Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

During the past couple weeks, I’ve visited schools in Barrington, Elgin, Quincy and Rockford and have seen a lot of great things happening in those communities. I’ve handed out Honor Roll certificates throughout the state for several months and I only wish I could personally hand out every one. My congratulations and thanks go out to the students, staff and administration in these schools. You’re doing great work and I am glad we’re able to recognize you.

I also want to let you know that I am very proud of how our Illinois schools responded to the H1N1 virus. I know this was a tense time for many of us, and I believe the response was appropriate.

This was a fluid situation and we tried to keep you updated on the changing school closure guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We take our cue from medical professionals and provide resources to help you make decisions. I can not stress enough the need to work with your local health departments - a relationship that should be year round and not just during an emergency.

Next week, representatives of the US Department of Education’s (ED) Office of Inspector General will be in Springfield to begin their initial audit of Illinois’ use of funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). During this particular audit, they will look at how we monitor districts and others that receive these ARRA funds. I want you to be aware that the process is starting, even though not all guidance is out, and that at some point soon, auditors from ED will likely go out to districts to monitor the use of these funds.

Agency staff will host another ARRA webinar at 1:30 p.m. Friday, May 15. You will need to register by going to https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/930649953. Staff will discuss changes to the Illinois Program Accounting Manual and A-133 Single Audits. We anticipate about 200 districts will be required to perform an A-133 audit this year for the first time due to the increase in the receipt of federal funds. Also, please note there are specific qualifications your auditor must meet in order to conduct an A-133 audit.

Part of the ARRA includes $4.35 billion, which Secretary Duncan refers to as his “Race to the Top” fund, to help states drive improved student achievement. The Illinois State Board of Education has positioned our state well to be in line to receive some of these funds. Just last month, Illinois received a non-stimulus related federal grant to further develop a data system that will allow us to track student data from preschool through post secondary education and into the workforce. It will allow us to match students and teachers, and to see what classes students across Illinois are taking in High School to prepare for the future. It will be an invaluable tool for parents and students as they make decisions about their future.

As you may know, the Board last year voted to join the American Diploma Project and is currently undergoing a review of its standards, along with California and Florida. In addition to our ADP work, Illinois has just signed on with

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the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association to work with other states on a common core of internationally benchmarked standards.

In mid-April, we joined with 40 other states in Chicago to discuss this concept of a common core of standards. This work could lead to a common standardized test that could be voluntarily administered regionally or even nationally, providing a realistic picture of academic achievement for all students. This state-led effort will focus on developing fewer, clearer and higher standards aligned with college and work expectations. These standards will be based on research, evidence and international benchmarks, with a focus on rigor and relevance.

The direction the Board is driving Illinois’ education agenda is exactly what ED is looking for, as reflected in the principles of ARRA. Our Board has positioned us well to take advantage of these historic opportunities, which I believe will be a great benefit not just for the students of Illinois, but for all students in the United States.

Chris

Upcoming Dates & Deadlines

- Application for Regional Safe Schools Program – May 15
- National School Lunch Program Equipment Assistance Grant application due – May 15
- Part 575 (School Technology Program): Public comment period ends – May 18
- Those Who Excel Nominations due – May 18
- Prevention Initiative Birth to Age 3 Years RFP – May 19
- Proposals for FY2010 School Improvement Grant – May 28
- FY 2009 State and Federal Grant Projects ending June 30 submit budget amendments and project extension requests – May 31
- Applications for 1% Cap Exceptions – June 1
- Deadline for entries in the Art on a Rain Barrel contest – June 10
- Part 65 (New Teacher Induction and Mentoring): Public Comment period ends – June 15
- Part 100 (Requirements for Accounting, Budgeting, Financial Reporting, and Auditing): Public comment period ends – June 15.
- 2009 Bilingual Education Program Delivery Report due – June 30
- Nonpublic Registration, Enrollment, and Staff Report – June 30
- Student Health Data – Vision – June 30
- Consolidated Bilingual Program Application – June 30
- TSR Salary Data – July 15
- FY 2009 State and Federal grant projects ending Aug. 31 submit amendments and project extension requests – Aug. 1
- Deadline for waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly in Fall 2009 – August 14

Rules

Notice of Completed Rulemaking

Please be advised that a set of emergency amendments recently adopted by the State Board is now in effect. These rules have been posted on the agency’s Web site at www.isbe.net/rules

Please choose “Rules Currently in Effect” and scroll to Part 100. The emergency amendments are posted separately, just below the main document.

