

40 STORIES

TOGETHER FOR CHANGE



TAKING IT TO THE CAPITAL

West40 has a legislative action team, SWAT, which influences decision-makers in Springfield about our at-risk programs. The West40 SWAT team consists of a number of individuals interested in learning about the legislative process. They have joined us on several trips to the capital to "lobby" for essential elements to the law and process for the sake of our students and students across the state.



All that we do, some of which even includes hosting legislators here at our West40 schools, is in alignment with our partners, IARSS and ICEARY. Our desired result is to restore funding for Safe Schools and TAOEPs—recovering the 64% decrease in funding which resulted in a \$20,000,000 cut. The West40 SWAT team is making a difference for ALL children in Illinois.



SPEAKING UP AND BEING HEARD

What do you get when you have State Superintendent Dr. Carmen Ayala, Senator Kimberly A. Lightford, Representative Kathleen Willis, Representative Chris Welch, and Representative Will Davis all in one room at the Regional Safe School in Hillside? You get meaningful connections! West40 RSSP hosted all these incredible legislators and our kids felt heard, had a ton of fun, and developed relationships with state representatives!

Remarkably, our West40 students made it all happen. They were honored to share their space and appreciated the opportunity to share their stories and learn quite a bit about the legislators. As one West40 RSSP student said, "It was pretty cool to have these big-time legislators with influential titles take time out of their day to be with us. I feel pretty special!"



"IDEAS ALONE ARE NOT SCALABLE. ONLY WHEN AN IDEA IS PUT INTO WORDS THAT PEOPLE CAN CLEARLY UNDERSTAND CAN AN IDEA INSPIRE ACTION."

Simon Sinek, Bestselling Author and Motivational Speaker

We love hearing stories of how lives have been changed by what we do here at West40. Want to share your story? Send it our way at amooney@west40.org.

MESSAGE FROM MARK

Happy November!

There is a strange irony with Thanksgiving and Legislative Veto Session! I must say that I am EXTREMELY THANKFUL for the legislative presence we have established and the amazing impact we have had! West40 has become known as well-informed and influential. I'm excited to report that an influential representative and an equally prominent senator said to me, "West40 is everywhere!"

Serving as a West40 leader in our legislative efforts, Dr. Michael Popp has brought the issues of equity and adequacy to the forefront! We are "standing strong with you" to address essential issues around rules and funding to benefit West40 students as well as students across the state!

However, nothing will happen without action! West40, our leadership team, and our SWAT team take this reality very seriously! If we can be a strong voice for your particular issue, let us know! Please let us help to champion positive change for the students in our region and across Illinois!

