



## TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIP GRANTING & ADVOCACY

### WHO WE ARE:

In two months following the passage of the TCS, we have transitioned our advocacy efforts into building a statewide Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO), securing Chicago's leading businessmen Jim Perry, John Schreiber, John Buck Sr., and Michael McClain as board members to operate the organization in three key program areas:

### SCHOLARSHIP GRANTING:

Support existing schools, non-profits, and donors to fundraise for scholarships utilizing the tax credit, administer the program, and provide support to parents, students and participating schools.

### RESEARCH & POLICY DEVELOPMENT:

Guides the marketing and execution of the scholarship program and provides the basis for new laws by investigating barriers preventing students from maximizing their potential and accessing quality educational services.

### ACTION:

Constituent training and mobilization, coalition building, communications, and donor advocacy.



## BACKGROUND

Illinois made history in August of 2017 with the passage of a Tax Credit Scholarship (TCS) program. It is the first time a large blue state—with both houses of the legislature under Democratic control—has enacted an educational choice program. The law has the highest scholarship funding cap (\$100 million) of any first-time TCS program. This success is the result of a long-term, under-the-radar strategy of coordinating a statewide coalition of 400 schools and organizations, including 53 non-teachers labor unions, in nearly every legislative district.

Empower Illinois is based on a simple notion: every child has just one chance to get a great K-12 education; there are no do-overs. We seek to empower community members to assist parents to choose the best school for their child.

We support access to great public and private schools and educational opportunities.

Period.



## PROGRESS TO DATE

- Entered into an exclusive two-year agreement with Step Up For Students (SUFS) on November 1, 2017 to manage all of the backend systems and processes of the SGO
- A beta version of the Empower Illinois web site that will process donations and applications is scheduled to be completed by December 15, 2017 with a "Go Live" date of January 1, 2018
- Received partnership commitments from approximately 70% of all private schools in Illinois, including every Catholic diocese in the state
- Secured just under \$2.5M in funding for scholarships

## INVESTMENT PROPOSITION STATEMENT:

One Chance Illinois, the organization that coordinated efforts behind the scenes, is building a new statewide non-profit Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO) called Empower Illinois to implement the Tax Credit Scholarship program and is seeking \$100M in financial backing to fund 15,000 scholarships and to distribute them to families to meet their educational needs. Empower Illinois will coordinate closely with One Chance Illinois to achieve shared advocacy goals. A full-length strategic plan is available upon request.