Part 100 (Requirements for Accounting, Budgeting, Financial Reporting, and Auditing)

Adding new revenue account numbers and other material related to funds received pursuant to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).
Affected Sections: 100.130 and 100.Table C

Effective Date: April 17 for a maximum of 150 days

Invitation to Comment on Rules

Two proposed rulemakings recently reviewed by the State Board of Education are currently available for public comment. These items have been posted on the agency’s Web site at www.isbe.net/rules.

Please choose “Proposed Rules and Amendments.”

Please submit any comments or suggestions you may have to rules@isbe.net.

Part 65 (New Teacher Induction and Mentoring)

Changing the current pilot program into a continuing grant program; adding detail to some of the program specifications.

Deadline for Public Comment: June 15.

Part 100 (Requirements for Accounting, Budgeting, Financial Reporting, and Auditing)

Adding new revenue account numbers and other material related to funds received pursuant to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

Deadline for Public Comment: June 15.

Student Assessment

2009 Applications for 1% Cap Exceptions are due June 1

If more than one percent of students in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 11 are identified as significantly cognitively disabled, districts should prepare a request for an exception to the one percent cap and submit by June 1. If the conditions for the exception are approved, then all proficient and advanced scores earned by students taking the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) in reading and math will be counted as passing scores in making determinations for school, district and state AYP.


The form may be mailed or faxed to 217-782-6097, attention Pearl Schneider. For additional information please contact Ms. Schneider at 217-782-4823 or via email at pschneid@isbe.net.

Electronic Transcript Exchange Records

The Illinois Student Assistant Commission (ISAC) is reporting record usage of its Illinois Electronic Transcript Exchange service (ILTE).

The service allows schools utilizing virtually any student information system to create an electronic version of a student’s transcript to send to a college or university.

For students, the electronic transcript exchange found on IllinoisMentor.org means a simplified application process. When submitting an online application to a college participating in the transcript exchange program, transcripts may be now released to one or more colleges at the same time the online application is submitted. Last year, 38,495 online applications were submitted to 56 colleges and universities.

ISAC recently announced that Illinois high schools with students who plan to play college athletics have another reason to utilize the ILTE system because the NCAA Eligibility Center now accepts electronic transcripts sent through IllinoisMentor.org.

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ISAC recently announced that Illinois high schools with students who plan to play college athletics have another
reason to utilize the ILTE system because the NCAA Eligibility Center now accepts electronic transcripts sent through IllinoisMentor.org.

Participating high schools electronically send official transcripts to the transcript exchange using the ILTE application in one of two ways; a counselor can upload transcripts directly from their student information system, and release them to participating colleges in response to student requests, or if the high school has enabled the feature, students can enter information into the transcript manager, which is matched to the appropriate transcript in the transcript exchange. If a match is found, the student is prompted to release the transcript. The college(s) then download the released transcript from the Transcript Exchange. The Transcript Manager allows for tracking of released transcripts, including institutions selected for release, transcript release dates, and institutional transcript download dates.

Illinois’ electronic transcript exchange system is offered at no cost, courtesy of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. For further information on electronic college applications and the electronic transcript exchange, visit www.IllinoisMentor.org/AdmissionApp/

Special Education

School Mental Health Support Request for Proposals (RFP)

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is accepting proposals for the School Mental Health Support Grant. The purpose of this grant is to develop a coordinated system that addresses the mental health needs of individual students through early intervention.

Early intervention is defined as Tier Two Interventions, which occur as early after the onset of an identified concern as possible and are those that target individual students or subgroups of students whose risk of developing mental health concerns is significantly higher than average.

The School Mental Health Support goals are to:

A. Enhance the capacity of school districts to identify and meet the early intervention mental health needs of students in natural settings;

B. Develop a coordinated, collaborative student mental health support system that integrates with community mental health and other child-serving agencies and systems; and

C. Reduce the stigma associated with mental health and mental illness within the school community.

Visit http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/grant_info.htm for additional information about the grant, program requirements, and to access the grant application. Proposals and completed applications must be submitted to ISBE no later than 4 p.m. on May 29.

