

Mandated Categoricals (MCATs)

Issue & Background

There are two significant state funding streams that support Illinois schools and the students they serve, both are critical for public education: 1) Evidence Based Funding (EBF) and 2) Mandated Categoricals (MCATs). EBF was enacted in 2017 and has been consistently funded at its statutory minimum since then. MCATs, on the other hand, have been continuously prorated during that same time.

Concerns

MCATs are funded separately outside of the EBF formula and support critical student services. These costs continue to rise due to inflation, and districts can no longer rely on federal ESSER funds to fill the gap. Schools are forced to absorb more and more of these expenses, using property taxes or EBF funds.

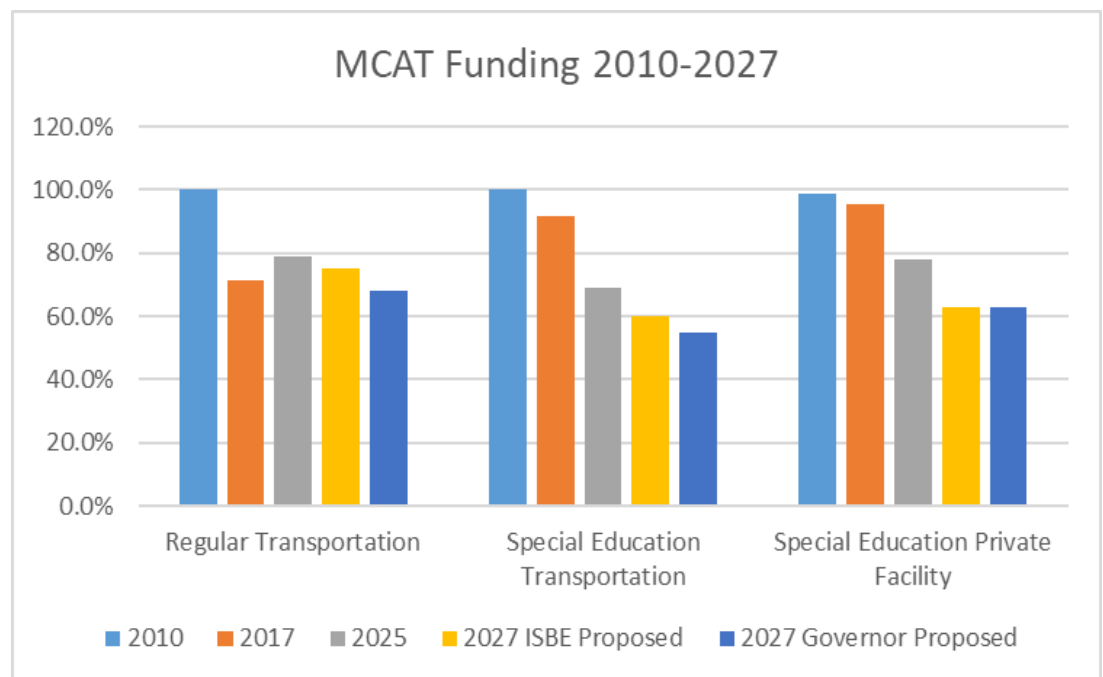
Proposed Solutions

- The Governor's budget proposal includes an additional \$51 million for MCAT reimbursements.
- ISBE's proposal includes an additional \$151 million to MCATs to keep proration levels flat to FY26
- SB2975 (Cappel) requests ISBE's \$151 million plus an additional \$49 million to special education transportation. This would keep transportation and special education private facility flat to FY26 levels and start building back funding levels to special education transportation.

Critical Mandated Categoricals

Three MCAT line items support critical student services, including:

- Regular Transportation
- Special Education Transportation
- Special Education Private Facility



IASB Ask

Support and co-sponsor Increased MCAT Funding (SB2975, Cappel)