per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap of any region, as shown in **Figure 29**. Then in FY 2023, CPS realized an unprecedented year-to-year increase in local resources of $338 million, coupled with a decrease in student enrollment of 2.75 percent.[174] In FY 2024, this trend continued with another large increase of CPPRT of 102 percent and a decrease in student enrollment of 3.13 percent.[175]

The combined impact of those two exigencies both pushed the final Percent of Adequacy for CPS above the Target Ratio, causing CPS to move from Tier 1 into Tier 2, and greatly reduced CPS' Adequacy Funding Gap, in the aggregate and on a per pupil basis.

Figure 29
Annual Per Pupil Adequacy Funding Gap Distribution by Region, FY 2018- FY 2024



	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24
CPS	($4,011)	($3,820)	($3,613)	($3,438)	($2,589)	($1,637)
Cook County	($3,666)	($3,396)	($2,973)	($2,899)	($2,616)	($2,032)
Collar Counties	($3,219)	($3,263)	($3,026)	($2,911)	($2,755)	($2,462)
Downstate Districts	($2,868)	($2,818)	($2,765)	($2,683)	($2,384)	($1,806)
Total Per Pupil Gap	($3,319)	($3,234)	($3,050)	($2,943)	($2,549)	($1,953)

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

Because of those changes—which were local in nature and not a product of enhanced investment under the EBF—in FY 2024, the per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap in both Cook County and the Collar Counties became greater than the per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap in CPS.[176] Meanwhile, the annual per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap for Downstate districts consistently ranked as the lowest of any region over the FY 2018 through FY 2023 sequence, until FY 2024 when CPS surpassed Downstate as the lowest.[177]

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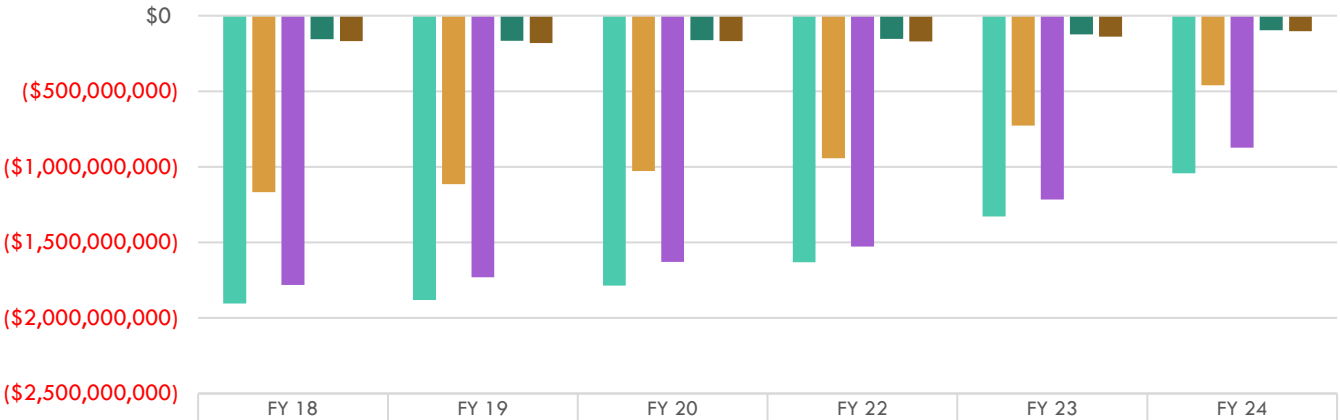
5.3 Adequacy Funding Gaps By Race & Ethnicity

Figure 30 shows the dollar value of Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap facing students in each major racial and ethnic group.

Figure 30
Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap by Race/Ethnicity, FY 2018—FY 2024



	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24
White	($1,905,377,862)	($1,881,072,367)	($1,785,798,398)	($1,632,077,923)	($1,329,033,317)	($1,042,387,730)
Black	($1,166,981,175)	($1,115,129,762)	($1,028,137,554)	($943,452,456)	($726,781,035)	($460,599,573)
Latinx	($1,780,816,617)	($1,730,165,755)	($1,629,538,564)	($1,527,775,388)	($1,217,231,321)	($873,977,646)
Asian	($155,118,677)	($165,397,558)	($160,595,303)	($154,143,957)	($124,188,752)	($96,171,431)
2 or More	($167,034,356)	($179,868,346)	($167,696,126)	($169,387,525)	($139,029,668)	($101,774,885)

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

The greatest Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap by race and ethnicity is faced by white students. This is, again, not surprising, given that most students in Illinois identify as white.[178] Similar to the regional analysis, the total dollar value of the Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap by race and/or ethnicity does not provide a complete picture of the severity of the Adequacy Funding Gap actually faced by students in any particular group. Instead, an analysis of the average Adequacy Funding Gap per pupil that is further broken down by race/ethnicity provides a better understanding of the severity of the funding gap faced by students in different racial/ethnic groups.

