Appropriated (Non-Discretionary) Funds for Clinical Experiences in the Laboratory Schools

Historical Perspective

The existence of the Laboratory School "non-discretionary" account stems from a change in the state aid formula in the early 1970's. According to a January, 1981 memo from then College of Education Dean, Dr. Ben Hubbard:

> *A base budget was established for each institution. The base has been adjusted each year according to the levels and programs approved by the governing boards and legislative appropriations.*

However, Dr. Hubbard goes on to say that the Laboratory Schools' share of the base allocated to Illinois State University declined steadily, while costs (primarily personnel) continued to rise. He voiced further concern that funds generated from the passage of HB 3498 would not provide sufficient per pupil funding for the Laboratory Schools.

This concern led to a 1982 meeting between Richard Schuler, then Acting Director of the Laboratory Schools, and Harold Burns, then University Comptroller, to discuss ways to increase the funding for the Laboratory Schools and to change the funding classification that was previously related to organized research. In a 1982 memo to Provost Leon Boothe, Dr. David Strand, then Vice President for Business and Finance, reported:

> *Their (Schuler and Burns) conclusion is that there is no credit hour productivity which can be attributed to student teaching. Their only option was to place the entire laboratory school budget in a chargeback classification related to the student observation experience.*

Since that time the Laboratory Schools "non-discretionary" funds have been attributed to a chargeback classification related to clinical experiences.

Use of "Non-Discretionary" Funds

The "non-discretionary" funds received by the Laboratory Schools are used to help finance the multiple mission of the Laboratory Schools with emphasis on the use of the Laboratory Schools as a resource for teacher education and preparation. An April 13, 1990 Board of Higher Education staff report entitled University Laboratory High Schools: A Response to House Resolution No. 805 states:

> *The use of university funds to support Laboratory School operations is justified because the schools support the instructional and organized research mission of the university. In fiscal year 1989, Illinois State University was responsible for nearly 8,000 student teaching clinical placements, more than any other public university.*

Nearly 87 percent of the placements were in pre-student teaching settings, over 12 percent were in student teaching placements, and about one percent of the placements were in graduate clinical placements. Illinois State University laboratory schools are used as one of the principal sites for the preparation of new elementary and secondary teachers, accounting for nearly one-half of the University's student teaching clinical placements. Clinical placements other than those at the laboratory schools are made at cooperating local schools.

Direct University costs associated with student teaching clinical placements totaled slightly over $1.0 million in fiscal year 1989. These costs included transportation, faculty supervisors, cooperating teacher stipends and tuition waivers, and support services. Direct University support for laboratory school operations totaled $751,000 in fiscal year 1989. Therefore, the total University costs for student teaching placement and laboratory school operations were $1.8 million in fiscal year 1989, or approximately $225 per student teaching clinical placement. Further, *These data show that the teacher preparation costs at Illinois State University, including the amounts spent for laboratory school operations, are cost effective in relation to similar programs at other public universities.*

Need for Additional Funding

From the above discussion, it is clear that the Laboratory Schools play a very important role in providing clinical experiences to prospective teachers at Illinois State University. However, the amount of appropriated funds has decreased from 25.5% of the Laboratory School budget in FY85 to 15% in FY94. The information in the following table demonstrates that ten-year decline.

	FY85	FY86	FY87	FY88	FY89	FY90	FY91	FY92	FY93	FY94
Laboratory School Total Budget	2,771,155	3,361,102	3,726,500	3,786,696	4,075,954	4,426,396	4,781,698	4,733,238	4,978,932	5,110,158
Non-Discretionary Funds Received	708,000	648,000	667,440	751,120	751,120	766,142	766,142	766,142	766,142	766,142
%	**25.5**	**19.3**	**17.9**	**19.8**	**18.4**	**17.3**	**16.0**	**16.2**	**15.4**	**15.0**

As we consider fiscal strategies to address anticipated budget difficulties in the Laboratory Schools, it's essential to reverse this downward trend. If appropriated funds for clinical experiences would have accounted for 25% of the Laboratory School budget in FY94 like they did in FY85, the total IBHE reimbursement would have been $1,277,540, or an additional $511,398.