



Aug. 11, 2009

Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

The first General State Aid (GSA) payment of FY 2010 has just been made. There is important information following this column that alerts you to the proper accounting codes for these funds.

Last year, we utilized the State Fiscal Stabilization Funds (SFSF) for the final five GSA payments. This year, we will continue to use SFSF money for at least 3 payments, and these dollars will be coming from different sources within the SFSF. A notice that explains this situation was sent to GSA recipients Friday, and we will provide you with notice when different codes will be applicable. Please pay close attention to this issue as it will be necessary to properly fulfill reporting requirements under the ARRA.

As a reminder, TRS has determined that SFSF used for GSA payments are to be considered state funds and are subject to the regular TRS rates. <http://trs.illinois.gov/subsections/employers/pubs/bulletins/0905.pdf>

I know many of you have questions about the ARRA Race to the Top (RT3) funds such as whether and when Illinois will apply, and what our chances are for receiving RT3 funds. There are two preconditions for applying for RT3 funds. We must have a Phase 2 SFSF application approved and there must be no prohibition on the ability to link student performance to teachers and administrators. We are working on our SFSF Phase 2 application and the governor recently signed legislation that allows for the necessary data linkage.

The RT3 competition further requires that states demonstrate considerable reform around four areas: 1) internationally benchmarked standards and assessments; 2) data systems to support instruction; 3) great teachers and leaders; and 4) intervention in the lowest-performing schools and districts.

Based on a variety of completed and ongoing initiatives, I believe Illinois is well-positioned to submit a successful application for these funds. In fact, at next week's state board meeting in Bloomington, my staff and I will be updating our board on the various initiatives in which we have engaged and will continue to be engaging related to the four RT3 areas.

On a different note, the federal government has announced a new set of guidelines for schools to consider as they prepare to deal with the spread of seasonal flu and the H1N1 virus this year. We have posted these documents to our H1N1 resource page and I would encourage you to review them: <http://www.isbe.net/htmls/H1N1.htm>.

There were a few changes, most notably allowing sick students back into school 24 hours after their fever breaks. Additionally, federal officials stated that they felt school closure is a last resort and would rarely be necessary, and that schools should be considered as sites for mass vaccinations in the future.

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We will continue to work with the Illinois Department of Public Health to bring you updated information and resources, however, I urge you to work closely with your local health departments. If we have a severe H1N1 outbreak many of the decisions that will have to be made will need to be made by you and other local officials.

Chris

Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- **Deadline for waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly in Fall 2009** – Aug. 14
- **TSR Salary Data** – Aug. 15
- **Reading Improvement Block Grant Performance Report** – Aug. 17
- **Part 120 (Pupil Transportation Reimbursement), Part 180 (Health/Life Safety Code for Public Schools), Part 252 (Driver Education), Part 401 (Special Education Facilities Under Section 14-7.02 of the School Code) and Part 675 (Providers of Supplemental Educational Services):** Public comment period ends Aug. 20
- **Affidavit of School Treasurer Bonds submitted by Regional Superintendents** – Sept. 1
- **Hooked on Hydroponics application deadline** – Sept. 18
- **Bright Green Dream Challenge entry deadline** – Sept. 25
- **National Public Lands Day** – Sept. 26
- **State Farm’s Youth Advisory Board service-learning grants deadline** – Oct. 2
- **U.S. Senate Youth Program and Hearst Scholarship application deadline** – Oct. 7
- **Illinois Youth Dropout Prevention Summit** – Oct. 12
- **Annual Superintendents’ Conference in Springfield** – Oct. 27-28
- **Annual Statewide Transition Conference** – Nov. 8-10

Funding and Disbursement Services

Important Revenue Code Information for Aug. 10 GSA Payment

The first FY 2010 General State Aid payment was vouchered Aug. 6, and per statute was forwarded to the Office of the Comptroller for release Aug. 10. During FY 2010 The state board will again be utilizing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act – State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) as the source for some of the payments made through the General State Aid program. In FY 2009, we utilized SFSF Education funds for the final five GSA payments. In FY 2010 we will utilize the SFSF Education as well as the SFSF Other Government Services fund as the fund source for select payments this year.

