Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Late last week, we sent out a special message, which you can access at [http://www.isbe.net/board/archivemessages/2009/specialmessage_040309.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/board/archivemessages/2009/specialmessage_040309.pdf), to inform you on several new updates for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). The U.S. Department of Education provided additional guidance documents and fact sheets. Additionally, we provided you with timelines, background information on IDEA and Title I, Part A, and two letters of intent for FY09 to show if there is local intent to apply for IDEA and/or for Title I, Part A.

Also this week, Secretary Duncan provided an update on the previous administration’s Title I regulations issued in October 2008 and proposed the following changes:

1. Repeal of the requirement that a state revise its Accountability Workbook with respect to its definition of adequate yearly progress (AYP) and submit those revisions for peer review.
   - However, a state’s graduation rate definition and related accountability provisions will have to go through peer review.
2. A one-year waiver for states that cannot meet the 14-day public school choice notice requirement due to existing assessment timelines.
   - States granted a waiver must still ensure districts provide notice to parents before the start of school.
   - States must comply with the 14-day in advance of start of school notification requirement by the 2010-2011 school year. Illinois has been repeatedly warned about the need to change to earlier test dates and we will need to determine how best to come into compliance with this mandate in the future.
3. Amend or repeal the regulatory provision issued in December of 2002 prohibiting a state from approving districts and schools identified for improvement to be supplemental educational services (SES) providers.
   - If, after the notice and comment period, this provision is repealed, a state will still have the authority to make determinations about SES providers based on its approval criteria, including an examination of a provider’s demonstrated record of effectiveness.
Because it will take some time to go through the rulemaking process for this proposed change, a waiver of this provision will be considered by the secretary for the 2009-2010 school year.

Aside from the above three changes, the previous administration’s regulations issued last fall are unchanged. The Department of Education will issue additional guidance and technical assistance on the implementation of these regulations.

I want to update you on the current backlog of bills we are facing in FY 2009. Currently, there are about $1 billion dollars in vouchers that we have sent to the Comptroller’s Office, which can not be paid because of insufficient funds. The increase is due to the vouchering of the third quarter Mandated Categorical payments that would normally be paid near the end of March.

The overall backlog of bills remains at $3.4 billion and the oldest ones remaining to be paid date back to December. General State Aid (GSA) has been paid on time to date and I anticipate that those payments will continue to be made on time. We are working on the application for the $2 billion in State Fiscal Stabilization Funds and the General Assembly has approved a supplemental appropriation that would allow us to access nearly a billion dollars during this fiscal year. I want to note that because the state will be utilizing federal stimulus funds to make the remaining GSA payments in FY 2009, there will be additional reporting requirements for districts. I know that this is not something that anyone wants; however, it is much better than the possible alternatives, which could include reduced or eliminated GSA payments. We will have more information on these additional requirements to you soon.

I want to thank everyone at Crab Orchard and Carbondale High Schools for their hospitality last week when I spent some time in Southern Illinois. I also want to thank my personal tour guide, Board member Andrea Brown.

It was good seeing some of you at the Illinois Association of School Administrators conference last week. Thank you for everything you do for the children of Illinois!

Chris

Upcoming Dates & Deadlines

- Pre-registration for Bilingual Job Fair – April 10
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grant – April 15
- Preschool for All Children Ages 3 to 5 Years RFP – April 21
- Part 140 (Calculation of Excess Cost Under Section 18-3 of the School Code); Part 240 (Alternative Learning Opportunities Program); New Part 405 (Payments to Certain Facilities Under Section 14-7.05 of the School Code): Public comment period ends – April 20
- Applications for ISBE’s Student Advisory Council – April 30
- Title I Status Survey due on IWAS – May 6
- Application for Regional Safe Schools Program - May 15
- Invitation to comment on proposed Amendments to Part 575 (School Technology Program) - May 18
- Prevention Initiative Birth to Age 3 Years RFP – May 19
Weekly Message – State Board of Education – April 7, 2009

- 2009 Bilingual Education Program Delivery Report due – June 30
- Percent Exception Application due – June 1

Bilingual Education

Bilingual/Foreign Language Job Fair Announcement

The Illinois Resource Center and the Illinois State Board of Education are sponsoring an annual Bilingual/ESL/Dual Language/Foreign Language Job Fair. The employment fair will take place at the Double Tree Hotel in Oak Brook from 8 a.m. until noon Saturday, April 18. Registration information for both districts and job seekers can be found at http://www.thecenterweb.org/irc/pages/f_event-job.html. The deadline for pre-registration has been extended to April 10. The DoubleTree Hotel is at 1909 Spring Road, Oak Brook, IL 60523 and the hotel phone number is: (630) 472-6000.

