

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 15, 2011

Dr. Christopher Koch
State Superintendent
Illinois State Board of Education
100 W. Randolph St.
Suite 14-300
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Dr. Koch:

We write to express our strong concern regarding the January 10, 2011 *Superintendent's Weekly Message* announcement changing the manner in which local education agencies receive federal funding through Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Title I) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

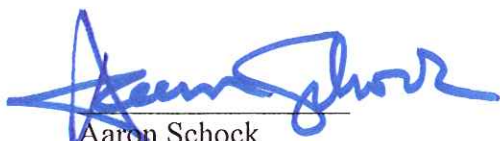
Currently, local school districts are allowed to use the advance funding model to receive their share of Title I and IDEA federal funds. The advance funding model allows a school district to receive their share of federal funding before the actual expenditure is made. However, with the January 10th announcement, the Illinois State Board of Education will require school districts to move to the reimbursement model starting on July 1, 2011. The reimbursement model requires school districts to apply for reimbursements from the State of Illinois *after* they have incurred Title I and IDEA expenses. For many school districts, especially smaller and rural school districts, this change can be detrimental as they may not have the necessary funding available to absorb the cost of providing Title I and IDEA services upfront.


This change to the reimbursement model is especially troubling given the fact that the State of Illinois owes millions of dollars to school districts that are routinely delayed due to the state's fiscal situation. We are concerned that should the State of Illinois be unable to make its payments to school districts in a timely manner, school districts will be hit twice as hard if there is a delay in both their federal and state funds.

Finally, we are concerned that this change was made on a unilateral basis with no input from the local stakeholders. Considering that this change will become effective in less than six months, we are concerned that local school districts will not have enough time to build up the necessary reserves needed to provide Title I and IDEA services to their communities.

We strongly urge you to reconsider the move to the reimbursement model as it will have a negative impact on many school districts throughout the state of Illinois. We appreciate the thankless job you do at the Illinois State Board of Education and look forward to your response.

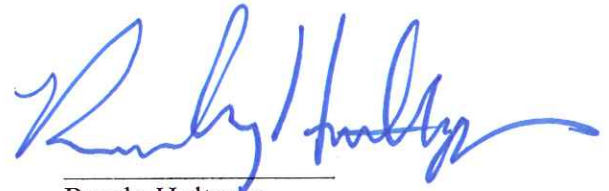
Sincerely,


Aaron Schock
Member of Congress

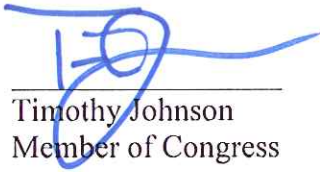

Judy Biggert
Member of Congress



Bob Dold
Member of Congress



Randy Hultgren
Member of Congress



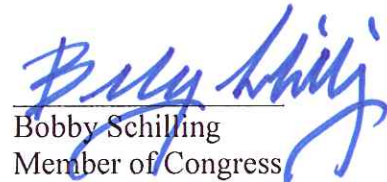
Timothy Johnson
Member of Congress



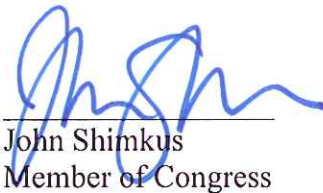
Adam Kinzinger
Member of Congress



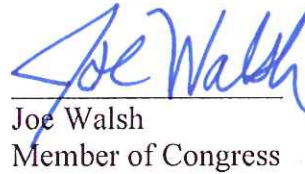
Don Manzullo
Member of Congress



Bobby Schilling
Member of Congress



John Shimkus
Member of Congress



Joe Walsh
Member of Congress

CC: Pat Quinn, Governor, State of Illinois
Mr. Joseph Alesandrini, President, Illinois Association of School Boards