



2023 IMPACT REPORT

MISSION

The Empower Illinois mission is to expand quality education options for low-income and working-class families of Illinois.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

2023 By The Numbers	05
Empower Students	06
Regional Data	08
Empower Families	14
Advocacy	15



BY THE NUMBERS

EMPOWER ILLINOIS SET A NEW ANNUAL FUNDRAISING AND AWARDING RECORD IN 2023, MAKING IT THE MOST SUCCESSFUL YEAR YET.

10,483

SCHOLARSHIPS

\$53,991,915

RAISED
OVER 95% DIRECTLY FUNDS SCHOLARSHIPS

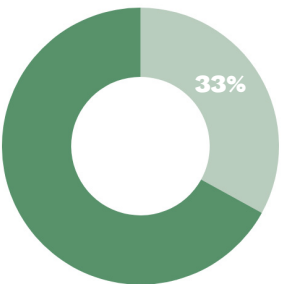
31,410

KIDS IN LINE

\$4,250 \$1,000

MEDIAN DONATION

MOST COMMON DONATION



DEMAND MET

\$6,852

AVERAGE AWARD AMOUNT

\$8,782

AVERAGE TUITION COST

498

SCHOOLS WITH AWARDS

21

SCHOLARSHIPS PER SCHOOL

\$46,079

AVERAGE FAMILY
HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

100%

BASED ON NEED

66%

OF SCHOLARSHIPS GO TO
FAMILIES WHO MAKE 185%
OR LESS OF THE FEDERAL
POVERTY LEVEL (FPL)

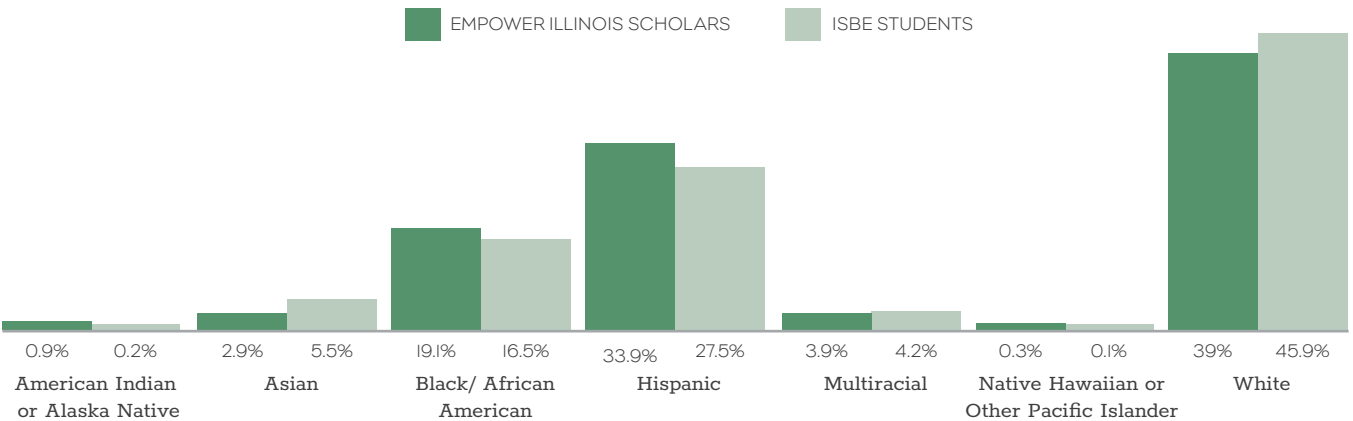
18%

OF SCHOLARSHIPS GO
TO FAMILIES WHO MAKE
BETWEEN 186%-250%
OF THE FPL

16%

OF SCHOLARSHIPS GO
TO FAMILIES WHO MAKE
BETWEEN 251%-400%
OF THE FPL

EMPOWER ILLINOIS' SCHOLARSHIPS ALIGN WITH THE STATE'S STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC DATA



STUDENTS



DEMAND FOR TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIPS IN ILLINOIS REMAINS OVERWHELMING, TOPPING OVER **\$215 MILLION**. CURRENT FUNDING ALLOWED ONLY **33%** OF APPLICANTS TO RECEIVE A SCHOLARSHIP IN THE FALL 2023-SPRING 2024 SCHOOL YEAR.