Data Analysis & Progress Reporting

Title I Status Survey on IWAS

The Title I Status Survey is now available on IWAS. The purpose of this survey is to identify Title I schools for 2008-09 AYP computations and school report cards. The deadline to complete this survey is May 6. If you have any questions, please call the Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division at (217) 782-3950.

Special Education

State Performance Plan Changes

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires each state to submit a State Performance Plan (SPP) designed to evaluate the state’s efforts to improve results for students with disabilities. Under SPP Indicator 14, states are required to collect data and report on the percent of youth who had IEPs, are no longer in secondary school as a result of graduating, dropping out or aging out, and who have been competitively employed, are enrolled in some type of post-secondary school or both, within one year of leaving high school. ISBE has implemented a cohort cycle to collect and report these data to ensure that each district collects these data at least once over the course of the six-year SPP.

In March 2009, states were notified by the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), that there would be substantial changes to the collection and reporting of the SPP data, including Indicator 14. Because of these substantial changes, states have been given the option to take a one-year hiatus on the collection and reporting of post-school outcome data for Indicator 14.

This spring, large unit districts and a sample of Chicago Public High Schools were on schedule to collect Indicator 14 data on their students who had an IEP and graduated, dropped out or aged out during the 2007-2008 school year. However, given the substantial changes to Indicator 14, ISBE has decided to delay the Indicator 14 survey cycle one year. This means the large unit districts and the sample of Chicago Public High Schools which were scheduled to complete the survey and report data to ISBE this Spring for their 2007-2008 school leavers, will now complete the survey and report data to ISBE next Spring (April - September 2010) for their 2008-2009 school leavers.

Further, the high school districts and the sample of Chicago Public High Schools which were scheduled to complete the Indicator 14 survey next spring will instead complete the survey and report data to ISBE the following Spring (April - September 2011) for their 2009-2010 school leavers. An updated Indicator 14 Survey Cycle schedule and other technical assistance resources are available for your reference at http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/indicator14.htm.

School districts committed to the collection and use of post-school outcome data beyond the cycle requirement for ISBE’s federal reporting are invited and encouraged to continue this valuable work. Post-school outcome data are a powerful tool for data-based decision making and
improving the quality of transition service planning and implementation within school districts.

Further details will be released as they become available. If you have any questions, please contact Melanie Fleenor, Scott Beever or Gwen Williams at (217)782-5589.

**New Process to Request ISBE Training, Technical Assistance or Conference Presentations**

The Special Education Services Division in Springfield has increased its efforts to ensure effective and efficient customer service by establishing a process for external entities to request training, technical assistance and/or conference presentations to be provided by division staff. Such requests must be submitted in writing using the Request for ISBE Training, Technical Assistance or Conference Presentation form, which is available at [http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/training.htm](http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/training.htm).

Please refer to the form’s instructions for information on the submission process. Upon receipt of the request form, Special Education Services Division staff will submit it to division management for review and will subsequently inform the requester of the outcome. We believe this process will help us organize the requests we receive, match such requests with the appropriate resources and respond to the requests in a timely manner. We also hope you find this process helpful and easy to use.

Questions may be directed to any consultant in the Special Education Services – Springfield Division by calling 217-782-5589.

**Grants & Programs**

**Regional Safe Schools Programs**

The Regional Safe Schools Program (RSSP) FY 2010 Continuation Application has been released. This application is offered only to Regional Safe Schools Programs identified by Article 13A of the School Code.

The purpose of Regional Safe Schools Program is to provide for alternative programs for disruptive youth in grades six through twelve. Disruptive youth are defined in Article 13A as students with suspensions or expulsion eligible.

The application is due Friday, May 15 and is available online at [http://www.isbe.net/grants/pdf/10_RSSP_application.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/grants/pdf/10_RSSP_application.pdf)
[http://www.isbe.net/grants/pdf/10_RSSP_forms.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/grants/pdf/10_RSSP_forms.pdf)

Questions about the RSSP application process may be directed to Sally Veach, Grants and Programs Division, 217-524-4832 or sveach@isbe.net.

**Rules & Waivers**

**Notice of Effectiveness of Rulemaking**

Please be advised that two rulemaking items recently adopted by the State Board are now in effect. These rules have been posted on the agency’s Web site at [www.isbe.net/rules](http://www.isbe.net/rules); choose “Rules Currently in Effect” and scroll to the relevant Part number. If you print the affected Sections, please be sure to include the table of contents, which changes each time a Part is revised.

**Part 1 (Public Schools Evaluation, Recognition and Supervision)**

Updates to the rules on the Student Information System; technical correction in the requirements for supervisory and administrative positions; and flexibility for middle-grades assignments when changing to departmentalized format.

