Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

I know many of you have either just returned or are now on your spring break. I hope you enjoyed, or are able to enjoy, your time away from the daily grind.

Governor Quinn has submitted Illinois’ application to begin accessing the $2.055 billion in State Fiscal Stabilization Funds that has been set aside for our state. It is our hope that this funding will become available to Illinois as soon as possible. As you know, the Governor’s intent is to use the SFSF funds in the General State Aid (GSA) program in FY09 and FY10 to minimize the possible impact of the state’s current fiscal deficit upon payments of GSA to Illinois school districts.

While utilizing the SFSF funds for GSA will alleviate some of the state’s fiscal pressures, it also means some additional paperwork. As we have stated before, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) includes additional accountability and transparency requirements for all agencies that receive stimulus funding. Districts will need to submit an application, which was sent to you earlier, in order to receive the remaining GSA payments.

I apologize that this notice was sent to you over what was/is spring break for many of you, but there is a real urgency in returning a signed application to us in a timely manner. I know that some school districts will not be returning until the date you are scheduled to receive the next GSA payment, however, please return the assurances to ISBE as soon as possible.

In addition, although we have not yet received the guidance on record-keeping and reporting, districts will be required to track this funding separately. You will need to report on specific uses, as well as track and account separately the remaining GSA payments. We will provide additional guidance to you as soon as the U.S. Department of Education provides it.

We have completed calculating preliminary allocations of IDEA Part B Flow Through and Preschool funds that you are scheduled to receive in FY 2010, as well as the preliminary IDEA amounts that you are scheduled to receive under ARRA. Final allocations will be available this summer.

Special education directors and cooperatives were sent this information late last week and you can access the calculations at the agency’s special education Funding and Disbursements Web page under the Federal Special Education heading at http://www.isbe.net/funding/html/specialed.htm or you can review just the ARRA amounts at the agency’s stimulus webpage http://www.isbe.net/arra/arra_summary_allocations.pdf.
Finally, I would like to make some clarifications regarding the letters of intent we had requested you complete and send to ISBE. The letter of intent must be signed and returned to ISBE in order to access ARRA Title I or IDEA funds in FY 2009. The total amount of funding to which your district is entitled will not change if you decide to access the funds in FY 2009 or, instead, wait until FY 2010. We would anticipate most districts will not want to access these funds during FY 2009, due to the limited amount of time left in the school year. If you wait to apply until FY 2010, you will still have the same amount of funding and will be able to obligate those funds through September 30, 2011.

Thanks and have a great week!

Chris

Upcoming Dates & Deadlines

- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grant – April 15
- Registration for Statewide Summit for Bilingual Parents – April 17
- 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
- Part 575 (School Technology Program): Public comment period ends - May 18
- Prevention Initiative Birth to Age 3 Years RFP – May 19
- 2009 Bilingual Education Program Delivery Report due – June 30
- Percent Exception Application due – June 1

Educator Preparation & Certification

Best Practices for “Interim” District Superintendents

The Illinois School Code requires all school districts “to employ a superintendent who shall have charge of the administration of the schools under the direction of the board of education.” 105 ILCS 5/10-21.4. The School Code does not, however, further define the ways in which school districts are permitted to employ superintendent—for example, the School Code does not require, on its face, that a school district superintendent be hired “full-time”, nor does the School Code, on its face, prohibit a school district from retaining a retired district superintendent to work in that school district for less than 120 days in a school year.

The Illinois State Board of Education (the “Agency”) has done its best, despite the lack of clarity in the law, to determine what is and what is not an acceptable employment practice—and has historically taken action pursuant to Section 1.20 of its administrative rules (23 Ill. Admin. Code 1.20) to reduce the recognition status of school districts that have not shown a commitment to employing a full-time district superintendent. Furthermore, despite little statutory guidance, Regional Superintendents have done an excellent job to best ensure compliance consistently across the state.

The Agency, though, believes that before further action is taken by the Agency to negatively impact a school district’s recognition status due to this issue, more clarity is necessary. Therefore, for the remainder of this current school year (2008-09) and for the coming school year (2009-10) only, the Agency has decided that no school district’s recognition status will be negatively affected due to
its employment of an ‘interim’ superintendent. This moratorium by the Agency should not be interpreted as an endorsement of school districts employing an ‘interim’ superintendent.