31,410

Kids in Line



33%

Demand Met



10,483

Scholarships



1 IN 15

Unique learners



\$215M

Required to fund all kids who want a scholarship



6

Successful years of investing in kids

WHY FAMILIES APPLY FOR TCS AWARDS

- 1 **Wanted a school with higher academic quality**
- 2 **Wanted a school with religious/faith based instruction**
- 3 **Wanted a school with character/values instruction**
- 4 **Wanted a safer school**
- 5 **Wanted a school with smaller class sizes**

REGION 1

13,466
TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICANTS

5,201
TOTAL NUMBER OF AWARDEES

\$31,818,646
DONATED

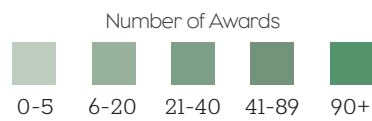
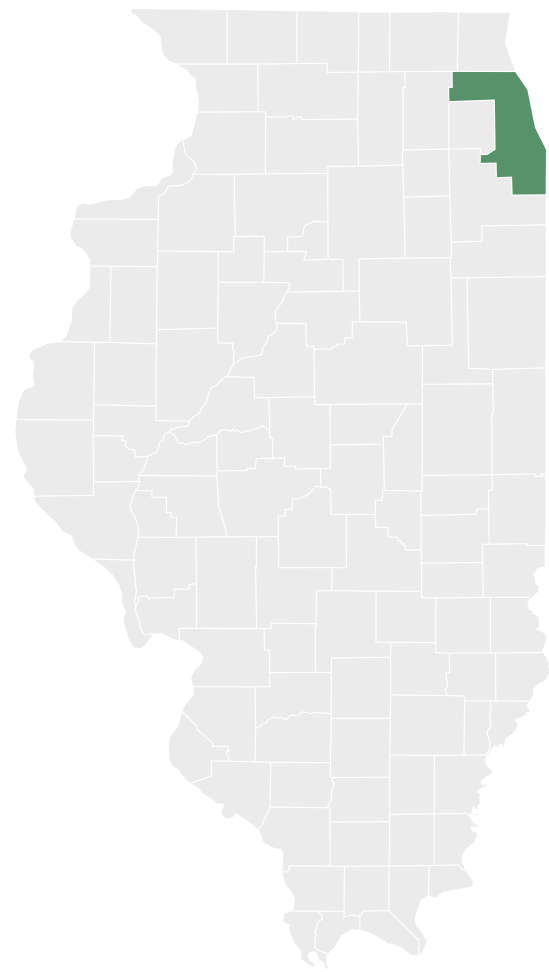
226
SCHOOLS

MOST AWARDS BY CITY

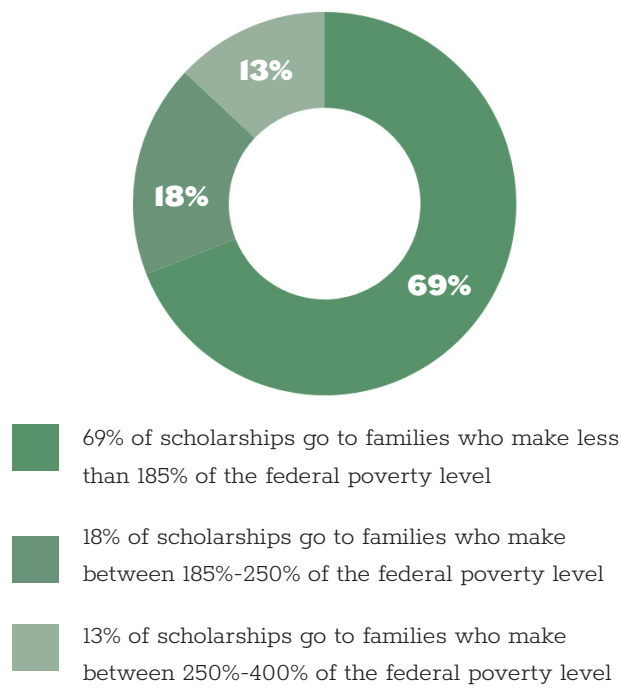
- CHICAGO
CICERO
SKOKIE
BERWYN
EVANSTON
NORTHBROOK
- PALATINE
MAYWOOD
WHEELING
DES PLAINES
MOUNT PROSPECT
GLENVIEW