Please be advised that this first GSA payment is being vouchered from the SFSF Other Government Services source of funds. The revenue code for this program is 4870 and the federal Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number is 84.397 for audit purposes.

This is the only GSA payment you will receive this year under the SFSF Other Government Services line item.

Later this fall, you will receive at least two, and a portion of a third, payment from the SFSF Education source of funds. The revenue code for this program is 4850 and the CFDA number is 84.394, which is the same revenue code as was used in FY 2009. When the state board receives final approval to access the balance of the SFSF Education funds we will distribute the payments to you consecutively.

We are still developing the collection tool for you to report the ARRA funds distributed to you for GSA and will notify you as soon as it is ready.

If you have questions regarding the General State Aid program please contact **Jim Mathes** at jmathes@isbe.net or 217-782-5256.

Interrupted School Days/Heat

The health and safety of students are a primary concern for every school superintendent. Section 18-12, of the School Code allows the use of Interrupted School Days for “adverse weather conditions,” including extreme heat

as well as extreme cold. ISBE allows four options with regard to extreme heat:

- Amend the public school calendar to start school at a later date
- Dismiss after five clock hours of instruction
- Utilize an Emergency Day
- Utilize an Interrupted Day

If an Emergency Day is utilized, it is recommended that an Amended Calendar be submitted electronically through IWAS to the Regional Office of Education (ROE) for approval, to assure that the most up to date Public School Calendar is available online via the School Calendar Inquiry. If an Interrupted Day is utilized, an Amended Calendar must be submitted electronically through IWAS, within 30 days of occurrence, to the ROE, who will forward it to ISBE for approval as required by statute. The Calendar Code for Emergency Day is ED. The Calendar Code for an Interrupted Day is XID. When amending the calendar code to XID, Student Attendance Time is required to verify a minimum of 1 instructional clock hour was conducted as well as a brief explanation of why the day was interrupted.

ISBE's policy further states that if the announcement is made in advance (i.e., on the previous day) that school will be closing on any day or days after less than five clock hours because of heat, you must use an emergency day(s). You cannot count that shortened day as a full-day of attendance under those circumstances.

At this time, all 2009-10 Public School Calendars should have ROE approval, making the calendar available for interested parties to view on the ISBE's School Calendar Inquiry. Per Section 10-19 of the School Code, any changes to the calendar must be approved by completing and submitting an amended calendar via IWAS prior to the change taking effect.

It is our hope that this information is helpful for the upcoming school year. If you have further questions regarding the public school calendar please contact your Regional Office of Education or **Marj Beck** at mbeck@isbe.net or 217-782-5256.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

Updated ARRA Guidance for Securing DUNS Number and CCR Registration

Updated guidance has recently been provided for carrying out the reporting requirements included in

Section 1512 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). Previous guidance indicated that sub-recipients that receive ARRA funds, such as districts, regional offices of education, joint agreements and other local education agencies must secure a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and register with the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) site.

We have received updated information indicating that all sub-recipients that receive ARRA funds must have a DUNS number but do not have to register with the CCR site. Each sub-recipient will have to provide their DUNS number when they report ARRA expenditures and other variables as required. The ARRA collection instrument is still being developed and all sub-recipients will be notified when it is ready.

Q: What is a DUNS number and who provides it?

A: Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) maintains a business database of information on businesses worldwide. D&B provides a DUNS number, which is a unique 9-digit identification number for each physical location of a business organization. D-U-N-S number assignment is free for all entities required to register with the U.S. federal government for contracts or grants.

Most school districts already have a DUNS number. Please check with your business office to determine if your district has a DUNS number assigned, and if you do not, please register at <http://www.dnb.com>.

Recovery Act FAQs Available Online

The latest Recovery Act guidance FAQs are available on the White House Web site (http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/recovery_faqs/) and will also be available on Recovery.gov in the near future.

Topics included:

- Clarification on M-09-21 Recipient Reporting Guidance
- Guidance on federal agency-specific jobs guidance and publication deadlines
- Technical aspects of the FederalReporting.gov solution
- Clarification on the M-09-18 Memo for covering state administrative costs
- General Recovery Act clarification

The data model is updated at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/memoranda_fy2009/m09-21-supp2.pdf.

