


MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Tony McCombie, House Minority Leader
The Honorable Don Harmon, Senate President
The Honorable John Curran, Senate Minority Leader
The Honorable Emanuel “Chris” Welch, Speaker of the House

FROM: Dr. Tony Sanders 
State Superintendent of Education

DATE: March 7, 2024

SUBJECT: PA 103-0008 Glenwood Academy

Pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/18-8.15, the Professional Review Panel, in cooperation with the Illinois State Board of Education, submits a report on the annual adjustments to Glenwood Academy’s Evidence-Based Funding formula.

This report is transmitted on behalf of the state superintendent of education. For additional copies of this report or for more specific information, please contact Dana Stoerger, executive director of Legislative Affairs at 217-782-6510 or dstoerge@isbe.net.

cc: Secretary of the Senate
Clerk of the House
Legislative Research Unit
State Government Report Center

Report to General Assembly on Annual Adjustments to the Base Funding Minimum for Glenwood Academy

Background

The Professional Review Panel (PRP) was created under 105 ILCS 5/18-8.15 to study and review the implementation and effect of the Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) formula and to recommend continual recalibration and future study topics and modifications pertaining to it. Public Act 103-0008 amended 105 ILCS 5/18-8.15 and added: "On or before April 1, 2024, the Panel must submit a report to the General Assembly on annual adjustments to Glenwood Academy's base-funding minimum in a similar fashion to school districts under this section."

According to Glenwood Academy's website:

Glenwood Academy is a revolutionary private residential school that provides a supportive learning community for students grades 2-8, with a high school option at three local partner schools. Working hand-in-hand with parents and caregivers, the Glenwood experience builds the platform children need to be successful students and become outstanding citizens. We provide life-changing situations for students who come from challenging situations, and who have been impacted by poverty, violence, inadequate educational systems, as well as a lack of basic resources, such as food and shelter. Students live onsite Sundays through Fridays in a nurturing environment, away from the violence, poverty and challenging situations that they may have experienced previously. Nearly all students live below or at the poverty line. Glenwood Academy is a privately funded institution that relies on the generosity of its donors to continuously serve students whose families are most in need of support. In addition to education and the residential component, Glenwood Academy provides extensive extracurricular opportunities and proactive counseling services.

Glenwood Academy has received funding through ISBE for various activities. On the next page is a list of non-EBF funding streams through ISBE since fiscal year 2022:

State and Federal Funds Administered to Glenwood Academy

07-016-968P-00 & 07-016-029X-01

Department of Funding and Disbursements

February 26, 2024

	FY 2022	FY2023	FY2024	Total	Comment
Freedom Schools Grant	\$ 206,128	\$ -	\$ 143,872	\$ 350,000	Grant ends 12/31/24; grantee has spent all available funding as of 1/31/24
Mental Healthcare for Low Income Children	\$ -	\$ 500,000	\$ -	\$ 500,000	FY23 member initiative grant
Illinois Free Lunch/Breakfast	\$ 621	\$ 819	\$ 819	\$ 2,260	FY24 is estimated at flat to FY23
National School Lunch	\$ 33,619	\$ 53,379	\$ 53,379	\$ 140,378	FY24 is estimated at flat to FY23
National School Breakfast	\$ 22,880	\$ 30,912	\$ 30,912	\$ 84,703	FY24 is estimated at flat to FY23
National School Lunch - Pandemic EBT	\$ 628	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 628	FY24 is estimated at flat to FY23
National School Lunch - Supply Chain	\$ 6,318	\$ 8,134	\$ 8,424	\$ 22,876	FY24 is estimated at actual disbursement that occurred 1/23/24
National School Lunch - Equipment Assistance	\$ 17,300	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 17,300	FY24 is estimated at flat to FY23
	\$ 287,495	\$ 593,244	\$ 237,407	\$ 1,118,146	

Glenwood Academy was designated as a “specially funded unit” in PA 100-0465, and its Base Funding Minimum was set at \$625,500. The school was excluded from Tier designation. The Base Funding Minimum for Glenwood Academy was increased to \$952,014 by PA 103-0008; it continued to be excluded from Tier designation.

Glenwood Academy does not at the current time report demographic data to ISBE. Additionally, ISBE does not have data on how students are placed at Glenwood or any information about non-ISBE funding streams related to its students.

This topic was reviewed by the PRP Distribution Committee. The committee convened on January 31, 2024, to review assorted options to comply with the requirement included in PA 103-0008. The PRP Distribution Committee considered three possibilities:

1. No changes are made to the EBF statute regarding Glenwood Academy. Its Base Funding Minimum remains at \$952,014.
2. Glenwood Academy becomes an entity that would receive a Tier designation and Tier funding in the EBF calculations. Each year's Tier funding would become an increase to its Base Funding Minimum in the following year.
3. Glenwood Academy is removed from the EBF statute and placed as a separate line item in the ISBE budget or a different agency's budget.