ETHNIC/RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS

RACE/ETHNICITY	PERCENT OF STUDENTS
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.2%
Asian	2.7%
Black/African American	26.1%
Hispanic	39.8%
Multiracial	2.9%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.3%
White	27%
GRAND TOTAL	100%



SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS



REGION 2

4,360
TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICANTS

1,942
TOTAL NUMBER OF AWARDEES

\$10,199,008
DONATED

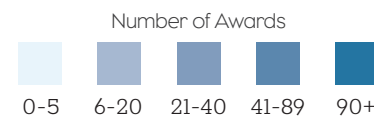
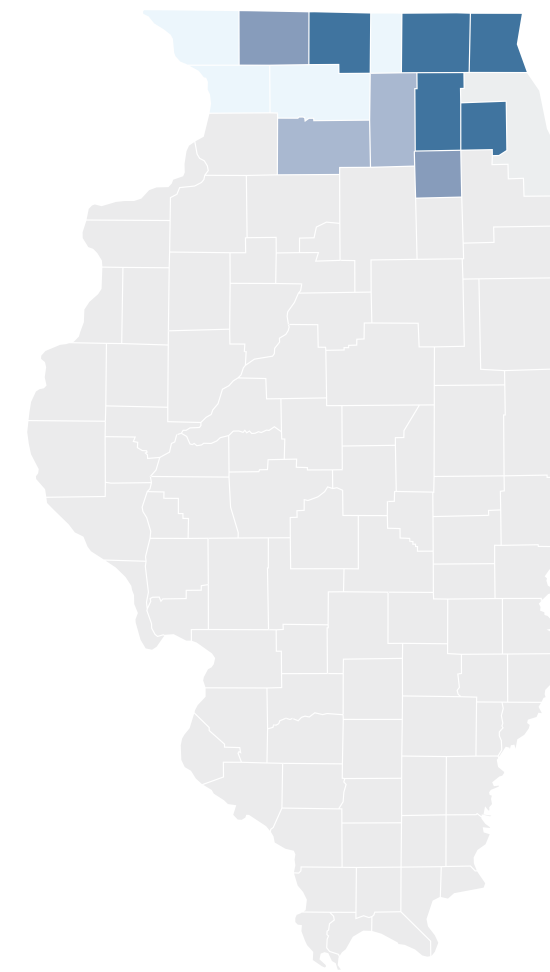
107
SCHOOLS

MOST AWARDS BY COUNTY

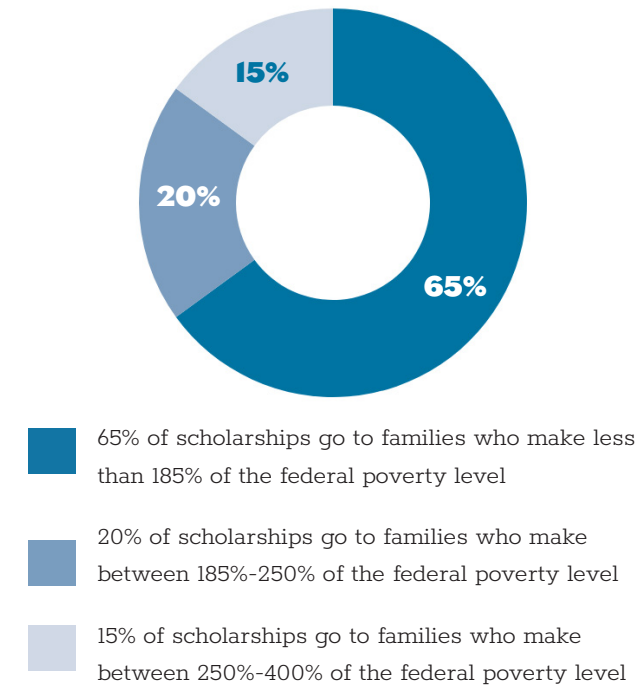
- DUPAGE
LAKE
KANE
WINNEBAGO
MCHENRY
- KENDALL
STEPHENSON
DEKALB
LEE
BOONE

ETHNIC/RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS

RACE/ETHNICITY	PERCENT OF STUDENTS
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.7%
Asian	7.6%
Black/African American	7.7%
Hispanic	40.6%
Multiracial	5.4%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.3%
White	37.7%
GRAND TOTAL	100%



SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS



REGION 3

2,618
TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICANTS

1,508
TOTAL NUMBER OF AWARDEES

\$5,868,311
DONATED

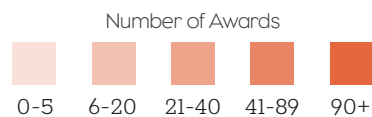
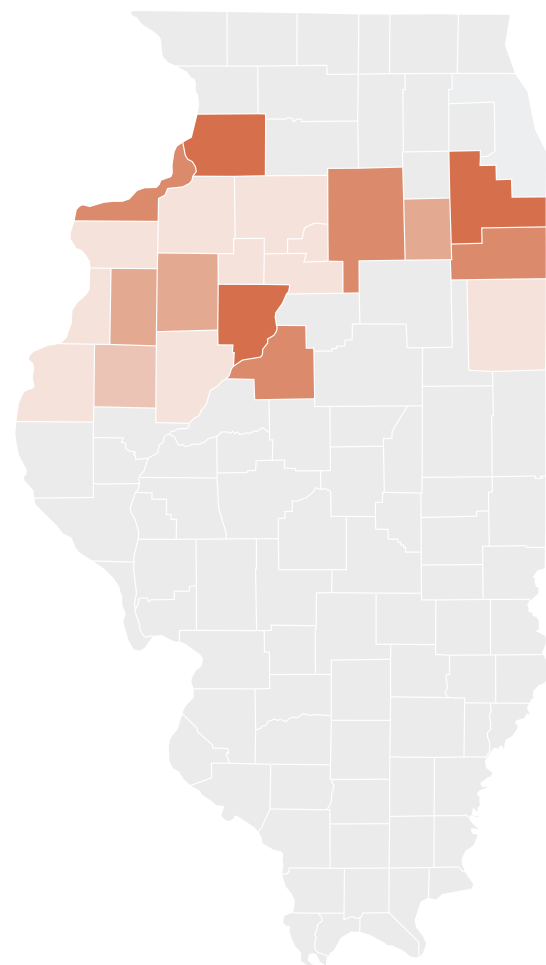
63
SCHOOLS

MOST AWARDS BY COUNTY

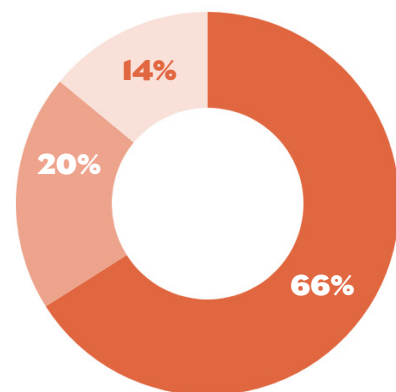
- PEORIA
WILL
WHITESIDE
KANKAKEE
ROCK ISLAND
TAZEWELL
- LASALLE
GRUNDY
KNOX
WARREN
MCDONOUGH
HENRY

ETHNIC/RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS

RACE/ ETHNICITY	PERCENT OF STUDENTS
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.3%
Asian	2%
Black/African American	13.7%
Hispanic	32.3%
Multiracial	4.5%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.1%
White	47.1%
GRAND TOTAL	100%



SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS



- 66% of scholarships go to families who make less than 185% of the federal poverty level
- 20% of scholarships go to families who make between 185%-250% of the federal poverty level
- 14% of scholarships go to families who make between 250%-400% of the federal poverty level