If you have any questions about the School Mental Health Support Grant, please contact Kelly Rauscher at krausche@isbe.net or 217-782.5589.

English Language Learning

FY10 Consolidated Bilingual Program Application

The FY10 Consolidated Bilingual Program Application for both State TBE/TPI funding and federal Title III (LIPEPS and IEP) funding has been posted at http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/consolidated_application.htm.

Please note that to be eligible for federal Title III (LIPEPS and IEP) funding, your consolidated application must be postmarked by June 30.

In addition, this year you will be required to complete the Self-Monitoring Checklist which will also be made available on our Web page at www.isbe.net/bilingual. The Self-Monitoring Checklist also must be postmarked no later than June 30.

Your FY10 Consolidated Bilingual Program Application and the Self-Monitoring Checklist both must be completed and returned to the Division of English Language Learning postmarked no later than June 30.

Please send the application and the checklist to:

Illinois State Board of Education
Division of English Language Learning
100 W. Randolph, Suite 14-300
Chicago, IL 60601-3268-3169

To assist you in completing your application, we suggest that you review the materials at the following links:
• Title III –Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives
• Private Schools - Guidance
• Fiscal Policies and Procedures
• Division of English Language Learning Consultants Assigned to Assist Local School Districts
• Illinois School Code and Rules to Serve English Language Learners

If you have questions regarding the FY10 Consolidated Bilingual Application and/or the Self-Monitoring Checklist, please contact the Division of English Language Learning (DELL) at 312-814-3850

Grants

FY 2009 State and Federal Grant Amendments and Project Extension Requests

Many State and Federal grant projects are approaching a June 30 end date for obligating FY 2009 grant funds. Please be advised that per Policy Statements #2 and #3 on page three of the State and Federal Grant Administration Policy and Fiscal Requirements and Procedures, all State and Federal project end date extension requests and final budget amendments must be received in the agency no later than 30 calendar days prior to the end date of the project. Final amendments for federal or state funded grants with a Project End Date of June 30, 2009 that are in the electronic Grants Management System (eGMS) must be transmitted to ISBE no later than May 31. Since this deadline falls on a Sunday, state or federal grants that are outside of the eGMS must be date stamped no later than Monday June 1.

For grants with a Project End Date of Aug. 31, 2009, the last day that amendments will be accepted is Aug. 1. Since this deadline falls on a Saturday, state or federal grants that are outside of the eGMS must be date stamped no later than Monday Aug. 3. All budget increases for state funded grant projects must be received by June 30, even if the project end date has been extended. For grant applications in the eGMS, the deadline is also referenced on the Program Overview page under “Amendment Due Date.”

FY 2010 Beginning Dates of Obligations or Expenditures

Please be advised that per Policy Statements #8 and #9 on page three of the State and Federal Grant Administration Policy and Fiscal Requirements and Procedures, districts/entities can begin obligating grant funds on an annual basis when the initial application (or request for funding) has been received or approved by ISBE, depending on the type of grant. This policy applies in general to all grants, but there may be sections in the school code or other legislation that would override this ISBE policy for particular grants or those with specific appropriations. If so, please provide that information if requested. Every grant that ISBE administers is included in the appropriation bill and several appropriation line items are for specific organizations. However, that does not guarantee funding without a signed grant agreement to access those funds. All grants require submission of a budget and project plan of how the funds will be expended prior to obligation.

Professional Development

Basic Skills Test Needed for Certification

The Illinois State Board of Education now offers the Basic Skills test needed for teacher certification on computer during select five-or-six-day testing windows at Pearson Professional Centers nationwide, including at least six sites in Illinois.

The move from pencil-and-paper tests, previously only administrated on Saturdays, to the computer-based testing during the week and on Saturdays, offers test takers more scheduling options. The first computer-based Basic Skills testing period began in March. There were 305 test takers from more than a dozen states who took the Basic Skills test online.

The next computer-based testing window is May 14-20. More than 380 people have registered to test in 19 states. Applicants must register online as early as possible before their desired test date. Test centers schedule appointments on a first-come, first-served basis and seating is limited to about 20 test takers at each testing session. Registration information is available at www.iets.nesinc.com. Additional dates for computer-
based testing are already scheduled for July and August and more dates will be soon be added for other months.

