



**HB7 (Mayfield)
Amendments 1, 2, and 3
School District Efficiency Commission**

OPPOSE

WE strongly believe that any attempt to consolidate or restructure a local school district is the ultimate decision of local school boards and their communities.

- HB7 allows the School District Efficiency Commission to essentially **MANDATE** districts to consolidate by replacing the Committee of Ten.
- This is not a fiscal issue. Schools are more than finances. Focus areas to be considered are curriculum, facilities, governance, finance, and the best interests of students.
- Decisions must be research-based.
- Each county and school district is different, which has become increasingly clear this past year.
- HB7 does not address barriers to restructuring schools in Illinois, including merging of salary schedules, disparities in tax rates, outstanding debt and varying capital needs for individual school districts, and existing employment and service contracts into which individual districts have previously entered.
- Consolidation considerations are most thoroughly addressed with local school districts and their communities to provide successful education outcomes. NOT simply decided by a statewide body and placed on a General Election ballot without prior community support.

MOST important is the impact HB7 will have on our students. Forcing communities and schools to consider consolidating schools at this time will diminish the required efforts and full focus of the school community to support a safe return to school, post pandemic.

- Our students and communities need stability right now: "This pandemic has taken an extraordinary toll on students, parents, educators, and schools, and we know that our schools, students, and communities need help now to reopen safely and quickly, and to stay open," said Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona.
- Our schools need to focus on the immediate needs of students and communities that have been impacted by COVID-19: Avoiding devastating layoffs and hiring additional educators to address learning loss, providing support to students and existing staff, and providing sufficient staffing to facilitate social distancing.
- School districts are prioritizing the needs of students, staff, and communities as we continue to navigate the impact of the global pandemic.
 - **Safe and Healthy Environments:** School and campus approaches to implementing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) recommended mitigation strategies and preparing for and sustaining in-person operations safely. (USDE)
 - **Providing Supports to Students:** School and campus strategies to meet student social, emotional, mental health, academic, financial, and other needs, including access to food and other basic needs. (USDE)
 - **Teacher, Faculty, and Staff Well-Being, Professional Development, and Supports:** School and campus strategies to address the social, emotional, health, and other needs of teachers, faculty, and staff. (USDE)