

AN ACT concerning education.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,  
represented in the General Assembly:

Section 5. The School Code is amended by changing  
Section 1D-1 and adding Section 2-3.51a as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/1D-1)

Sec. 1D-1. Block grant funding.

(a) For fiscal year 1996 and each fiscal year thereafter, the State Board of Education shall award to a school district having a population exceeding 500,000 inhabitants a general education block grant and an educational services block grant, determined as provided in this Section, in lieu of distributing to the district separate State funding for the programs described in subsections (b) and (c). The provisions of this Section, however, do not apply to any federal funds that the district is entitled to receive. In accordance with Section 2-3.32, all block grants are subject to an audit. Therefore, block grant receipts and block grant expenditures shall be recorded to the appropriate fund code for the designated block grant.

(b) The general education block grant shall include the following programs: REI Initiative, Summer Bridges, Preschool At Risk, K-6 Comprehensive Arts, School Improvement Support, Urban Education, Scientific Literacy, Substance Abuse Prevention, Second Language Planning, Staff Development, Outcomes and Assessment, K-6 Reading Improvement, 7-12 Continued Reading Improvement, Truants' Optional Education, Hispanic Programs, Agriculture Education, Gifted Education, Parental Education, Prevention Initiative, Report Cards, and Criminal Background Investigations. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, all amounts paid under the general

education block grant from State appropriations to a school district in a city having a population exceeding 500,000 inhabitants shall be appropriated and expended by the board of that district for any of the programs included in the block grant or any of the board's lawful purposes.

(c) The educational services block grant shall include the following programs: Bilingual, Regular and Vocational Transportation, State Lunch and Free Breakfast Program, Special Education (Personnel, Extraordinary, Transportation, Orphanage, Private Tuition), Summer School, Educational Service Centers, and Administrator's Academy. This subsection (c) does not relieve the district of its obligation to provide the services required under a program that is included within the educational services block grant. It is the intention of the General Assembly in enacting the provisions of this subsection (c) to relieve the district of the administrative burdens that impede efficiency and accompany single-program funding. The General Assembly encourages the board to pursue mandate waivers pursuant to Section 2-3.25g.

(d) For fiscal year 1996 and each fiscal year thereafter, the amount of the district's block grants shall be determined as follows: (i) with respect to each program that is included within each block grant, the district shall receive an amount equal to the same percentage of the current fiscal year appropriation made for that program as the percentage of the appropriation received by the district from the 1995 fiscal year appropriation made for that program, and (ii) the total amount that is due the district under the block grant shall be the aggregate of the amounts that the district is entitled to receive for the fiscal year with respect to each program that is included within the block grant that the State Board of Education shall award the district under this Section for that fiscal year. In the

case of the Summer Bridges program, the amount of the district's block grant shall be equal to 44% of the amount of the current fiscal year appropriation made for that program.

(e) The district is not required to file any application or other claim in order to receive the block grants to which it is entitled under this Section. The State Board of Education shall make payments to the district of amounts due under the district's block grants on a schedule determined by the State Board of Education.

(f) A school district to which this Section applies shall report to the State Board of Education on its use of the block grants in such form and detail as the State Board of Education may specify.

(g) This paragraph provides for the treatment of block grants under Article 1C for purposes of calculating the amount of block grants for a district under this Section. Those block grants under Article 1C are, for this purpose, treated as included in the amount of appropriation for the various programs set forth in paragraph (b) above. The appropriation in each current fiscal year for each block grant under Article 1C shall be treated for these purposes as appropriations for the individual program included in that block grant. The proportion of each block grant so allocated to each such program included in it shall be the proportion which the appropriation for that program was of all appropriations for such purposes now in that block grant, in fiscal 1995.

Payments to the school district under this Section with respect to each program for which payments to school districts generally, as of the date of this amendatory Act of the 92nd General Assembly, are on a reimbursement basis shall continue to be made to the district on a reimbursement basis, pursuant to the provisions of this Code governing those programs.