The Agency intends to work with stakeholders over the course of the next six months to establish clear standards for the employment of district superintendents, and hopes to incorporate the resulting standards into either Illinois law or rule. The standards will be then applied for purposes of determining a school district’s recognition status for the 2010-11 school year.

If your school district has any questions regarding this message, please contact Patrick Murphy, Division Administrator for Educator and School Development, at pmurphy@isbe.net.

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**Grants & Programs**

**21st Century Grant Readers Sought**

Grant readers are sought to review the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) after-school programming grant proposals. Proposal reviews will take place at the Springfield ISBE offices at 100 North First Street on April 28-30. Training on the scoring rubric will be provided for all readers.

Mileage and per diem will be available for all readers that qualify, with hotel expenses paid for those who reside more than 50 miles from Springfield. There is no honorarium.

Current grantees or those who are affiliated with school districts or organizations applying for 21st CCLC grant funding in FY10 need not respond to this call for readers.

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**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](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/special-ed/html/training.htm](http://www.isbe.net/special-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.

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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 from 8 a.m. until noon Saturday, April 18 at the Doubletree Hotel in Oak Brook. Registration information for both districts and job seekers can be found at [http://www.thecenterweb.org/irc/pages/f_event-job.html](http://www.thecenterweb.org/irc/pages/f_event-job.html).

The Doubletree Hotel is at 1909 Spring Road, Oak Brook, IL 60523 and the hotel phone number is: (630) 472-6000.

Fourth Annual Statewide Summit for Bilingual Parents

The Fourth Annual Statewide Summit for Bilingual Parents will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday, May 2 at the Doubletree Hotel, 1909 Spring Road in Oak Brook. School districts with bilingual/ESL programs are encouraged to register a delegation of bilingual parents who are members of Parent Advisory Councils (PACs) and staff who work with the PACs. While this summit is aimed at members of PACs, other bilingual parents are also encouraged to attend. Keynote presenters include Dr. Pauline Clardy from Illinois State University in Normal and Dr. Linda Espinosa from the University of Missouri, Columbia.

The Illinois State Board of Education will reimburse school districts for registration costs ($200 for each person) for up to ten persons (eight parents and two school representatives). In addition, if the delegation travels more than 50 miles, the district will be reimbursed for travel expenses. The registration deadline is April 17th. To obtain a registration form and get additional details regarding reimbursement, go to [http://www.thecenterweb.org/irc/index.html](http://www.thecenterweb.org/irc/index.html) and click on "4th Annual Summit for Bilingual Parents" on the right hand side of the screen.

Please complete and send registration forms along with payment to the Illinois Resource Center by Friday, April 17. If you have specific questions about payment by purchase order, check, or credit card, please contact the Illinois Resource Center at 224-366-8555.
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.

Curriculum & Instruction

Illinois Math Science Partnership

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.

Computers & Technology

Microsoft Select Licensing Program

ISBE offers Illinois K-12 Public Schools and organizations of all sizes the ability to purchase Microsoft software at greatly discounted prices through the Microsoft Select Licensing program. The current agreement with Microsoft expires on 2/28/2010.

The Select program is a perpetual license program allowing schools the ability to purchase even a single license at discounted prices. Media can be ordered only when needed. All of the Microsoft Applications like Office are offered along with the complete set of Microsoft server products and
Operating System Upgrade licenses. Subscription based products such as Forefront for Exchange (used at ISBE) that allow you to license software for the remaining 11 months of the current contract are also available.

Illinois schools place their orders directly through Microsoft LARS chosen by ISBE to service this program. Current pricing and program information can be found online at http://www.isbe.net/msselect/contract.html. A brief price list of the most popular Microsoft products and a complete list of all products are current and are updated monthly.

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/homefront.pdf

Department of Natural Resources

2009 Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest Winner Announced

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources recently announced that Abraham Hunter, a homeschooled student from Vienna, Illinois, won “Best in Show” in Illinois’ segment of the Federal Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Contest. Abraham’s artwork has been entered in the National Federal Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest April 22 at the National Postal Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

For a complete list of student winners please visit http://www.dnr.state.il.us/education/CLASSRM/RIBBON/main.htm

Professional Development

Charter School Informational Workshop Schedule for South Cook County Area

Staff from the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Network of Charter Schools will conduct a charter school informational workshop beginning at 1 p.m. on April 30 at the Holiday Inn & Convention Center in Tinley Park. The informational workshop will provide information on charter school grants, charter school law, and charter development. This charter school outreach is a requirement of the Federal Charter School Start Up Grant which ISBE received for a three year period from FY08 thru FY10. All interested parties are encouraged to attend including members of the general public, school district staff, and charter school developers or staff. Brief presentations will be made but the main purpose of the workshop is to answer individual questions. The workshop is free and pre registration is not required. It is helpful if participants notify us of their plans to attend. Please contact Richard Loman, Division of Educator and School Development, if you have questions or want to pre register, email rloman@isbe.net or phone, 217-782-2948.

History Teacher of the Year Award Finalists
Congratulations to those teachers who were selected as finalists for the 2009 History Teacher of the Year Award. The finalists received congratulatory letters that included the final materials needed. The due date for these materials is April 17, 2009.

The materials needed are:

- A one-page statement of the nominee’s philosophy of teaching American history.
- A sample lesson plan, no longer than 3 pages. Primary document attachments are not included in the page limitation.
- A sample extended student project, demonstrating use of primary documents, artifacts, historic sites, etc. Nominees can include up to 10 pages of student work in this category.
- An 8-10 minute video, which is not a class session, but a segment during which the nominee demonstrates class projects, and discusses his or her most effective teaching practices, and how student achievement is assessed. Students are not present in the video.

In order to ensure that all applicants have an equal opportunity to represent their achievements, the selection committee will not consider additional or supplemental application materials. If there are any questions, contact Mike Hatfill at dhatfill@isbe.net or 217-557-7323.

Save the Date: January 20-22, 2010 for Annual Early Literacy & Illinois Reading Recovery® Conference in Chicago

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

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.

Essay Contest: Why is Abraham Lincoln Still Important Today?

U.S. Senator Roland W. Burris launched a statewide essay-writing competition and invited all Illinois school children in grades K-8 to participate. In recognition of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial, Senator Burris is asking students to write an essay answering the question, “Why is Abraham Lincoln Still Important Today?”

The United States Capitol Historical Society in cooperation with the Lincoln Bicentennial Commission will be compiling reflections and essays written by students and Members of Congress about our 16th President, and placing them in a time capsule. The Lincoln Capsule will remain sealed for 50 years, before being opened by a new generation in the year 2059.

The students who send in the best submissions to Senator Burris’ Lincoln Essay Contest will be rewarded by having their essay included in the Lincoln Capsule and entered into the Official Congressional Record. They will also receive a personal note of congratulations from Senator Burris and the school with the highest level of participation will receive an American flag flown over the United States Capitol Building during the 200th year since Abraham Lincoln’s birth.

All Illinois students enrolled in grades K-8 in public, private and home schools are invited to submit an essay. The essay should fit on a single sheet of paper and must include name, mailing address, the name and address of school, student’s current grade level and the name of the teacher who assigned the essay. One essay per student.

Send all entries to the address below no later than April 27th:

Senator Burris’ Lincoln Essay Contest
Office of Senator Roland W. Burris
230 South Dearborn, Suite 3900
Chicago, Illinois 60604
The winning essay will be announced May 11.

First Amendment Freedoms Art & Essay Contest

The Anti-Defamation League’s First Amendment Freedoms Art & Essay Contest deadline is May 8th. First prizes are $1000. A contest entry form and information about the teacher’s free program can be downloaded at [www.nie.chicagotribune.com/freedoms](http://www.nie.chicagotribune.com/freedoms). The awards dinner honoring First Amendment champions, Abner Mikva and Newton Minow, will be September 16. Winning students and their families will be invited to attend as guests.

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](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.

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**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)

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**In the News**

**Weekly News Clips**

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