REGION 4

2,052
TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICANTS

1,113
TOTAL NUMBER OF AWARDEES

\$4,126,461
DONATED

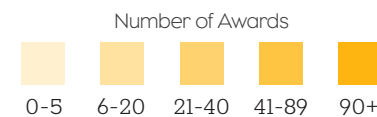
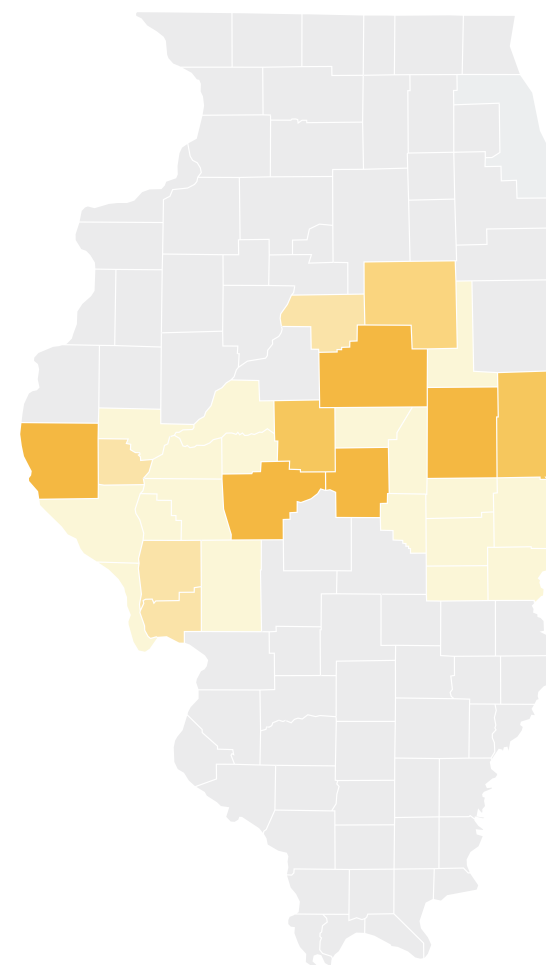
51
SCHOOLS

MOST AWARDS BY COUNTY

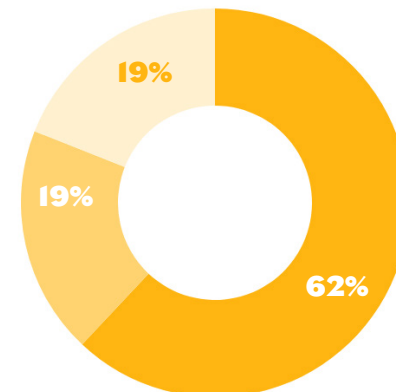
- SANCAMON
CHAMPAIGN
MACON
MCLEAN
ADAMS
VERMILION
- LOCAN
LIVINGSTON
GREENE
JERSEY
WOODFORD
BROWN

ETHNIC/RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS

RACE/ ETHNICITY	PERCENT OF STUDENTS
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.4%
Asian	1.0%
Black/African American	18.4%
Hispanic	11.4%
Multiracial	3.5%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.1%
White	63.2%
GRAND TOTAL	100%



SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS



- 62% of scholarships go to families who make less than 185% of the federal poverty level
- 19% of scholarships go to families who make between 185%-250% of the federal poverty level
- 19% of scholarships go to families who make between 250%-400% of the federal poverty level

