

Presentation on school funding set at EIU Oct. 27

Anyone who wants to learn more about funding for our public schools is invited to attend a presentation by Ralph Martire, executive director of the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, on the campus of Eastern Illinois University in Charleston.

Martire will present "For Each and Every Child: What Teachers Need to Know about Funding for Education in Illinois and Nationally" Monday, Oct. 27 at 6 p.m. in Buzzard Auditorium.

This is Martire's second visit to Eastern. His first visit left EIU English professor Fern Kory, the organizer of this event, yearning to learn more.

"During his talk last spring I learned that since 2002 the state has been funding public schools at levels well below the 'Adequate Education Standard' set by the Illinois Education Funding Advisory Board. In 2013, spending per pupil was \$2500 under the minimum recommended for educating Illinois children and young adults," Kory said. "As Illinois citizens, we need to be talking about that."

Jay Bickford, a former middle school teacher who teaches Social Studies Education at EIU, is also concerned about the long-term effects of short-sighted policies: "Withholding necessary funds is not fiscally sound. Our children are our foundation and future. They deserve more consideration than the subminimum."

So this year, Martire will provide more information about how education funding works in Illinois. He will also share findings from a national report by the Equity and Excellence Commission that advised the secretary of the U.S. Department of Education on the inequalities of systems of finance that lead to an achievement gap because "a child's critical opportunities are often a function of his or her zip code."

The free event is open to the public. Teachers, administrators, parents, and community members are encouraged to attend.

EIU has a long history of training Illinois teachers, and college students seeking teacher certification at EIU and the surrounding campuses will also benefit from Martire's presentation.

"I am excited for our special education teacher candidates to have the opportunity to hear about funding of public education" said Jennifer Stringfellow, an associate professor of special education at EIU who wants her students to be informed about their chosen profession: "Martire is a knowledgeable source on the funding of education in Illinois and our candidates will benefit from this opportunity."

The presentation is sponsored by the Eastern Illinois University chapter of the University Professionals of Illinois (EIU-UPI). For more information visit <http://castle.eiu.edu/EiuUpi/>.