(h) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any school district receiving a block grant under this Section may classify all or a portion of the funds that it receives in a particular fiscal year from any block grant authorized under this Code or from general State aid pursuant to Section 18-8.05 of this Code (other than supplemental general State aid) as funds received in connection with any funding program for which it is entitled to receive funds from the State in that fiscal year (including, without limitation, any funding program referred to in subsection (c) of this Section), regardless of the source or timing of the receipt. The district may not classify more funds as funds received in connection with the funding program than the district is entitled to receive in that fiscal year for that program. Any classification by a district must be made by a resolution of its board of education. The resolution must identify the amount of any block grant or general State aid to be classified under this subsection (h) and must specify the funding program to which the funds are to be treated as received in connection therewith. This resolution is controlling as to the classification of funds referenced therein. A certified copy of the resolution must be sent to the State Superintendent of Education. The resolution shall still take effect even though a copy of the resolution has not been sent to the State Superintendent of Education in a timely manner. No classification under this subsection (h) by a district shall affect the total amount or timing of money the district is entitled to receive under this Code. No classification under this subsection (h) by a district shall in any way relieve the district from or affect any requirements that otherwise would apply with respect to the block grant as provided in this Section, including any accounting of funds by source, reporting expenditures by original source and purpose, reporting requirements, or

requirements of provision of services.

(Source: P.A. 91-711, eff. 7-1-00; 92-568, eff. 6-26-02; 92-651, eff. 7-11-02.)

(105 ILCS 5/2-3.51a new)

Sec. 2-3.51a. Continued Reading Improvement Block Grant Program. To improve the reading and study skills of children from seventh through twelfth grade in school districts. The State Board of Education is authorized to administer a Continued Reading Improvement Block Grant Program. As used in this Section, "school district" includes those schools designated as laboratory schools.

(a) Funds for the Continued Reading Improvement Block Grant Program shall be distributed to school districts on the following basis: 70% of moneys shall be awarded on the prior year's best 3 months average daily attendance and 30% shall be distributed on the number of economically disadvantaged (E.C.I.A. Chapter I) pupils in the district, provided that the State Board may distribute an amount not to exceed 2% of the moneys appropriated for the Continued Reading Improvement Block Grant Program for the purpose of providing teacher training and re-training in the teaching of reading. Program funds shall be distributed to school districts in 2 semi-annual installments, one payment on or before October 30 and one payment prior to April 30 of each year. The State Board shall adopt any rules necessary for the implementation of this program.

(b) Continued Reading Improvement Block Grant Program funds shall be used by school districts in the following manner to support students in grades 7 through 12 who are reading significantly below grade level:

(1) to continue direct reading instruction for grades 7 through 12, focusing on the application of reading skills for understanding informational text;

(2) to focus on and to commit time and resources to the reading of rich literature;

(3) to conduct intense vocabulary, spelling, and related writing programs that promote better understanding of language and words;

(4) to provide professional development based on scientifically based research and best practices and delivered by providers approved by the State Board of Education; and

(5) to increase the availability of reading specialists and teacher aides trained in research-based reading intervention or improvement practices or both.

(c) Continued Reading Improvement Block Grant Program funds shall be made available to each eligible school district submitting an approved application developed by the State Board, beginning with the 2003-2004 school year. Applications shall include a proposed assessment method or methods for measuring student reading skills. Such methods may include the reading portion of State tests. At the end of each school year the district shall report assessment results to the State Board. Districts not demonstrating performance progress using an approved assessment method shall not be eligible for funding in the third or subsequent years until such progress is established.

(d) The State Superintendent of Education, in cooperation with the school districts participating in the program, shall annually report to the leadership of the General Assembly on the results of the Continued Reading Improvement Block Grant Program and the progress being made on improving the reading skills of students in grades 7 through 12.

(e) Grants under the Continued Reading Improvement Block Grant Program shall be awarded provided there is an appropriation for the program, and funding levels for each

district shall be prorated according to the amount of the appropriation. Funding for the program established under Section 2-3.51 of this Code shall not be reduced in order to fund the Continued Reading Improvement Block Grant Program.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect on July 1, 2003.