

July 27, 2010

To the Honorable Members of the Illinois Senate,
96th General Assembly

Today, I return Senate Bill 2499 to the Illinois Senate, vetoed in its entirety.

I commend the sponsors of this bill for their commitment not only to the constituents they represent, but also to all of the citizens of our State. They are tireless advocates for their communities with a genuine interest in improving education in their districts and beyond.

Senate Bill 2499 amends the School Code to specify that starting with the 2010-2011 school year, if a school district's boundaries span multiple counties, then the Illinois State Board of Education must use the limiting rate and individual rates by purpose for the county that contains the majority of the school district's Equalized Assessed Valuation.

For Fiscal Year 2011, the General State Aid remains fixed at the same level as the previous two years. School districts in Illinois have not had any increase in general state aid despite increasing costs. In addition, districts face delayed payments for special education programs, early childhood education block grants and transportation services. Many have received less than half of the payments that are owed to them for FY 2010. Both of these factors have resulted in a significant drain on school resources and districts are faced with difficult choices on maintaining programs. I cannot approve a measure that will boost General State Aid to one district at the expense of all others.

As Governor, I have fought to ensure adequate resources for students in every school district in Illinois. Despite the most difficult fiscal conditions in our State's history, I have maintained the foundation level at \$6,119. Approving this bill means lowering the foundation level in every other school district in the State—which I cannot approve of at this time.

I truly believe that in the near future, we need to evaluate the way that we fund education in Illinois. Financing a 21st century education with a 19th century funding model is not beneficial to students and is not fair to taxpayers. However, making piecemeal changes will not fix the system. I look forward to genuine reform in the context of a much broader discussion of funding our State's priorities.

Therefore, in accordance with Article IV, Section 9(b) of the Illinois Constitution, I hereby return Senate Bill 2499, entitled "AN ACT concerning education.", with this statement of objections, vetoed in its entirety.

Sincerely,

Pat Quinn
Governor