The Basic Skills test consists of 125 multiple-choice questions in reading and comprehension, language arts (grammar and writing), and mathematics, and a constructed-response writing assignment. New teaching candidates wishing to become certified in Illinois must take the Basic Skills test. In addition, teachers who are currently certified and are seeking an additional certificate must also take the Basic Skills test. A computer-administered practice test program for the Basic Skills test is available to download at www.icts.nesinc.com/IL_practest_opener.asp

There are Pearson Professional Centers in the following Illinois locations:
- Chicago (Two downtown sites)
- Marion
- Peoria
- Schaumburg
- Springfield

Test takers must bring their admission ticket and proper identification to the testing center. Security measures include taking a thumbprint of each test taker at the test site for the purpose of identity verification. An official score report will be mailed to test takers by U.S. mail approximately one month after the test. Additional information regarding certification testing is available at http://www.isbe.net/certification/html/testing.htm.

Illinois State Museum Seeks Grades 6-12 Teachers for Pilot Workshop

Illinois State Museum's Oral History of Illinois Agriculture Project is developing an interactive Web module called the Audio-Video Barn -- featuring new digital multimedia oral-history interviews with people involved in agriculture and rural life in Illinois, educational resources, and links to ISM online collections, to be launched in fall 2009. Teachers in grades 6-12 are needed to help field test Audio-Video Barn resources in an on-site workshop July 13 in Springfield. A stipend, free lunch and 6 CPDUs are available. Travel is on your own.

If interested, please contact Mike Maniscalco, Project Coordinator, 217-557-6095 or mmmaniscalco@museum.state.il.us. Additional information on the pilot workshop can be found at www.museum.state.il.us/avbarn.

Nutrition

Food Allergy Webinar Series Continues

Mark 1:30 p.m. May 27 and June 3 on your calendar and register for the USDA and School Nutrition Foundation’s 75-minute Managing Food Allergy Webinars. Jeannie Sneed, PhD, RD, CP-FS, SNS with USDA’s Office of Emergency Management and Food Safety is the moderator.

- May 27 - Managing Food Allergies in Schools: Developing Policy
  The expert panel includes a National School Boards Association representative, State Director of Child Nutrition Programs (Massachusetts), Consultant, and School Director of CNP

- June 3 - Managing Food Allergies in Schools: Implementing Policy
  The expert panel includes the Vice President of Educational Programs with the Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN), a specialist with Baltimore County Public Schools and an Assistant Director of Nutrition in a public school district.

The first webinar, Managing Food Allergies in Schools: Understanding the Fundamentals was broadcast earlier and recorded. It covered the Liberty Public School District’s Food Allergy Policy & Guidelines. Visit www.2.gotomeeting.com/register/678831511 to view and download that Webinar.

Illinois Department of Labor

Carnival and Amusement Ride Safety Tips

With summer just around the corner, millions of Illinois families will visit amusement parks, festivals, street fairs and carnivals across the state. The Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL) is responsible for inspecting rides and attractions that are open to the public -- before they are permitted to operate -- to ensure that they meet safety requirements and are operated according to manufacturers’ standards. The Department is offering tips on how to stay safe while enjoying amusement rides and attractions.

Please feel free to download the IDOL Carnival and Amusement Ride Safety Tips and print, display and
Student Opportunities

Latino Art Beat Contest

Latino Art Beat, a Chicago-based not-for-profit arts organization that awards scholarships to high school students, is now accepting submissions for its 2009 contest. This year’s competition deadline is May 29. The competition theme is “What Hispanic Heritage & Culture Means to Me.”

Students attending Chicago Public Schools 299, in grades 9 – 12, are eligible to participate in the multiple competition categories of drawing, painting, 3-D artwork, computer generated artwork, photograph and film and animation.

For students outside of Chicago, only juniors and senior may participate in the competition categories of drawing, painting, and/or film and animation.

Scholarships are only awarded to juniors and seniors. Freshmen and sophomores qualify for recognition, award certificates and other prizes. The contest Web site is http://www.latinoartbeat.com/home.htm.

For more competition information, including instructions, contest rules and the 2009 application forms, contact the Latino Art Beat at 773-291-6901 or by e-mail at latinoartbeat@hotmail.com.

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: