

DATE

Dear Teacher,

As you know, students and adults from Chicago--and from across the state--are gathering in Springfield, IL, on May 2 to rally for school funding reform. For this trip to be as meaningful as possible, it is important to get your students familiar with the issue of school funding, and with the structure of Illinois politics, so that they understand why they are attending the event and why their presence is important.

To facilitate getting your students ready for May 2, we have provided several lessons from which you may pick and choose according to the parameters of your class, available time, etc. A brief outline of the lessons appears below:

**School Funding Crossword:** This activity will get your students familiar with the basics of school funding and Illinois politics. Students should use the materials included (Illinois power pyramid, school funding facts, and graphs) to complete the crossword puzzle.

**You Be the Governor:** In this activity, students will get the chance to make the tough decisions about how the State of Illinois will fund its schools. Students will read over the funding options listed in the lesson and then decide what percentage of total revenues they will collect from each method

**Persuade a School Funding Critic:** This role-playing activity will require your students to use their persuasion skills to convince a skeptic to support school funding reform legislation. In pairs, students will each assume a lawmaker role—one being from an affluent school district while the other is from a low-income school district—and argue for their position as an opponent or supporter of school funding reform.

**Create a Slogan and Rally Chant:** This lesson gives students the chance to be creative and get excited about the action they will be taking on May 2. In small groups, students should generate several catchy, attention-grabbing slogans and rally chants that express how they feel about the issue of school funding. If time permits, students can create signs and banners from these slogans to display at the rally.

**Writing a Letter to a Lawmaker:** This activity allows your students to formally express their opinions to lawmakers on the issue of school funding. Students can use the lesson's

letter-writing tips to guide them as they write to state lawmakers. (This lesson can also be used as a follow-up activity after the May 2 event.)

We hope you find these lessons helpful and look forward to seeing you in Springfield on May 2!