**2013-15 Biennium Report:  Education Funding**
**Claire McIntyre and Jean Pierce, Issue Specialists**

**General Legislative Trends:**

- Funding decreased, with an 89% proration of the appropriation.
    - 2/3rds of IL districts are in deficit spending mode.
    - It would cost the state $5 B to bring General State Aid up to recommended amounts in 2014/15 and yet the state let the tax rate increase sunset in January, 2015.
    - The Governor's budget proposes more cuts which are not acceptable in view of League principles.
    - In Chicago, traditional public schools lost $72M in funding, with a corresponding rise in funding to public charter schools
- An advisory Committee on Education funding was created in 2013 and delivered its report in 2014. Since then, major legislation has been proposed to make school funding more equitable: SB1 (2015) is an improvement over SB16 (2014), but both bills create new winners and losers unless more funding is available


**League Actions:**
April and May 2015:
> Witness slips, letter to the governor, and TFA supporting HB4025, requiring civic education in high school.

April 2015:
> TFA supporting HB397 stopping the Charter School Commission from overriding decisions of local school boards. Passed the House, stuck in committee in the Senate.

March and May 2015:
> Witness slip and TFA supporting HB 1360 to require charters to meet the same   non-curricular health and safety standards as traditional public schools.

November and  December 2014:
> Witness slip and TFA opposing SB16 on the grounds that the funding formula was faulty and additional funding was needed. In Spring 2015, bills designed to provide equitable funding were stuck in committee.

October 2014:
> Legislator Position paper on SB16

March 2014:
> Witness slip supporting HB4591 – if a student transfers from a charter school to a traditional public school , the money will follow them, prorated for the time not enrolled in the charter. This became a law.

> Witness slip opposing HB4680 – Reducing property tax rates for dual taxing districts.