Figure 31 shows the dollar value of the average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap faced by students in each major racial and ethnic group. On average, Asian students face the smallest average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap in FY 2024 at $1,770.[179] Coming in a close second were Black students, who collectively face an average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap in FY 2024 of $1,784—an amount which is fully $844 or 32 percent less than the $2,628 per pupil Adequacy Gap Black students faced in FY 2023.[180] In fact, FY 2024 marks the first time Black students in Illinois will have a lesser per pupil Adequacy Gap on average than white students.[181]

This remarkable, and positive, turn of events is primarily due to the dramatic increase in local revenue generated by the CPPRT for CPS over the past two fiscal years. In FY 2022, CPS collected $193 million in CPPRT. By FY 2024, that amount jumped to $687 million, an incredible increase of 256 percent.[182]

As noted previously, CPS educates 38 percent of all Black students in the state—by far the greatest portion of any region. Given that tremendous growth in local revenue for CPS, and the significant proportion of Black students in Illinois educated by CPS, the average Adequacy Gap per pupil faced by Black students in the state went down significantly in both FY 2023—declining by $533, from $3,181 in FY 2022 to $2,628 in FY 2023, and again in FY 2024 as indicated above.[183]

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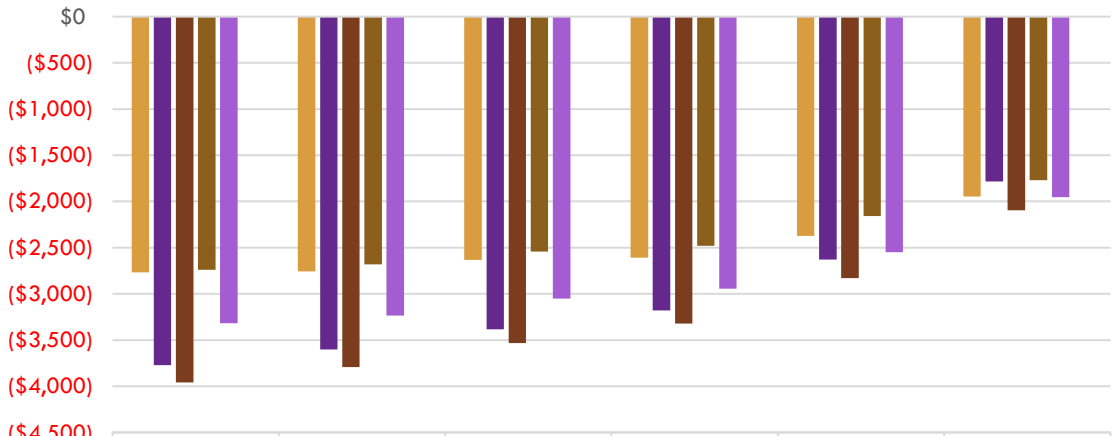
CPS also educates a material portion—27 percent—of all Latinx students in Illinois.[184] That is the second highest of any region in the state, trailing only the Collar Counties, which educate 31 percent of all Latinx students in Illinois.[185] Because of this, the significant spike in local CPPRT revenue for CPS also helped close the average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap faced by Latinx students.

From FY 2022 to FY 2023, the average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap faced by Latinx students decreased by $490, from $2,481 to $2,158.[186] In FY 2024, the average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap on average faced by Latinx students saw its largest reduction to date, dropping from $2,830 to $2,096, a decline of $734 or 26 percent.[187] Latinx students statewide still face the largest per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap on average and have since FY 2018.[188]

While the reduction in the Adequacy Funding Gaps for Black and Latinx students attributable to the significant growth in CPPRT revenue for CPS that has occurred over the last two fiscal years is a positive development, those reductions are in all likelihood not sustainable. That is because the Illinois Department of Revenue projects that CPPRT revenue will begin to flatten out and then start declining in value in the future.[189] If and when the CPPRT revenue for CPS declines in amount, the corresponding Adequacy Funding Gaps for Black and Latinex students will start to worsen.

Figure 31
Annual Per Pupil Adequacy Funding Gap by Race/Ethnicity, FY 2018–FY 2024



	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24
White	($2,766)	($2,757)	($2,634)	($2,608)	($2,372)	($1,945)
Black	($3,770)	($3,602)	($3,383)	($3,181)	($2,628)	($1,784)
Latinx	($3,958)	($3,793)	($3,532)	($3,320)	($2,830)	($2,096)
Asian	($2,740)	($2,682)	($2,542)	($2,481)	($2,158)	($1,770)
2 or More	($3,319)	($3,234)	($3,050)	($2,943)	($2,549)	($1,952)
Total Per Pupil Gap	($3,319)	($3,234)	($3,050)	($2,943)	($2,549)	($1,953)

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

5.4 Adequacy Funding Gaps By Income & EL Status

Figure 32 shows the dollar value of the Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap that is attributed to students who are low-income or EL status. This amount was determined by (i) first, multiplying the percentage of students in a district who are either LI or EL by the dollar value of the Adequacy Funding Gap in said district, and then (ii) summing the respective dollar amount of the Adequacy Funding Gap attributable to either LI or EL students as the case may be for all districts.