REGION 5

1,095
TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICANTS

719
TOTAL NUMBER OF AWARDEES

\$1,947,607
DONATED

51
SCHOOLS

MOST AWARDS BY COUNTY

- EFFINGHAM

ST. CLAIR

MADISON

MONROE

JACKSON

CLINTON
- SHELBY

WILLIAMSON

RICHLAND

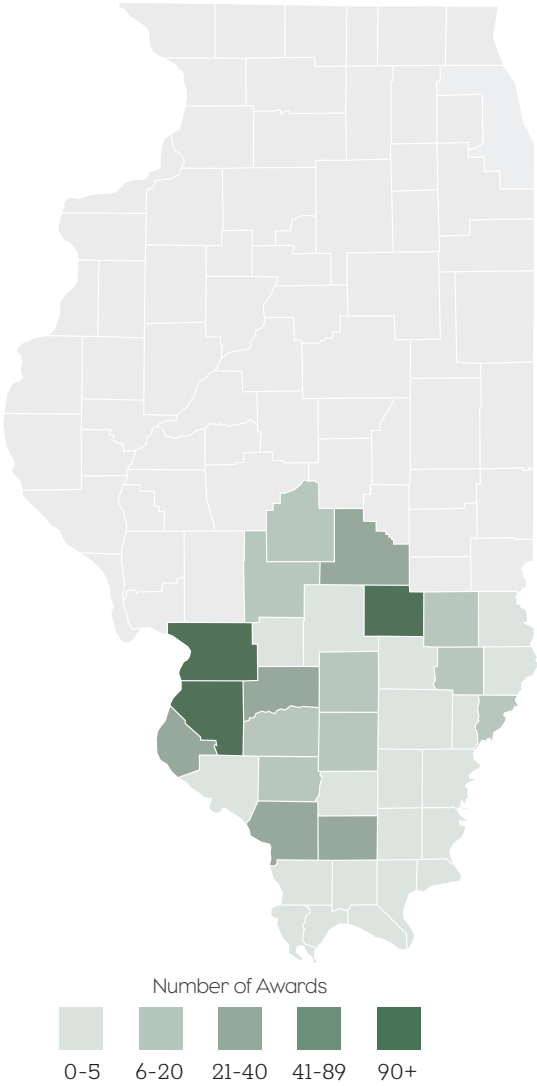
CHRISTIAN

JASPER

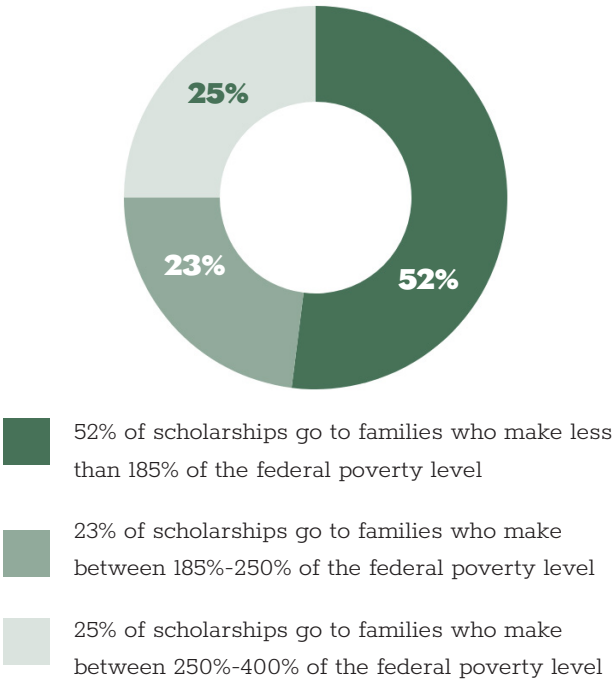
MARION

ETHNIC/RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS

RACE/ETHNICITY	PERCENT OF STUDENTS
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.9%
Asian	1.3%
Black/African American	12.2%
Hispanic	7.4%
Multiracial	3%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.6%
White	74.2%
GRAND TOTAL	100%



SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS



REGION 6

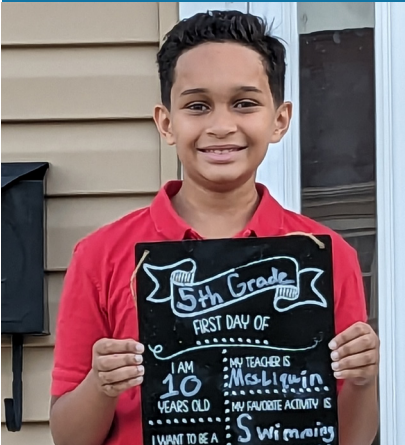
Starting October 2023, donors were able to direct their donation to a Technical Academy, which the Invest in Kids Act defines as “a non-public school that operates or a jointly administered CTE (Career and Technical Education) program as the primary focus of the school.” This is just one of the many examples of the Tax Credit Scholarship Program providing a variety of quality educational opportunities for students across the state.



FAMILY STORIES

Thousands of Illinois families rely on Tax Credit Scholarships for access to their best-fit school. Of those families, 97% were 'extremely satisfied' or 'very satisfied' about their decision to pursue a tax credit scholarship.

