

Press Clippings 04/03/20

---Chicago Sun Times---04/03/2020

CPS to receive \$205M in federal coronavirus relief funding, state estimates

The total is 40 percent of the more than half-billion dollars expected to come to Illinois schools.

By: Nader Issa



Chicago Public Schools could receive more than \$200 million in emergency funding from the federal coronavirus package. *Ashlee Rezin Garcia/Sun-Times*

Chicago Public Schools is set to receive \$205 million in federal emergency coronavirus relief, accounting for more than 40% of the total funding Illinois will get for education, according to preliminary estimates from state officials.

The funds will come from the \$2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act passed last week by Congress and signed by President Donald Trump, which includes \$13.5 billion for K-12 education.

As part of the education package, Illinois will receive an estimated \$569.5 million, 90% of which officials are required to distribute among the state's 860 public school districts.

Allocations to each state are based on how much they currently get through federal Title I funding, which prioritizes giving money to states with more low-income students. States then distribute those funds to districts in the same way.

CPS, with 355,000 students, is the state's largest district and nation's third-largest. It has 271,000 students from low-income families, which alone is seven times more than any other Illinois district's total enrollment.

Rockford Public Schools, the state's third-largest district with 28,700 students, will receive the next highest amount, \$11.6 million. Springfield School District 186 will get \$7.9 million, and **School District U-46** in Elgin, Illinois' second-largest serving 38,400 students, will receive \$7.8 million.

Spokeswoman Emily Bolton said CPS is figuring out how it'll spend the money and will release that information when it's determined.

“We are grateful for our federal and state leaders who have advocated for critical relief for CPS and districts across the state,” Bolton said.

Chicago Teachers Union President Jesse Sharkey said the money needs to be used to help students who need it most — those who don’t have access to computers or internet, kids who are suffering from homelessness, English learners and special education students.

“Every penny of that support must go to addressing the obvious and vast inequities that plague remote learning for our students and school workers,” Sharkey said.

State Supt. of Education Carmen Ayala wrote in a letter to district leaders that “we strongly encourage [districts] to explore using the additional funding to strengthen your infrastructure for remote learning.” The state in recent days released comprehensive remote learning guidance as officials prepare for lengthy school closures, and Gov. J.B. Pritzker on Tuesday extended the schools shutdown through the end of April.

The Illinois State Board of Education is guiding districts to specifically use the money to address the needs of low-income families, children with disabilities, English learners and homeless students. Specific uses of the funds could include meal programs, electronic devices for students and teachers who need them, mental health services, summer learning and sanitizing school buildings.

It still wasn’t clear when districts would receive the funds. The state plans to apply for the money as soon as the U.S. Dept. of Education releases an application, which should happen in the next month.

Chicago’s Board of Education has already given CPS administrators approval to spend up to \$75 million on its coronavirus response.

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Prom Canceled Amid COVID-19 Clampdown

By: Rob Hart



(WBBM NEWSRADIO) -- One of the state's largest school districts is canceling prom.

Elgin District U46 made the announcement this week. Superintendent Tony Sanders tells WBBM Newsradio that three of the district's five high schools had proms scheduled for May 1.

That's only one day after Gov. Pritzker's latest stay-at-home order is expected to expire.

"It kills me. My heart breaks for the students," Sanders says.

He said it would have been impossible to pull off prom with school faculty and staff working off-site.

Sanders says he's looking forward to the day when students can gather again.

"The first opportunity that we can re-gather as a community of schools will be a true celebration."

The district is also delaying high school commencement ceremonies. These events were originally scheduled for May 23 at the Sears Centre in Hoffman Estates.

They will be rescheduled for a later date.