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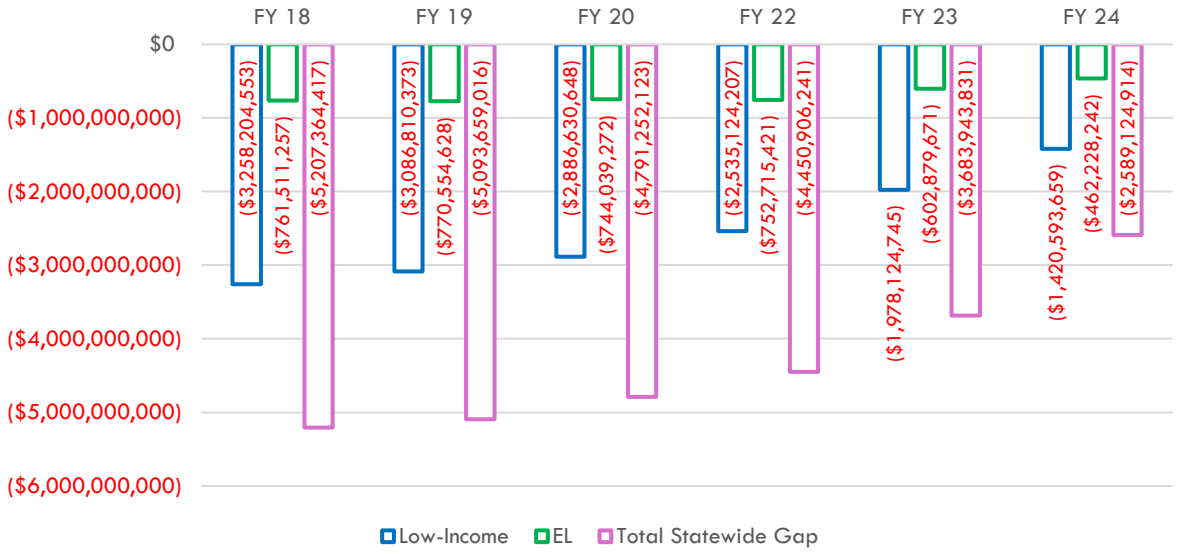
Figure 32
Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap by Low-Income & EL Status, FY 2018–FY 2023

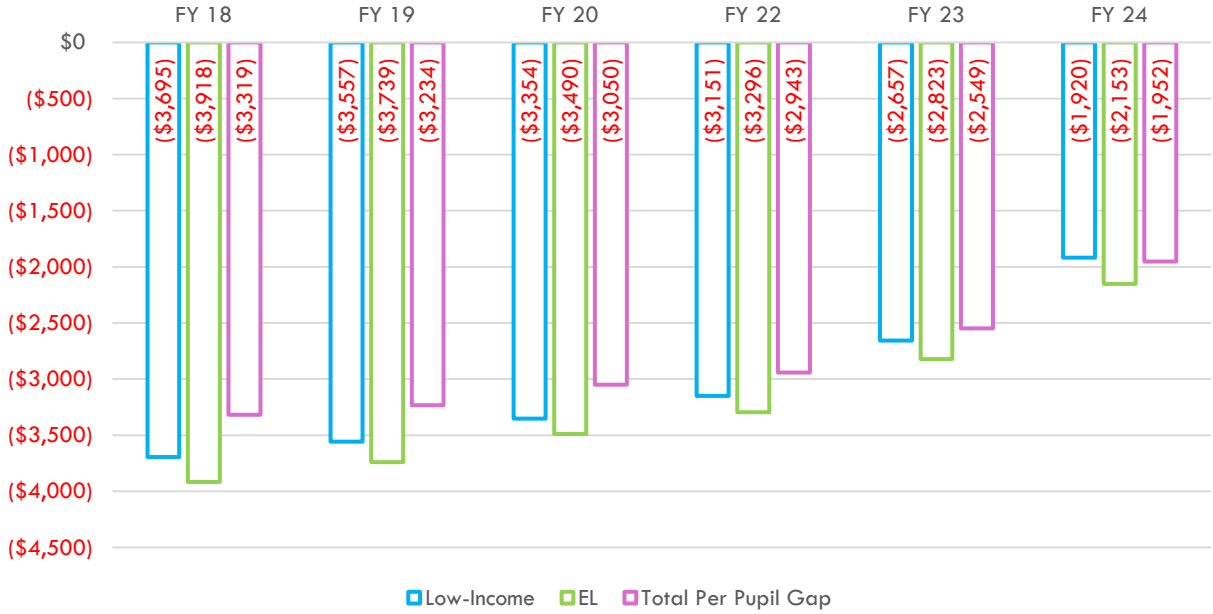


Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2023

Low-income and EL students face large Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gaps, which is not surprising given that 80 percent of EL students are educated in Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts, and 83 percent of low-income students are educated in Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts.[190] Very few low-income and EL students have the advantage of attending school in a district that has either adequate funding or an adequacy funding surplus.

Figure 33 shows the dollar value of the average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap faced by low-income and EL students. This is calculated by dividing the Aggregate Adeuqacy Funding Gaps for low-income and English Learner students by the number of students who are categorized as low-income or English Learners in Tiers 1 and 2 (districts that have Adequacy Funding Gaps).

Figure 33
Annual Per Pupil Adequacy Funding Gap by Low-Income & EL Status, FY 2018 – FY 2024



Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

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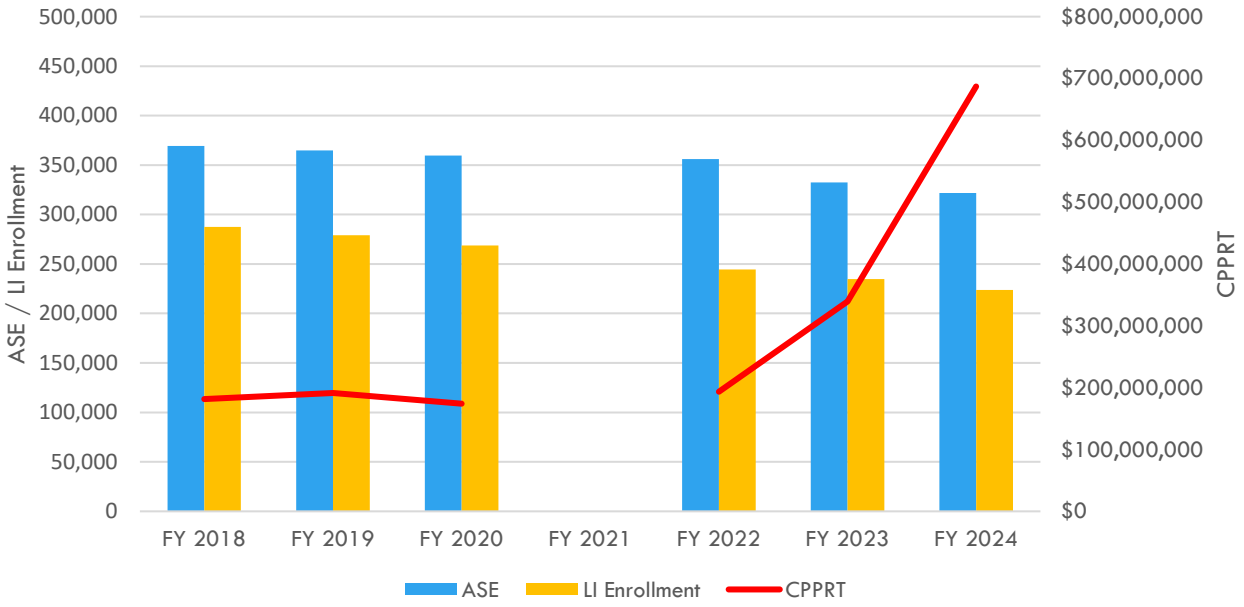
When the data on race, ethnicity, income level, and EL status are considered together some interesting—and disturbing—patterns merge. For instance, not only do Latinx students face the greatest average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gaps by race and ethnicity, but the per pupil Adequacy Funding Gaps they face are nearly equivalent to the per pupil funding gaps faced by low-income and EL students.[191]

In FY 2023, the average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap faced by Black students ($2,628) was nearly identical to the average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap faced by low-income students ($2,657), and the average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap faced by Latinx students ($2,830) was nearly identical to the per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap faced by EL students ($2,823).

In FY 2024, however, the shift of CPS from Tier 1 into Tier 2, and the reasons for that shift—the reduction in student population generally and low-income students specifically, coupled with the substantial uptick in CPS's CPPRT revenue—all of which are shown in **Figure 34**, have resulted in the average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap for Black students going down from $2,628 to $1,784. Which means for the first time ever, the average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap for Black students in Illinois is actually lower than it is for white students. Unfortunately this progress will likely prove to be ephemeral, because, as noted previously, IDOR is projecting that CPPRT revenue will return to lower levels over the next few years.[192]

Figure 34
CPS Average Student Enrollment, Low-Income Enrollment, and CPPRT Revenue, FY 2018 – FY 2024



Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

The good news is that **Figure 33** also highlights how effective the EBF has been in helping reduce average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gaps faced by low-income and EL students. Consider that in FY 2018—the first year of the EBF—the average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap faced by low-income students was $3,695, or $1,775 more than it is this year in FY 2024. Similarly, the average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gap faced by EL students in FY 2018 was $3,918, or $1,765 more than the $2,153 it is in FY 2024.

However, it would be disingenuous to say that the declines in average per pupil Adequacy Funding Gaps were strictly a result of the EBF's effectiveness. Other factors that impact these declines are shown in **Figure 35,** and include items such as the unprecedented statewide increase in CPPRT revenue of 279 percent between FY 2018 and FY 2024, the 17 percent growth statewide in EAV and local property tax revenue during the same time period, and the 7.3 percent decrease statewide in student enrollment since FY 2018.

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Figure 35
Change in Resources and ASE Contributing to Adequacy Funding Gap Decrease, FY 2018 – FY 2024

	FY 2018	FY 2024	Change Between FY 2018 & FY 2024
Statewide Adequacy Target 90%	$22,993,202,698	$25,277,336,938	$2,284,134,240
Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap	($5,207,364,417)	($2,404,692,202)	($2,802,672,215)
New Tier Funding to Date			$1,847,616,554
Property Tax Relief Grant to Date			$202,692,217
Local Property Tax Revenue (Real Receipts)	$14,468,817,533	$16,867,739,942	$2,398,922,409
Local CPPRT Revenue	$677,116,722	$2,565,663,203	$1,888,546,481
ASE	1,959,356	1,815,942	(143,414)

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

6. Income Quintile Analysis

One major impetus behind enactment of the EBF was to redress Illinois' historic standing as having one of the most inequitable school funding formulas in the nation, when measured by the income level of students.[193] Generally speaking, under the state's prior school funding formula, districts with the greatest concentrations of low-income students had significantly less in per pupil funding than districts with very low concentrations of low-income students.[194] The EBF was intended to reduce that discrepancy by prioritizing distribution of new Tier funding to districts with greater concentrations of low-income students to educate.

To help determine whether the EBF has been effectively accomplishing this intended outcome, the following analysis delineates the impact of the EBF across all school districts—other than CPS—broken down into quintiles (each a "**LI Quintile**"), predicated on the percentage of low-income students attending each district. Because of its large student population, CPS is considered separately from all other districts in the state to avoid distorting data.

Based on extant low-income student populations of each school district other than CPS, as of FY 2024:

1. **Quintile 1** includes districts that have zero to 24 percent of their student populations identified as low-income;
2. **Quintile 2** includes districts that have 24 to 39 percent of their student populations identified as low-income;
3. **Quintile 3** includes districts that have 39 to 49 percent of their student populations identified as low-income;
4. **Quintile 4** includes districts that have 49 to 61 percent of their student populations identified as low-income; and
5. **Quintile 5** includes districts that have 61 to 100 percent of their student populations identified as low-income.

CPS is categorized on a stand-alone basis and has 76 percent of its student population identified as low-income.

Figure 36 identifies the aggregate number of low-income students attending schools in districts in the respective LI Quintiles.

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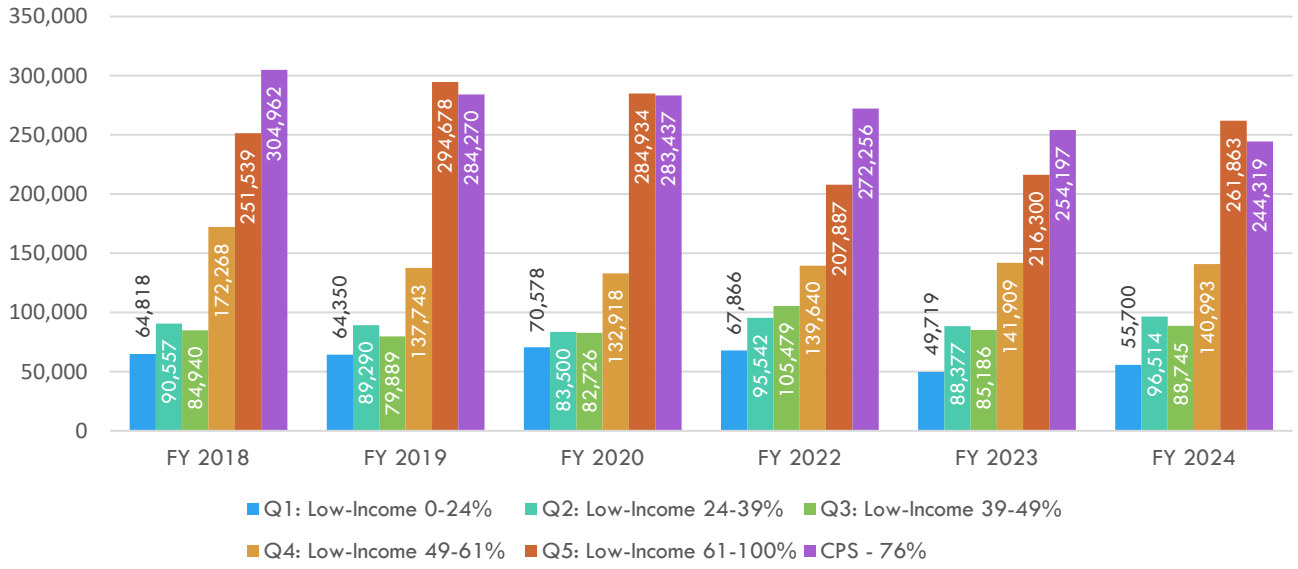
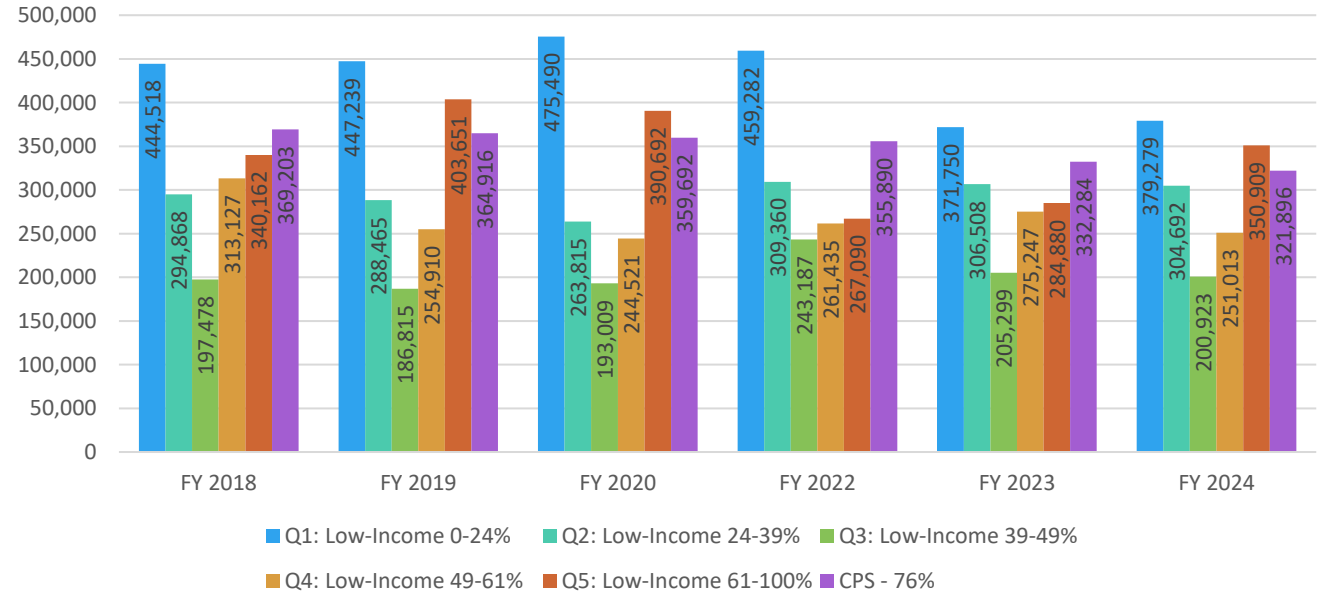
Figure 36
Number of Low-Income Students by District LI Quintile, FY 2018 – FY 2024



Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

Of course, any new Tier funding a district receives in a given fiscal year is used to educate all the students in that district, not just the low-income students. **Figure 37** shows the total number of students attending school in the respective LI Quintiles, regardless of low-income status.

Figure 37
Number of Total Students by District LI Quintile, FY 2018 – FY 2024



Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

One clear indication that the EBF has been working effectively to counter past funding inequities is that most new Tier funding under the EBF has been distributed to districts with student populations that range from 61 to 100 percent low-income, as shown in **Figure 38.**

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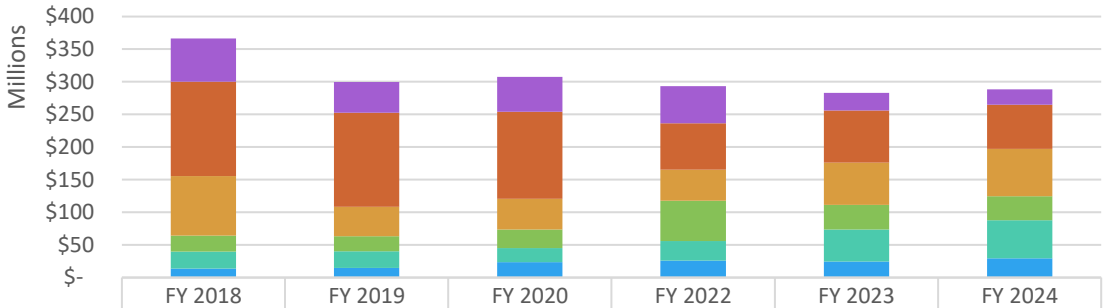
Figure 38
Distribution of New Tier Funding by LI Quintile, FY 2018 – FY 2024