LISA S.
Mother




"Our school, or as I call them, our family, treats our children as if they are their children."

This program allowed my son to attend St. Thomas of Villanova since first grade, and now he is in fifth grade. He's very good at math and science, which are his favorite subjects, and they make sure it's exciting to learn and he gains the knowledge he needs to succeed. Our school is a STEM school, so they are learning with excellent technology and have subjects and clubs focused on those interests. They offer small classes with excellent quality education.

I have not been able to work a full time schedule in a while and I have been raising my son alone for the most part. I chose a Catholic school because I wanted the same values to be taught at school as at home. Being a single mom, I wanted the best education, values, morals and examples set for my son, and I can't imagine him at any other school.

KARIS & CRAIG
Student; Father




"For families like us, this education wouldn't be possible without these scholarships."

We have that personal aspect and it's nice to know my teachers care about me outside of the classroom. After high school I'd like to study English education for high school. My teachers have been so influential, I'd like to do the same: to educate and invest in their lives. -Karis

Coming to Wheaton Academy was a challenge because we weren't quite sure we could afford it. Every year, through generous donations, it's been a reachable goal. It's more of a family atmosphere. The teachers are all very invested in the students. On several occasions as our kids have gone through classes, every teacher has taken time to help us identify where they were struggling and what they need to work on. All of the teachers seem very invested in the kids, and that is a unique atmosphere we've come to enjoy. -Craig

JAQUOI S.
Mother



"When you invest in kids, you invest in their future, and you invest in our future."

One of the big things that drew me to this school was that the classrooms were smaller. I felt like, since my daughter only had a limited amount of preschool before the pandemic put everything online, I thought she might have a harder time transitioning to a bigger class. I felt like she would be able to get the attention that she needs with reading and math.

I feel that, since I cannot financially afford for my child to attend this school on my own, it's a big deal that there are donated funds to help. My child now has an opportunity to go to a private school in a smaller environment and better curriculum. I've seen a huge difference in my daughter. If we can't continue to get the scholarships, I'm afraid that we might not be able to continue to go to this school, and that would be very disappointing.

ADVOCACY



Engaging communities and empowering the voices of families, kids, and educators drives Empower Illinois' work. Our parent leaders recognize that those most impacted by the life-changing potential of a tax credit scholarship must be central to any discussion about the program's future. We are proud to have supported these critical perspectives through community organizing, public actions, and leadership trainings across the state.

Throughout 2023, Empower Illinois worked with families, schools, and community leaders across Illinois to advocate for legislators to #RemoveTheSunset. Empower Illinois organized a broad and diverse coalition of leaders who were ready to fight on behalf of our kids to extend the Tax Credit Scholarship Program.

The statewide effort to save the Invest in Kids Program speaks to the efficacy and impact of the law in the lives of kids and families. Supporters sent over 105,700 messages to their lawmakers, participated in rallies across the state, and over 2,500 advocates personally traveled to the state capital day after day, to fight on behalf of their kids.

Yet, because of intense political pressure from the teacher's unions, the Illinois legislature failed to extend the Tax Credit Scholarship Program. Their inaction will result in over 14,000 students from low-income families statewide losing their scholarships at the end of the 2023-2024 school year, causing many to leave their best-fit school.

But the fight is not over. Empower Illinois is committed to continuing to lead our statewide coalition to demand that the legislature act to renew the Invest in Kids Tax Credit Scholarship Program. Simply put, our kids are worth the fight!

Parents react upon ending of 'Invest in Kids' tax credit scholarship program
NBC5 Chicago | Published Nov. 10, 2023

Many Chicago parents are reacting to news that a controversial tax credit scholarship program will come to an end after state lawmakers ended their legislative session without renewing the measure.

"I am very disappointed and at this point, I have to tell a second and fifth-grader that I don't know if they can come back to school the next school year," Natasha McClendon told NBC Chicago.

Anthony Holter of Empower Illinois, the state's largest scholarship granting organization, criticized the ending of the program.

"The real tragedy is that kids who now have a scholarship may be forced to leave their school once these scholarships go away," Holter said.



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