In respect of the second option described above, ISBE reviewed the mechanisms that would need to be in place to allow Glenwood Academy to become part of the EBF calculation process and to be treated similarly to organizational units that receive Tier funding, such as public school districts and Regional Office of Education programs. Glenwood Academy is a private school that has an admissions process for families. It is unclear from its website if there are any tuition charges. There are no other private schools or academies of this nature currently included in the EBF model. Incorporating Glenwood Academy potentially sets a precedent for other private schools to be included in the future, which would divert public funding from public schools and specially funded units.

ISBE currently does not collect any student enrollment data from Glenwood Academy. Including it in EBF calculations would require the entity to provide ISBE with three years of enrollment data at grade level for October 1 and March 1. Additionally, decisions on the following topics would need to be made prior to making Glenwood Academy eligible for EBF:

1. The number of students in PreK-12 who are English learner students,
2. A means to calculate a low-income student count, and
3. A means to calculate a Local Capacity Target for Glenwood Academy because the entity has no Equalized Assessed Value or tax base.

The third option described above would mirror how the Philip J. Rock Center and School, the Illinois Math and Science Academy (IMSA), the Illinois School for the Deaf, and the Illinois School for the Visually Impaired are funded. The Philip J. Rock Center is funded through the ISBE budget, while IMSA is funded through the Illinois Board of Higher Education. The Illinois School for the Deaf and Illinois School for the Visually Impaired are both funded through the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS).

Legal Analysis

The purpose and intent of EBF can be found within the language describing the calculation model. Section 18-8.15 (a) contains general provisions regarding EBF, including:

*"The purpose of this Section is to ensure that, by June 30, 2027 and beyond, this State has a kindergarten through grade 12 public education system with the capacity to ensure the educational development of all persons to the limits of their capacities in accordance with Section 1 of Article X of the Constitution of the State of Illinois. To accomplish that objective, this Section creates a method of funding public education that is evidence-based; is sufficient to ensure **every student** receives a meaningful opportunity to learn irrespective of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, or community-income level; and is sustainable and predictable. When fully funded under this Section, every school shall have the resources, based on what the evidence indicates is needed, to:*

- (A) provide all students with a high quality education that offers the academic, enrichment, social and emotional support, technical, and career-focused programs that will allow them to become competitive workers, responsible

parents, productive citizens of this State, and active members of our national democracy;

(B) 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;

(C) reduce, with a goal of eliminating, the achievement gap between at-risk and non-at-risk students by raising the performance of at-risk students and not by reducing standards; and

(D) ensure this State satisfies its obligation to assume the primary responsibility to fund public education and simultaneously relieve the disproportionate burden placed on local property taxes to fund schools.” 105 ILCS 5/18-8.15 (a) (Emphasis added.)

One of the main purposes of EBF is to ensure adequate resources are distributed based, in part, on student enrollment counts. The EBF model contains various investment types that are used to determine the initial adequacy target. These include, but are not limited to, investments for special education teachers and assistants and additional investments for low-income and English learner students. Tier money is additional funding that the districts use on the investment types to ensure they have adequate resources to meet the goals and purpose of Evidence-Based Funding.

ISBE is required to calculate and report an organizational unit’s total state funds allocated for its students with disabilities. Additionally, organizational units must submit annual spending plans that describe how it will use the EBF dollars it receives with “specific identification of the intended utilization of Low-Income, English learner, and special education resources.”

EBF is a method of funding the public education system that is evidence-based; the statute simply does not contemplate that a private school would be included in the EBF calculation model and receive Tier funding. It would be unworkable and contradictory to the purpose of EBF to include a school in the model that does not have resources available for all the special populations specifically identified in the EBF model.

Conclusion

Funding Glenwood Academy through a separate line item in ISBE’s budget or in another agency budget, potentially IDHS, mitigates the problematic areas concerning the lack of information that is reported to ISBE as well as the concerns noted in the legal analysis. Funding Glenwood Academy through a separate yearly appropriation would facilitate increases in the appropriation to be made annually based on the needs of the institution, subject to funding availability, while mitigating the complications that arise when including Glenwood Academy in the Evidence-Based Funding model.

The EBF statute was originally crafted to avoid frequent annual modifications, aiming for a stable and consistent framework for public school funding. To accommodate unforeseen needs or special projects, schools such as Glenwood Academy would be best incorporated as a distinct, separate line item within the overall budget, rather than adjusting the foundational structure of EBF itself. This approach ensures clarity and maintains the integrity and equity of the original funding mechanism.