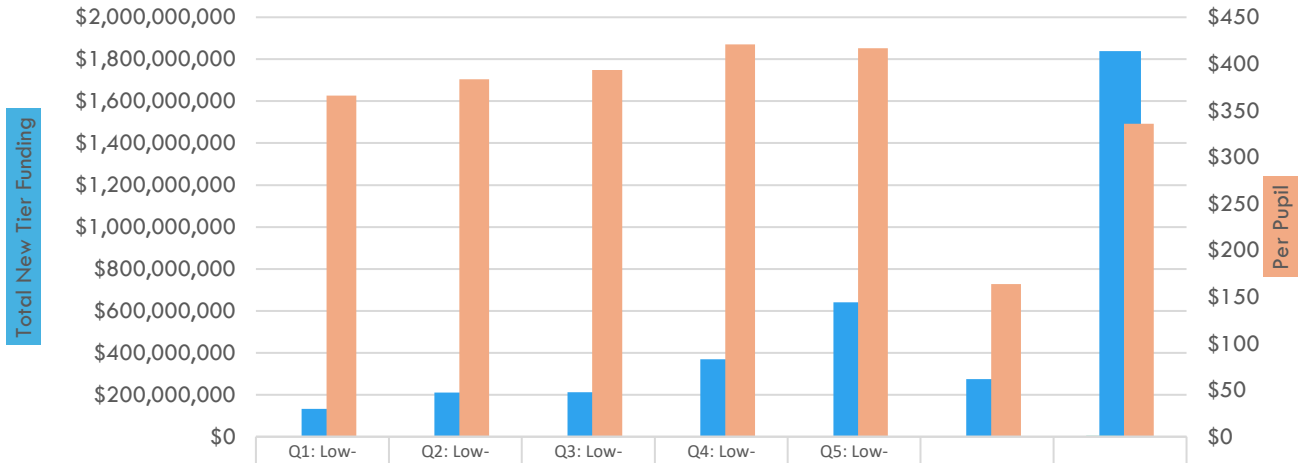


	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Total / All LI Quintiles	$366,462,635	$299,884,235	$307,415,875	$293,303,971	$282,872,770	$288,362,311
CPS - 76%	$66,383,046	$47,416,408	$53,076,677	$56,653,898	$27,012,298	$23,357,290
Q5: Low-Income 61-100%	$144,722,590	$143,839,318	$133,483,733	$71,244,121	$79,785,874	$67,556,544
Q4: Low-Income 49-61%	$91,011,038	$45,074,168	$47,436,931	$47,848,304	$64,441,140	$72,820,553
Q3: Low-Income 39-49%	$24,723,216	$23,103,529	$28,147,168	$61,383,771	$37,951,878	$36,672,252
Q2: Low-Income 24-39%	$25,593,469	$25,408,416	$21,564,334	$30,287,577	$48,968,927	$58,326,406
Q1: Low-Income 0-24%	$14,029,276	$15,042,395	$23,707,032	$25,886,300	$24,712,654	$29,629,267

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

This is not surprising given how the EBF is designed to work, which includes, among other elements, giving extra funding weight to low-income students in the Adequacy Target calculation.[195] Overall, including distributions to CPS, $915 million, or roughly 50 percent of the $1.8 billion in total new Tier funding distributed under the EBF has gone to districts that have student populations that are 61 percent or more low-income, as shown in **Figure 39**.[196]

Figure 39
Total Statewide Aggregate & Average Per Pupil New Tier Funding Since FY 2018, by LI Quintile



	Q1: Low-Income 0-24%	Q2: Low-Income 24-39%	Q3: Low-Income 39-49%	Q4: Low-Income 49-61%	Q5: Low-Income 61-100%	CPS - 76%	Statewide
Total New Tier Funding	$133,006,923	$210,149,129	$211,981,815	$368,632,134	$640,632,181	$273,899,616	$1,838,301,79
% of New Tier Funding	7%	11%	12%	20%	35%	15%	100%
Per Pupil New Tier Funding	$366	$383	$394	$421	$417	$164	$336

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

The data concerning Adequacy Funding Gaps confirms that the vast majority of new Tier funding provided under the EBF should in fact go to districts educating student populations that are 61 percent or more low-income, inclusive of CPS. For instance, **Figure 40** shows that those districts with greater concentrations of low-income

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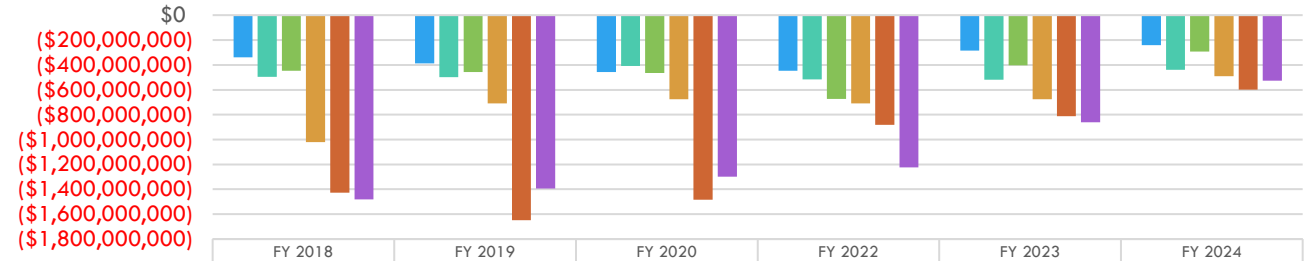
students do in fact have greater Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gaps than districts with lesser concentrations of low-income students.

