

TEACHERS ACHIEVE HISTORIC FUNDING REFORM IN ILLINOIS

OUR IMPACT

For more than two decades, Illinois had the most inequitable education funding formula in the nation. On August 31, 2017 Governor Bruce Rauner signed SB1947, which puts in place a new formula that will direct money to the neediest districts first. Teach Plus teachers took a leading role in a coalition of organizations fighting for funding reform. **The sustained statewide presence of Teach Plus teachers was critical to the funding reform efforts.**

HOW WE GOT THERE

The teachers left no stone unturned in their advocacy efforts. **They organized their peers, spoke up for equitable funding across the state, hosted house meetings and town halls, and wrote letters to the State Board of Education.** They met with legislators of both parties, including with House Speaker Michael Madigan, to explain how inadequate funding can hurt their students. On May 17, 2017 Teach Plus teachers gathered in Springfield along with other coalition members to hold the

Rally and Footrace for Fair School Funding. The rally drew hundreds of parents, students, teachers, and community members. **The Fellows organized the Footrace for Fair School Funding**, an obstacle-filled student race that clearly demonstrated inequities between wealthier and poorer districts. Fellows **Ashley McCall, Shonda Ronen, and Traci Dean** spoke at the rally, sharing the stage with policymakers and superintendents.

The teachers also mounted a multi-faceted public awareness campaign, publishing op-eds in seven of the largest media markets in the state and championing the issue on radio and TV. With Governor Bruce Rauner threatening to veto the bill, Fellows **Bill Curtin, Ashley McCall, and Kali Skiles**—who teach downstate, in Chicago, and in the suburbs—appeared on PBS *Chicago Tonight* to explain why they support funding reform and to provide a counternarrative to the Governor's divisive rhetoric.



“It is time for legislators to step in and implement an education funding formula that provides schools with the resources necessary to educate all students.”

— Monticello teacher **Jennifer Smith** in an op-ed in the Decatur Herald & Review.

“As long as we continue to ignore our school funding system, our most vulnerable students will continue to get shortchanged.”

— Warrensburg-Latham teacher **Rebecca Wattleworth** in an op-ed in *The State Journal-Register*.

Round Lake teacher **Kali Skiles'** advocacy began with one powerful opinion piece. After Kali published an op-ed in the *Daily Herald* explaining why Illinois needs to fix its broken funding formula,

- + Her district reallocated resources to her classroom.
- + She received book donations.
- + Her State Rep. Sam Yingling visited her class to learn more about IL's inequitable funding.
- + After the visit, the *Daily Herald* ran an editorial urging lawmakers to fix the formula.
- + Kali's local union president has asked that she speak to the entire staff about the importance of teacher advocacy.



15

house meetings held by Teach Plus teachers around the state.

150+

Teach Plus teachers educated about inequitable funding.

16

meetings with legislators.

38

media engagements, including op-eds, TV, and radio.

Chicago teacher **Ashley McCall** was one of the headliners at the Rally and Footrace for Fair School Funding in Springfield, working with coalition partners to design a canvassing strategy. **Ashley**, along with Fellows **Bill Curtin** and **Kali Skiles**, spoke about funding reform on PBS *Chicago Tonight*.