**Affected Sections:** 1.75, 1.705, and 1.720.

**Effective Date:** March 24, 2009

**Part 25 (Certification)**

Deferral of planned accreditation visits for one year; replaces emergency amendment of November 21, 2008.

**Affected Section:** 25. 115.

**Effective Date:** March 24, 2009

**Invitation to Comment on Rules**

One set of proposed rules recently reviewed by the State Board of Education is now available for public comment. This item has been posted on the agency’s web site at
These proposed amendments to Part 575 (School Technology Programs) include two technical updates. The changes involve:

- 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.

Deadline for Public Comment: **May 18.**

### Nutrition

**Electronic Direct Certification for free and reduced lunch now available statewide**

Direct certification is a simplified method of determining student’s eligibility for free meals through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs or free milk under the Special Milk Program without completing a Household Eligibility Application. In addition, students directly certified to receive free meals or milk are not subject to verification.

Effective with the School Year 2009-2010, a NEW Electronic Direct Certification System will be implemented statewide. Last school year, 10 school districts were selected to pilot an electronic system and with the success of that pilot, a statewide electronic system was developed. Further guidance regarding this system will be available on our Website in early June 2009. The Basic Training (June/July 2009) and Certification and Verification (July/August 2009) workshops planned this summer will provide training on the electronic direct certification system as well.

Please note that the eligibility certificates that were mailed to each student receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (commonly referred to as the Food Stamp Program) and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) will no longer be mailed. If you have any questions regarding the direct certification process or the direct certification system, please contact the Illinois State Board of Education, Nutrition Programs Division at (800) 545-7892 in Illinois or (217) 782-2491. Staff may also be reached via electronic mail at cnp@isbe.net.

**April 15 Webinar “Equipment Solutions: Plug into Profitability.”**

The School Nutrition Foundation and Duke Manufacturing will be hosting an “Equipment Solutions: Plug into Profitability” via the right choice of equipment webinar on Wednesday, April 15. Go to www.schoolnutrition.org and click on Careers and Education, then scroll down to SNF’s Wednesday Webinar series.

If you are unable to register, visit the website after April 17th to view the archived version. Schools interested in applying for the competitive Equipment Assistance Grants are especially encouraged to view the webinar. Visit www.isbe.net/nutrition, under What’s New for information on the school food service equipment grant.

### Storage of Commodities Over Summer Break

The Illinois State Board of Education does not allow over summer storage of prior year commodities at the Lanter warehouse. For example, we are currently in school year (SY) 2009. At the end of the SY2009, we will not allow SY2008 commodities to be held in the warehouse. This policy is an attempt to reduce/eliminate out-of-date commodity shipments in the subsequent school year. You can view the SY2008 commodities allocated to you by looking at your most recent monthly commodity bulletin on the Illinois Commodity System (ICS).

All SY2008 commodities will be delivered to schools with the last SY2009 delivery (April 2009) unless you have taken delivery prior to then. Contact Food Distribution Program staff at 800-545-7892 if you have questions.

### Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, Unused Funds

For the current school year, the Department of Defense (DoD) allowed participation in the program to all schools that requested to participate subject to a $500 allocation floor. The State Board allocated the money it could spend with DoD among all schools that
selected “yes” under *Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Participation* on the *Annual Order Forms* menu option on the Illinois Commodity System (ICS). Schools can see how much money was allocated to them by selecting *Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Participation* on the *Annual Order Forms* menu option on the ICS.

Recent reports from DoD indicate many schools that have money allocated to them have yet to place any orders for fresh fruits or vegetables.

Unused funds are now available for use by other schools participating in the program. Funds will be available until the entire state’s funds are spent. Order what you can use, but please use what you order.

Those schools that have not spent any of the money allocated to them are advised to contact Pam Hamlett with the DoD at 215-737-3676 to begin placing orders or risk their allocation being spent by other schools. If you have any questions regarding the DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, please contact the Food Distribution Program staff at 217-782-2491.

**Illinois School Wellness Conference**

The State Board, in cooperation with the Illinois Action for Healthy Kids, is sponsoring the 2009 Illinois School Wellness, From A to Z Conference on **Tuesday, May 5**, in Decatur.

The one-day conference will highlight successful implementation of school wellness programs involving nutrition education, physical activity and physical education. In addition, to meet Public Act 094-0190’s School Healthy Recognition Program, the conference will recognize and celebrate schools having success with their wellness efforts.

Connie Evers, an award-winning author and nutrition consultant will deliver the morning keynote, followed by a choice of breakout sessions. An exhibit room will offer free resources and networking.

Register by **Monday, April 20**, for the early bird rate at www.actionforhealthykids.org, click on the state of IL.

The state board has released an RFP for a partnership comprised of an IHE and a high-need LEA designed to improve the performance of Illinois students in the areas of math and science by offering an intensive, specialized graduate degree program in teaching math and/or science. The program will allow teachers in the program an opportunity to increase their content knowledge as they explore challenging pedagogy and technology integration in the areas of math and science. The RFP is available at the following site: http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/.