Figure 40
Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gap by District LI Quintile, FY 2018 – FY 2024

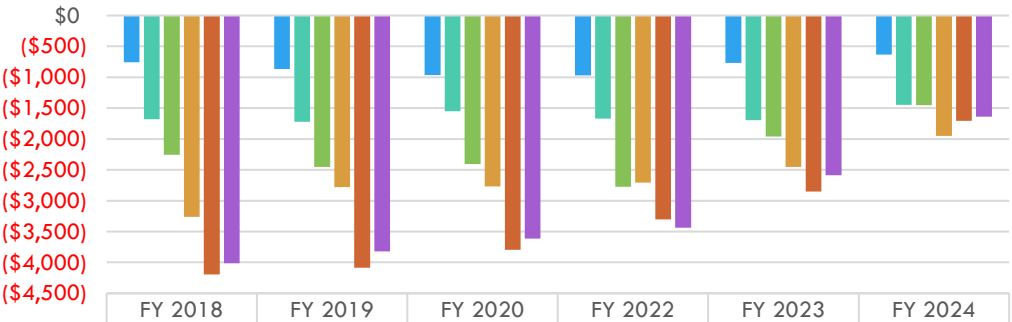


	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Q1: Low-Income 0-24%	($337,722,427)	($386,541,606)	($458,029,970)	($446,338,386)	($285,153,968)	($240,407,452)
Q2: Low-Income 24-39%	($495,197,807)	($497,260,638)	($409,210,180)	($516,606,265)	($519,847,999)	($440,241,767)
Q3: Low-Income 39-49%	($445,984,533)	($457,956,128)	($464,251,245)	($674,157,488)	($402,462,067)	($291,936,887)
Q4: Low-Income 49-61%	($1,020,594,614)	($708,941,297)	($676,946,547)	($708,127,483)	($674,901,646)	($489,995,132)
Q5: Low-Income 61-100%	($1,427,034,738)	($1,648,914,694)	($1,483,312,691)	($882,087,987)	($812,416,901)	($599,624,492)
CPS - 76%	($1,480,830,299)	($1,394,044,654)	($1,299,501,490)	($1,223,398,105)	($860,431,287)	($526,919,184)

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

Per pupil Adequacy Funding Gaps are greatest for districts that fall into the fourth low-income quintile with student populations that are 49 to 61 percent low-income, as shown in **Figure 41,** followed by districts in the fifth low-income quintile and CPS.

Figure 41
Annual Per Pupil Adequacy Funding Gap by District LI Quintile, FY 2018 – FY 2024



	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Q1: Low-Income 0-24%	($760)	($864)	($963)	($972)	($767)	($634)
Q2: Low-Income 24-39%	($1,679)	($1,724)	($1,551)	($1,670)	($1,696)	($1,445)
Q3: Low-Income 39-49%	($2,258)	($2,451)	($2,405)	($2,772)	($1,960)	($1,453)
Q4: Low-Income 49-61%	($3,259)	($2,781)	($2,768)	($2,709)	($2,452)	($1,952)
Q5: Low-Income 61-100%	($4,195)	($4,085)	($3,797)	($3,303)	($2,852)	($1,709)
CPS - 76%	($4,011)	($3,820)	($3,613)	($3,438)	($2,589)	($1,637)

Source: CTBA analysis of ISBE EBF Full Calculations, FY 2018 through FY 2024

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7. Conclusion

To date, all the data indicate the EBF is working as intended. Every region of the state has benefited from the new K-12 funding distributed under the statute, notably improving funding in school districts across the state that needed it most. The EBF has effectively targeted the vast majority of new education funding to: districts with the least amount of resources in comparison to their respective needs; supporting students who have been historically marginalized; and reducing educational Adequacy Funding Gaps by race, ethnicity, and income that were created under the state's prior school funding formula.

However, the change in overall Aggregate Adequacy Funding Gaps since FY 2018 cannot be isolated to just the impact of new Tier funding distributed under the formulas. While annual new Tier funding is targeting districts and students that have historically been underfunded, growth in CPPRT, a local tax on businesses, as well as changes in ASE, particularly for CPS, have very much impacted education funding and distribution of new Tier dollars under the EBF in the past two fiscal years. It is unclear how Adequacy Gaps across the state will change in the coming years, especially for districts that experienced the bulk of the jump in CPPRT revenue such as CPS.

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Endnotes

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When determining the Aggregate Funding Gap, no adjustments were made to consider potential future changes in Average Student Enrollment ("ASE") or Local Capacity Target ("LCT"). That said, each time CTBA makes a new projection of the Aggregate Funding Gap, the LCT and ASE used to begin the projection will be modified to incorporate the then current data points therefor.
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