Legal

Registration Guidance: Residency, Immigrant Pupils, Homeless Pupils and School Fees and Waivers

The summer is once again drawing to a close and as we prepare to register pupils for a new school year, we want to identify four areas that traditionally have generated confusion: residency, immigrant pupils, homeless pupils and school fees and waivers. Below are brief introductions to the four topics. To access the complete document, click here: [Residency, Immigrant Pupils, Homeless Pupils and School Fees & Waivers](#).

I. Residency (for non-special education pupils): School districts are concerned about registering or enrolling pupils that cannot produce documented proof of residency in the school district. ISBE encourages districts to “enroll first, ask questions later.”

II. Immigrant Pupils: Please review your district’s enrollment policy to ensure it is consistent with applicable laws, including the guidance outlined here.

III. Homeless Pupils: ISBE considers the school enrollment, attendance and success of homeless children and youth throughout Illinois to be a high priority.

IV. School Fees and Fee Waivers: During registration and throughout the school year, school districts must be aware of families who believe they are unable to afford school fees.

Student Assessment

ISAT Writing Pilot

ISAT writing will be piloted this fall in grades 3, 5, 6 and 8. Schools selected to participate will be contacted within the next couple of weeks by our contractor, Measurement Inc.

PSAE Fall Retake and Exemptions From the Diploma Requirement

This announcement summarizes two legislative changes brought about by Senate Bill 2014, regarding the administration of the Prairie State Achievement

Examination (PSAE) and allowable exemptions from the PSAE diploma requirement, which is awaiting the governor’s signature. Once signed by the governor, SB2014 will become effective immediately. Please carefully review these changes and discuss implementation with your staff, especially high school principals and directors of guidance who are responsible for maintaining student records.

Elimination of PSAE Fall Retake

Beginning with the 2009-10 school year, the PSAE will be administered only in the spring of each school year. The PSAE Fall Retake and all Grade 12 ACT test vouchers will be eliminated, effective immediately.

These changes provide significant financial savings for the state. Because only the spring administration is required or utilized for federal accountability purposes, the financial savings does not jeopardize any school district’s standing with regard to Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Eliminating the Fall Retake for the PSAE also reduces the severe strain on local school district resources needed to implement the test at the beginning of the school year. Counselors, in particular, are consumed with scheduling students’ courses and late student enrollment issues during the days immediately before and after the start of school. And, eliminating the need for Grade 12 test vouchers required for the national ACT removes an additional level of complexity.

PSAE Diploma Requirement

As indicated in the Illinois School Code, students must take the PSAE in order to receive a regular high school diploma, unless that student is exempted from taking the exam.

Eleventh graders, unless they are exempt, are required to take the PSAE in the spring. Students absent from Day 1 or Day 2 of the initial test dates should participate on the make-up date(s) for the day or days they missed.

New for 2010: Students classified as being in grade 12 in the spring who have not satisfied the PSAE diploma requirement, because they have not taken the PSAE and were not exempt from taking the PSAE when they were in grade 11, will be allowed to participate in the spring administration of the PSAE. Students absent from Day 1 or Day 2 of the initial test dates should participate on the make-up date(s) for the day or days they missed. With this change, students are essentially afforded a total of four opportunities to take the PSAE and satisfy the diploma requirement in their 11th and 12th grade years.

Scores achieved by these grade 12 students will not count towards AYP for the school, district or state.

**PSAE Diploma Requirement:
Students Who Are Exempt**

Students who were exempt from taking the PSAE in grade 11 are exempt from the PSAE diploma requirement.

Upon SB2014 taking effect, the exemptions to taking the PSAE in grade 11 will include:

- the student’s individualized educational program developed under Article 14 of the School Code identifies the Prairie State Achievement Examination as inappropriate for the student (i.e., the student is eligible to take the IAA),
- the student is enrolled in a program of Adult and Continuing Education as defined in the Adult Education Act. 105 ILCS 5/2-3.6 (c).
- the student is served in any locked facility that has a state-assigned RCDTS (region/county/district/type/school) code;
- the student attends a public university laboratory school under Section 18-8.05(K) of the School Code;
- the student is beyond the age of compulsory attendance (other than students with IEPs) whose programs do not culminate in the issuance of regular high school diplomas (23 Ill. Adm. Code 1.30 (a)(4)(A)); or
- the school district is not required to test the individual student for purposes of accountability under federal No Child Left Behind requirements because at the time of the grade 11 administration of the state assessment, the student is:
 - participating in residential programs that provide psychological treatment or treatment for drug or alcohol abuse;
 - jailed or in a locked-down facility;
 - residing in or attending facilities located out of state or out of country (This includes Illinois students who were in foreign exchange programs.);
 - hospitalized because of medical emergencies or procedures (i.e, medically exempt); or
 - homebound (i.e., homebound exempt), at which time, districts shall examine the circumstances of each case individually to determine whether administration of the state assessment to

the homebound student is feasible and appropriate (This does not necessarily mean that the student is receiving “homebound instruction”; but that the student is unable to attend school, and the reasons therefore must be assessed individually to determine whether administration is feasible and appropriate.).

**PSAE Diploma Requirement:
Students Who Are NOT Exempt**

Students who attend alternative programs and schools are not exempt from the PSAE diploma requirement.

Students who are administratively transferred to an alternative school program created under Article 13A of the School Code (the Safe Schools Law) or who participate in a program funded under Article 13B of the School Code (the Alternative Learning Opportunities Law) must take the PSAE. The PSAE scores these students earn are to be reported to and counted for AYP purposes at the home high school they attended (or would have attended) had they not been transferred to a safe school program or, in the case of students attending an alternative learning opportunities program, the home school they attended (or would have attended or still do attend).

Students who attend an alternative school created and operated by a Regional Superintendent of Schools under Section 18-8.05 of the School Code must take the PSAE if they 1) are dually enrolled in a local school district and an alternative school and 2) will be receiving a regular high school diploma from the district. The PSAE scores these students earn are to be reported to and counted for AYP purposes at an identified home school in the district.

**Determination of Participation for
Awarding a Regular High School Diploma**

District superintendents are responsible for determining whether students have taken the PSAE and informing students of the grade 12 spring administration if they have not.

Acceptable Proof that a Student Has Taken the PSAE
Proof that a student has taken the PSAE includes:

- The student’s Assessment Record in ISBE’s Student Information System indicates Assessment Data for PSAE,
- The student’s name appears on a PSAE School Roster,

- The student's name appears on a PSAE label on the student's transcript,
- The student's name appears on a PSAE Individual Student Report, or
- Due to the unavailability of the above prior to the awarding of a regular high school diploma, for grade 12 testers only, the student's name appears on a local PSAE testing roster, on which the student's attendance is marked as present for testing.

No Child Left Behind

U.S. Department of Education Guidance on Title I, Part A Waivers

ISBE has reviewed the U.S. Department of Education (ED) Guidance on Title I, Part A Waivers, and is preparing the following waivers for submission on behalf of the LEAs in the state. Additional information and the draft waiver letters will be available soon at <http://www.isbe.net/waiver>.

1. Waiver of 14-day notification requirement for the 2009-10 school year

- If granted, this waiver will apply to a limited number of schools, specifically high schools that start school prior to Sept. 1 and are either newly identified for improvement for the 2009–10 school year or are schools that could possibly have exited improvement status for the 2009–10 school year but did not.
- All other schools will have had their AYP results sufficiently in advance of the start of school so to have the notification letters approved and distributed. All LEAs, including those covered by the waiver must still meet the statutory requirement to provide notice prior to the start of the school year.

2. Waiver of the prohibition on schools or LEAs in status from being approved as SES providers for the 2009-10 school year.

- If granted, this waiver will allow schools or LEAs in improvement status to serve as an SES provider, if they can demonstrate they have an effective program through the ISBE application process.
- No school or LEA in improvement status can serve students as an SES provider until the school or LEA is approved by ISBE through the

state's application process and ED has granted ISBE this waiver.

As additional waivers are prepared, we will post them on the Web site and include a notification in the superintendent's Weekly Message. Please send any questions or concerns on this matter to nclb@isbe.net.

School Business Services

School Treasurer Bonds

Section 3-8 and Section 8-2 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/3-8 and 105 ILCS 5/8-2) require Regional Superintendents of Schools to file an affidavit with the Illinois State Board of Education showing which treasurers of school districts in their region are properly bonded. This affidavit must be filed before **Sept. 1** of each year. Copies of the actual school treasurer bond do not have to be filed with ISBE.

Section 8-2 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/8-2) requires each treasurer of a school district to be properly bonded. The penalty of the bond shall be 25 percent of the amount of all bonds, notes, mortgages, moneys and effects of which the treasurer is to have custody at any given time. The bond shall be increased or decreased from time to time, as the increase or decrease of the amount of notes, bonds, mortgages, moneys and effects may require. The bond shall be payable to the township trustees of schools over the district or payable to the school board of the district, whichever is applicable. The bond shall be filed with the Regional Superintendent of Schools. School districts do NOT need to file a copy of their bonds with ISBE.

For additional information on the State Board of Education interpretation of this Section, please refer to the State Superintendent's Weekly Message for June 12, 2006, which can be accessed at http://www.isbe.net/board/archivemessages/archivemessage_06.htm.

Section 3-8 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/3-8) describes the duties of the Regional Superintendent of Schools upon receipt of the treasurer bonds. When the bond of any school treasurer is filed with the Regional Superintendent of Schools, the Regional Superintendent shall carefully examine it. If the bond is found to be in all respects according to law and the sureties sufficient, the Regional Superintendent shall endorse his or her approval and file it with the papers of his or her office. If

the bond is in any respect defective, or if the sureties are insufficient, the bond shall be returned for correction.

An electronic version of the affidavit, and other information, can be found online at www.isbe.net/sfms/html/t_bonds.htm.

Please contact **Michelle Heninger**, School Business Services Division, at 217-785-8779 or via e-mail at mheninger@isbe.net with any follow-up questions.

Educator and School Development

Illinois New Principal Mentoring Program

Per PA 94-1039, persons entering their first year as a building principal with no previous principal experience are required to be mentored by a qualified individual. Assistant principals who have served five years in this capacity are exempt from the required mentoring unless the superintendent chooses otherwise.

Please forward the names and contact information of any first year principals working in your district for the 2009-10 school year to **Rashonda**, INPM Mentoring Coordinator, at rashonda@ilprincipals.org as soon as possible. Visit the Illinois New Principal Mentoring Web site at <http://www.ilprincipalmentoring.org> to find a listing of mentoring providers available for your district to contract with to provide mentoring services.

For any additional questions, e-mail Rashonda.

Data Analysis and Progress Reporting

2008-09 Teacher Service Record – Reminder Regarding Due Date

As previously announced, the Illinois State Board of Education has moved the close of the 2008-09 Teacher Service Record (TSR) spring data collection period from July 15 to midnight **Aug. 15**. This change is being made to assist districts in being able to submit complete and accurate TSR data, including actual salaries. The revised deadline is firm since ISBE has immediate TSR data usage needs, and missing or incomplete data will affect state totals and averages.

For the spring data collection, you must do the following as soon as possible (no later than Aug. 15):

- Make necessary educator updates. Please note that special education teachers must have at least one teaching assignment beyond assignment 1.
- Indicate if a teacher is paid (in part or in full) with Title I funds.
- Enter the number of classes for each teaching assignment.
- Ensure that your superintendent approves the data in the “Teacher Service Record Data Wizard” and submits the data to ISBE.
- Submit actual 2008-09 salaries (i.e., creditable earnings). Please note that salaries can only be submitted through the “Submit/Update Teacher Salary” wizard.

It is your responsibility to check the error log generated from the “Submit/Update Teacher Salary” wizard and correct any low and/or high salaries if necessary. If you have already submitted your TSR salary data and reported accurate actual salaries, you may ignore this message.

Questions about the 2008-09 TSR spring data collection may be directed to the ISBE Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division at TSR@isbe.net or 217-782-3950. Division staff will be available to respond to e-mails and take calls until 4 p.m. **Aug. 14**.

Special Education and Support Services

Annual Statewide Transition Conference Slated Nov. 8-10

The fifth annual Statewide Transition Conference for high school age students and young adults with disabilities, their family members and teachers, vocational professionals, caregivers, health-care professionals, college students pursuing careers in special education and community advocates will be held in Schaumburg Nov. 8-10.

The conference, titled “Mission Transition: Destination Success,” will be held at the Schaumburg Renaissance Hotel & Convention Center and will invite participants to imagine the possibilities for students with disabilities in the areas of employment, education and training, independent living, community integration, health care, and self-advocacy. Conference sessions are organized into four tracks: Education,

Community, Employment and Health. For program and registration information, see the new conference Web site at www.illinoistransitionconference.org.

Nutrition

It Has Been a Busy Summer for Nutrition Programs' Staff

Between May and August, more than 20 workshops and the first two ever Webinars were conducted statewide by Illinois State Board of Education Nutrition Programs' staff. The workshops and Webinars covered school wellness, Basic Training workshops (administration of the National School Lunch Program), menu planning and dietary guidelines, certification of eligibility and verification, and the National School Lunch Program's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Grant.

If you missed any of these trainings, most of the resources and reference materials used are posted online at www.isbe.net/nutrition. For example, the Administrative Handbook covering Basic Training workshops is located at www.isbe.net/nutrition. Just scroll down to NSLP, National School Lunch Program (raspberry shaded box), and then click on Administrative Handbook, the first bullet item. Likewise, Electronic Direct Certification System resources, including the Webinar, are available further down on the same page. Bookmark that link as a favorite for future use.

In addition, frequently check the What's New section of the Web site for information and workshop announcements. You can also e-mail us at cnp@isbe.net or contact the office at 800-545-7892 or 217-782-2491.

HealthierUS School Challenge Application Available Online

Elementary schools applying for any one of the four HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) award levels may do so online. Go to the Food and Nutrition Services' Team Nutrition Web site at www.teamnutrition.usda.gov.

The four levels are Bronze, Silver, Gold and Gold Award of Distinction. Illinois has two Silver award level winners, Ridgeview County Unified School District 19's Ridgeview Elementary School and Bushnell-Prairie City Community Unit School District 170's Bushnell-Prairie City Elementary School.

HUSSC promotes a healthier school environment by improving the quality of foods served in National School

Lunch Program schools and providing students with nutrition and physical education, as well as physical activity opportunities.

Rules and Waivers

Notice of Completed Rulemaking

Please be advised that two sets of amendments recently adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education are in effect. These rules have been posted on the agency's Web site at <http://www.isbe.net/rules>; choose "Rules Currently in Effect" and scroll to the relevant Part number. If you print the affected Sections, then please be sure to include the table of contents for the Part, since that changes every time the rules are amended.

Part 575 (School Technology Programs)

Technical updates that include replacing a reference to the now-repealed Program Accounting Manual with a reference to the new rules covering the same topics (Part 100; Requirements for Accounting, Budgeting, Financial Reporting, and Auditing); and replacing a reference to the Fall Enrollment and Housing Report with a reference the date on which enrollment is determined.

- Affected Sections: 575.300, 575.700
- Effective Date: July 22

New Part 405 (Payments to Certain Facilities Under Section 14-7.05 of the School Code)

Establishes some conditions on the obligation of a school district to pay the provider of a program that is not approved under Part 401 of ISBE's rules (Special Education Facilities Under Section 14-7.02 of the School Code) for the cost of educating a student with a disability who is placed into a residential facility by a court or a state agency. Sets forth what will be considered satisfactory proof or information in each of the areas specified in the law; establishes procedures that will ensure communication among the provider, ISBE staff, and the district of residence; and requires the setting of a rate for the educational program by the Illinois Purchased Care Review Board.

- Affected Sections: All
- Effective Date: July 22

Professional Development

Stop Bullying Now! Campaign Under Way

School leaders and educators are being asked to help "Stop Bullying Now!" with a campaign developed by the

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration.

The Stop Bullying Now! campaign features a Web site and DVD toolkit that includes video workshops for professionals, an instructor's guide to help teach children about bullying, public service announcements and more tips for prevention and intervention.

For more information, visit <http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/adults/>. To order the toolkits, e-mail **Nicolle Grayson** at nicolle.grayson@widmeyer.com.

Service-Learning Grants Available From State Farm Youth Advisory Board

State Farm's Youth Advisory Board has expanded its disaster preparedness issue area to include grants addressing societal issues like nutrition, exercise, bullying, abuse and diversity.

Applicants may request any amount from \$25,000 to \$100,000 based on a required budget that outlines project expenses. Request for Proposals (RFP) must be submitted online by Oct. 2. Complete details and contact information is available at <http://www.statefarmyab.com>.

The five issues that grant requests must focus on are:

- Natural and Societal disaster preparedness
- Driver safety
- Accessing higher education/closing the achievement gap
- Financial education
- Environmental responsibility

To be eligible to receive a grant from the board, applicants should be either an educator who teaches in a public K-12, charter or higher education institution, or a school-based service-learning coordinator whose primary role is to coordinate service-learning projects in a public, charter or higher education institution. Non-profit organizations are also eligible if they are able to demonstrate how they plan to actively engage students in public K-12 schools in meaningful service-learning programs.

The number of grants awarded will depend on the number and quality of requests received. Grant amounts will vary according to the nature of the proposal and availability of funds. At least one service-learning project will be funded in each of the 13 State Farm zones. As of June 2009, four years after the initial launch of the YAB,

the board has awarded more than \$12 million in grants to organizations in the U.S. and Canada and touched about 1.8 million lives.

Thirty high school and college age youth oversee the granting of \$5 million for student-led service-learning projects in the United States and in the Alberta, New Brunswick and Ontario provinces of Canada. The process is unique in the responsibility and resource decisions that the youth are given.

Classroom Opportunities

Walk Across Illinois Mileage Challenge Kicks Off This Fall

The Active Transportation Alliance, a non-profit advocacy organization based in Chicago, is kicking off its Walk Across Illinois Mileage Challenge. The contest is a free online program for Illinois schoolchildren.

With a Safe Routes to School grant administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation, the alliance is encouraging schools to promote walking and bicycling to and from schools. Students earn miles and track their progress on virtual historical routes such as the Underground Railroad. Schools are encouraged to start the program this fall and can participate as classes or school wide.



“Schools can really take the Mileage Challenge and run with it,” said Dan Persky, the director of the Walk Across Illinois program at the Active Transportation Alliance. “Students will have a blast when they start competing for the most miles. Plus, they will be getting their recommended amount of physical activity.”

For more information, visit www.walkacrossillinois.org. Call 312-427-3325 or e-mail info@walkacrossillinois.org for additional questions.

In related news, Gov. Pat Quinn signed Senate Bill 75 into law, which allows school districts to use funds received from speeding violations in school zones for the Safe Routes to School program and School Safety and Educational Improvement Block Grant programs. Visit <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/default.asp> and click on Senate Bills 0001-0100 to locate and read more about SB75.

Student Opportunities

Groups Form Engineering Alliance With Students in Mind

Project Lead the Way has announced the launch of the Engineering Alliance, a new partnership with the Technology Student Association and SkillsUSA that will provide students with the opportunity to participate in innovative activities in science, technology, engineering and math education – outside of the classroom.

“The PLTW curriculum is proof that given the right tools and learning environment, students do get excited about technology and innovation,” said Richard Grimsley, PLTW’s vice president of programs. “We are always looking for new ideas and innovative strategies to attract more students to engineering, including co-curricular activities and competitions. Given their combined 75 years of experience in the industry, TSA and SkillsUSA are just the right partners to help us identify new and interesting ways to engage students.”

PLTW’s critical thinking and project-based STEM curriculum is being implemented at more than 3,000 schools and the program reaches over 300,000 students. The alliance will offer online competitions and leadership development activities designed to support teachers and excite students about technology, innovation and engineering.

Project Lead the Way is a not-for-profit organization that promotes engineering and biomedical sciences courses for middle and high school students. The Technology Student Association is a national organization for middle and high school students with a strong interest in technology. SkillsUSA is a national partnership of students, teachers and industry that works together to ensure America has a skilled work force.

For more information, visit <http://www.pltw.org>, <http://www.skillsusa.org> and <http://www.tsaweb.org>.

Employment Opportunities

ISBE External Vacancy List

An External Vacancy List for the Illinois State Board of Education is available at:

<http://www.isbe.net/hr/Default.htm>.

In the News

Weekly News Clips

ISBE has posted highlights from last week’s education news clips at:

<http://www.isbe.net/news/2009/newsclips/090807.htm>.