For more information, contact Gil Downey, Curriculum and Instruction Division at gdowney@isbe.net or 217/557-7323.

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**Department of Defense**

**Remember a Military Child in April**

In 1986, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and the US Department of Defense, designated April as Month of the Military Child.

Children of those in the military face separation, frequent moves and school changes, trauma when a parent is in combat and many other difficulties associated with military life.

It is for these reasons that we take the month of April to acknowledge their unwitting sacrifice, and courage. We encourage every school in Illinois to take one day in April to recognize their students who are military children. Recognition can be as complex as inviting VFW or American Legion members to present the colors during a school ceremony and giving each military child a certificate of appreciation, or as simple as starting an April school day by having each military child stand up first in class and have their teachers award them the certificate.

For a blank certificate or more information, send an e-mail to Patt Miles at patt.miles@us.army.mil. Or call Pat at 217-761-3639. In addition, please see the booklet “Educator’s Guide to the Military Child During Deployment,” at www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/os/homefront/homefron t.pdf

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**Curriculum & Instruction**

**Illinois Math Science Partnership**
Professional Development

IT Faculty Development

Registration for the 2009 Working Connections IT Faculty Development Institute is scheduled for May 18-22 and is open to all high school teachers and technical staff. The cost of the Institute is $700 per person for double occupancy room or $800 for a single occupancy room. The cost includes hotel, training, daily breakfast and lunch and one dinner. For those not needing hotel accommodations, the registration fee is $500.

Go to www.workingconnectionsillinois.org and click on the registration button to sign-up for one of the classes listed. Highlights include Adobe CS4, cyber security, emerging educational technologies, game programming, screen casting, video production and more.

The University of Illinois – Springfield (UIS) is again offering Graduate Credit for all tracks. Click on the UIS Graduate Credit button for more information.

Student Opportunities

Student Advisory Council (SAC) Application Time

The Illinois State Board of Education is currently seeking applications for the Student Advisory Council (SAC) to the Illinois State Board of Education for the 2009-10 school year.

The students who comprise the Student Advisory Council are diverse, representing different geographic locations, ethnic backgrounds, and types of schools. However, they possess similar qualities, which include a strong work ethic, ability to think “outside-the-box,” and collaborate with others and the willingness to set aside time from their busy schedules for SAC work.

Members are invited to attend Board meetings and sessions of the General Assembly. As SAC members, students also may review and critique ISBE’s existing or proposed programs, policies and regulations, as well as inform Illinois students of SAC activities.

Eligibility to apply for the 2009-2010 SAC is limited to public school students. Given the need to hear from students on some of the more complicated issues faced by our state, special consideration will be given to applicants from low-performing schools or districts.

An application is now available online at: http://www.isbe.net/sac/.

It must be returned to the State Board of Education by 5 p.m., Thursday, April 30. The mailing address is:

Illinois State Board of Education
Student Advisory Council
S-202
100 N. First St.
Springfield, IL
62777

Activities of the Student Advisory Council in 2009-2010 are contingent upon final State budget allocation. For more information, contact Andrea Wingo at 217-782-6434 or awingo@isbe.net.

International Intelligent Ironman Creativity Contest

The Taiwan Ministry of Education is inviting Illinois students to participate in the 5th Annual International Intelligent Ironman Creativity Contest July 21-26 in Taiwan.

The contest uses RPG gaming technology in addition to hands-on activities that challenge participants to demonstrate their knowledge in creative ways.

Organizational and financial assistance is available from the Taiwan Ministry of Education. Lodging/living expenses in Taiwan for participants will be covered, as well as up to 50% of transportation expenses.

Cash prizes will be awarded to the first place, second place, and third place teams. There are other prizes as well.

Registration is due by May 31. For additional information please visit http://ironman.creativity.edu.tw/eindex.html. You may also email chengcc@mail.nsysy.edu.tw or kfliu@ntu.edu.tw for more details or assistance.

Applications Open for Operation Purple Summer Camps
The National Military Family Association is accepting applications for its *Operation Purple* Summer Camps. Each camp is “purple” and open to children of uniformed service members, active duty or reserve. Interested individuals may register online at [http://www.operationpurple.org](http://www.operationpurple.org).

There are 62 camps in 37 states and additional information about individual sites is also available on the Web site ([www.operationpurple.org](http://www.operationpurple.org)). Priority is given to children with a parent deployed or deploying anytime between September 2008 and December 2009 and have not attended an Operation Purple camp in the past. Each child may register for only one camp. Registration closes at midnight Eastern Daylight Time on *April 20th*.

### 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](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: