May 19, 2009

Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

The school year is coming to a close for most districts and I know these are going to be hectic days. Good luck as you wind things down and congratulations on another great year. I want to thank those of you who participated in our latest American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) webinar last Friday. We will continue to offer these to share new information.

I know many of you will be trying to take some time off during the summer for a well-deserved break, and in some cases, entire districts maybe shutting down for days at a time. I encourage you to make plans this summer to stay connected with us. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) continues to await additional guidance from the US Department of Education (ED) on various ARRA programs and requirements.

We will use the Weekly Message, as well as the stimulus page on our Web site http://www.isbe.net/arra/default.htm, to update the field on ARRA throughout the summer. If you are taking time off, please make sure you are able to check your e-mail accounts from a location other than school. Also, you may want to make sure you are able to get in touch with key staff over the summer in case your district needs to react to information as it becomes available from ED on ARRA with regards to possible competitive grants or data and accountability requirements.

I have received feedback from a number of you about how a negative Local Determination for The Individual with Disabilities Act (IDEA) Compliance will impact your ability to utilize IDEA funds from the ARRA. This is not just a concern for you, but a concern for all of us, because no one wants to see these additional federal funds unnecessarily restricted. We are working with our counterparts at ED to see if there is some flexibility. In the meantime, my advice is to continue work toward bringing your districts into compliance. If we are able to receive flexibility from ED on this issue and you are making progress, I think this will only help us in trying to ensure all ARRA funds are used as intended.

Additional information on the process for Local Determination for IDEA Compliance follows this column, as does a detailed, practical example of how IDEA’s 50% rule applies.

In May of prior years, the guessing game would begin as to whether or not the 23rd and 24th General State Aid (GSA) payments would be advanced from July to June. I can definitively tell you there will be
no 23rd and 24th GSA payments this year, because the General Assembly last year voted to change the
distribution to a 22-payment cycle (August—June) from a 24-payment cycle (August—July). Districts
still receive the same amount of funding; it is just spread out over fewer payments and contained within
one fiscal year.

I know the use of State Fiscal Stabilization Funds has created additional hoops for all of us to jump
through, but because we are using these funds we will see all of our GSA payments this fiscal year.
Additionally, it is freeing up money to pay the backlog of state bills. Prior to Illinois using the SFSF
funds for GSA, the Comptroller’s office had a backlog of bills for Illinois schools that totaled more than
$1.1 billion dollars. Currently, the backlog stands at about $775 million dollars.

Some of you may have received calls from ISBE staff this week inquiring about the status of
construction projects for districts on the waiting lists. We were asked to do this as lawmakers discuss a
possible capital construction proposal during the final days of session. I do not want to give anyone false
hope, but I do see this as a positive sign.

Enjoy the Memorial Day Holiday!

Chris

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**Upcoming Dates & Deadlines**

- Prevention Initiative Birth to Age 3 Years RFP – May 19
- NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant – noon (12:00 pm) on Friday, May 22.
- Proposals for FY2010 School Improvement Grant – May 28
- Advanced Placement Classroom Amendments – May 29
- 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
- Advanced Placement Classroom Continuing Applications – June 4
- Deadline for entries in the Art on a Rain Barrel contest – June 10
- Migrant Education Application for 2009-2010 school year – July 15
- 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.
- E-report card form – June 26
- 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
- Modified End of Year Report on IWAS- Aug. 1
- Deadline for waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly in Fall 2009 – August 14
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

Additional Information Regarding Funds for Part B of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and LEA Determination

Per Section 616(a)(1)(C)(i) and 300.600(a) of IDEA 2004, the US Department of Education requires each state to make annual determinations on the performance of each Local Education Agency (LEA) with regard to the provision of special education and related services. Essentially, these determinations are a way of designating the status of local districts into one of the following four categories, as outlined in Section 616 (d) of IDEA 2004:

- Meets Requirements
- Needs Assistance
- Needs Intervention
- Needs Substantial Intervention

Every state is required to make determinations based on indicators identified by the US Department of Education and delineated in the State Performance Plan (SPP). In order to develop Illinois’ determinations process, ISBE convened a stakeholder group comprised of representatives from the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA), Illinois State Advisory Council for Children with Disabilities (ISAC), Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education (IAASE), Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT), Illinois Education Association (IEA) and Regional Offices of Education (ROE) to select key indicators and to set criteria for determining the status of local districts in relation to the mandated requirements as outlined in IDEA.

This meeting was facilitated by a representative from the North Central Regional Resource Center, which provides technical assistance to states in meeting the requirements of IDEA. Through this process, criteria were developed for LEA determinations based on IDEA requirements. The LEA Determinations process was also discussed with a large stakeholder group, ISAC. ISBE has gathered several resources for districts regarding the LEA Determinations process, which are available at http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/lea_determinations.htm.

Per the US Department of Education, each state is required to consider the following data when making local determinations:

- Indicator 9: Disproportionate Representation in Special Education
- Indicator 10: Disproportionate Representation in Specific Disability Categories
- Indicator 11: Initial Eligibility Timelines
- Indicator 12: Early Childhood Transition
- Indicator 13: Secondary Transition Plans
- Indicator 15: General Supervision – Uncorrected noncompliance
- Indicator 20: Timely, valid & reliable data submissions
- District audit findings with regard to the use of Part B funds

States may consider additional SPP indicators when making LEA Determinations. Although other states include additional indicators, by recommendation of the stakeholder group Illinois chose to only consider the required indicators listed above. This decision is consistent with LEA Determinations made in previous years.

**50 Percent Rule and IDEA**

Upon receiving this guidance, ISBE staff have been in communication with US Department of Education, the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, the North Central Regional Resource Center and other states regarding LEA Determinations and the MOE reduction issue to discuss its impact on districts nationwide. To date, states have not been afforded any flexibility on this issue, however ISBE will continue to advocate for such flexibility.

§300.205 of the IDEA allows LEAs to adjust local fiscal efforts in certain fiscal years if specific conditions are met. This section of IDEA has also been called the “50% rule”.

The following scenario is an example of how this might look in a typical district.

In the first fiscal year, the district receives a $100,000 allocation that must be used on special education expenses according to the rules and regulations prescribed by IDEA and federal guidance documents. The district also spends $1,000,000 of local and state funds to support its special education program. The one million dollars are considered the district’s Maintenance of Effort (MOE).

In the second year, the same district receives $100,000 in IDEA funds and $100,000 in ARRA funds for a total of $200,000. The district plans to continue its support of special education programs or MOE with $1,000,000 of state and local funds.

If a district meets the guidelines specified in the IDEA rules and regulations, the district can compare these allocations and use 50% of the difference to support activities that would be allowable under the ESEA. (200,000–100,000=100,000 and 50% of this amount is $50,000.)

If a district is able to adjust its local efforts, it could use $150,000 of its IDEA allocations to support special education and $50,000 to support activities that would be allowed under the authority of ESEA. The district can then use the $50,000 identified with the 50% rule to reduce its support of special education through local and state funds (MOE) to $950,000.

If a district is unable to adjust its local effort according to §300.205, it can still use all $200,000 for its special education program and must continue to maintain its support of special education through local and state funding at $1,000,000.

Additional information will be shared as it becomes available.

**WIA Youth Services**

Under the auspices of the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth Program provides economically disadvantaged youth between the ages of 14 and 24 with employment and training services. Youth services funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) are expanded to serve youth up to the age of 24. WIA youth participants, in addition to being economically disadvantaged, must have at least one of the following barriers to employment in order to be eligible for these services:

- Basic literacy skills deficiency
- School dropout
- Homeless, runaway or foster child
- Pregnant or parenting
- An offender (a person who has been subject to any stage of the criminal justice process)
- Requires additional assistance to complete educational program, or secure and hold employment

WIA youth services are provided through a network of 26 Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAS) throughout the state. The following ten required youth program elements are available as part of the youth program in each area:

- Paid and unpaid work experiences, internships
- Adult mentors
- Leadership development
- Occupational skills training
- Alternative secondary school services
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling
- Support services
- Summer employment opportunities
- Tutoring, study skills training/dropout prevention strategies
- Follow-up services

Programs are available this summer, until September 30, 2009. If interested, contact with the appropriate LWIA
because each area has designed its own program and timetable.

For the Local Workforce Investment Areas Contact Listing please visit http://www.commerce.state.il.us/NR/rdonlyres/EAE8B56D-5AD4-4038-BDDF-EC07E9937C2D/0/LWIAMay2009Matrix.pdf

**National School Lunch Program Equipment Assistance Grant Deadline Extended**

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) will accept applications for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Equipment Assistance Grant until May 22. This deadline was extended because many school districts in Southern Illinois were without electrical power due to recent storms. Each school food authority (SFA) participating in the federally funded NSLP is eligible to submit an application to receive an NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant. Priority is given to SFAs seeking equipment assistance for schools with 50 percent or more of their students eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

Visit [http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/nslp_grant.htm](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/nslp_grant.htm) for additional information about the grant, program requirements, and to access the grant application. If you are taking advantage of this extension, you must complete and submit the NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant to ISBE (delivered to office not postmarked) no later than noon (12:00 pm) on Friday, May 22. Incomplete or applications received after that time will not be considered.

If you have any questions about the NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant, please contact *Stephanie Custer* (scuster@isbe.net) or *Roxanne Ramage* (rramage@isbe.net) at 217-782-2491 or 800-545-7892.

For purposes of compliance with Section 511 of P.L. 101-166 (the “Stevens Amendment”), applicants are advised that 100 percent of the funds for the program are derived from federal sources. The total amount of federal funding involved is $3,657,300.

**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 porschneid@isbe.net.

**E-Report Card Available**

The E-Report Card Form (86-43) is now available in IWAS. At step 1 on the confirmation page, please check the grades served and the enrollment data closely. Starting this year, those data were collected through the Student Information System. Please complete the rest of the data and submit through the "E-Report Card" system in IWAS by **June 26, 2009**.

**English Language Learning**

**Migrant Education Program Application**

The Migrant Education Program application for the 2009-10 regular school year is available on the Division of English Language Learning webpage at: [http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/migrant.htm](http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/migrant.htm).

Funding is available under Title I, Part C of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) for supplemental academic and support services in school districts with qualifying migrant children and youth. The deadline for submitting the application is **Wednesday, July 15, 2009**.

Children ages 0-21 who have not graduated from high school may be eligible for the program if they have moved within the past three years across state or school district lines with a parent or guardian or on their own to obtain temporary or seasonal work in agricultural production, fishing or food processing industries.
A certified recruiter must document that children qualify as migrant students. ISBE can assist districts with this process. For more information, contact Beth Robinson at 312-814-3850.

**FY10 Consolidated Bilingual Program Application**

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

Please note that to be eligible for federal Title III (LIPLEPS 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](http://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**

**FY10 Consolidated Application to Serve English Language Learners**

The FY10 Consolidated Application to Serve English Language Learners (ELLs) is now available under “Hot Topics” at [www.isbe.net/bilingual](http://www.isbe.net/bilingual). This application (available in Microsoft EXCEL Versions 2003 and 2007), allows districts serving ELL students to apply for state Transitional Bilingual Education and Transitional Program of Instruction (TBE/TPI) funds, federal Title III Language Instruction Program for Limited English Proficient Students (LIPLEPS), and Immigrant Education Program (IEP) funds.

In addition, districts that complete the consolidated application must fill out and submit the Self-Monitoring Checklist that is also found under “Hot Topics” at [www.isbe.net/bilingual](http://www.isbe.net/bilingual).

Districts will also find a number of resources that include grant eligibility requirements, a list of critical links, and a webinar to guide them in completing the consolidated application at [www.isbe.net/bilingual](http://www.isbe.net/bilingual). Districts should note that this application is not available through the e-grant system.

District applications for federal funding and the Self-Monitoring Checklist must be postmarked by June 30, 2009. Districts are instructed to submit one original and one copy of the application and one copy of the Checklist to:

Illinois State Board of Education  
Division of English Language Learning  
James R. Thompson Center  
100 West Randolph, Suite 14-300  
Chicago, IL 60601-3268-3169

For assistance in completing the FY10 Consolidated Application and the Self-Monitoring Checklist, contact the Division of English Language Learning at 312-814-3850.

**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 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.

The Dental Data Collection system is now open for data entry through June 30, 2009. The data must be submitted online using IWAS. Once logged into IWAS, the dental link (Student Health Data – Dental) will appear on the Systems Listing page under ‘Annual’. If you do not see the “Student Health Data – Dental” link, please call the ISBE Helpdesk at 217-558-3600.

URLs for important documentation are listed below:

School Dental Examinations- Information Sheet
http://www.isbe.net/research/pdfs/dental_information.pdf

IDPH Proof of School Dental Examination Form
http://www.idph.state.il.us/HealthWellness/oralhlth/DentalExamProof.pdf

IDPH Dental Examination Waiver Form
http://www.idph.state.il.us/forms/ohpm/DentalExamWaiver.pdf

Dental Information-Data Entry Worksheet
http://www.isbe.net/research/xls/dental_worksheet.xls

In the event of problems opening these links, copy the URL to the address bar of a browser window (Internet Explorer or Netscape) and hit the “Enter” button.

As mandated by Section 5/27-8.1 of the School Code, all Illinois schools serving any combination of kindergarten, grade 2, and/or grade 6 students are required to submit dental data. The data may be entered at the school level or, for public school districts, the district level. However, it is the responsibility of the nonpublic school administrator/public school district administrator to review the accuracy of entered data and submit the data to ISBE.

Please share this information with your school nurses, health technicians, and individuals responsible for entering your dental data on IWAS. Questions about the information to be provided may be addressed to Md. Shafiqul Azam in the Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division at 217-782-3950 or mazam@isbe.net.

2008-2009 End of Year Report Available on IWAS

The 2008-2009 End of Year Report is open on IWAS for school-level data submission. All public schools operated by districts and special education cooperatives, as well as other state-funded schools and regional
programs, need to submit the data. The deadline for submitting this year’s modified End of Year Report on IWAS is **August 1**. Your cooperation in submitting accurate data in a timely manner is greatly appreciated. Questions about information to be entered for this data collection should be referred to **Niann-Tsyr Chern** in the Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division at 217-782-3950.

### Professional Development

#### Basic Skills Test Needed for Certification Now Online

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 administered 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.

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.icts.nesinc.com](http://www.icts.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-administrated practice test program for the Basic Skills test is available to download at [www.icts.nesinc.com/IL_practest_opener.asp](http://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

Additional information regarding certification testing is available at [http://www.isbe.net/certification/html/testing.htm](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 mmaniscalco@museum.state.il.us Additional information on the pilot workshop can be found at [www.museum.state.il.us/avbarn](http://www.museum.state.il.us/avbarn).

#### Nutrition

**Electronic Direct Certification System Webinar**

Please join us from 2 to 3 p.m. on Tuesday, May 26 when staff with the Nutrition Programs Division of the Illinois State Board of Education will provide School-Based Child Nutrition Program sponsors an overview of the Electronic Direct Certification System
that will be used for school year 2009-2010.

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.

Please note that the eligibility certificates that were mailed to each student receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly the Food Stamp Program) and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) will no longer be mailed.

Materials for this webinar including the PowerPoint presentation and Guidance Document will be posted on the Nutrition Programs Web site (www.isbe.net/nutrition) no later than 10 a.m. on Tuesday, May 26.

WHAT: Overview of the Electronic Direct Certification System Webinar

DATE/TIME: 2-3 p.m., Tuesday, May 26

Space is limited. Please pre-register for this Webinar at https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/667330824.

If you have any questions, 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.

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.

- 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 distribute them to school children as you deem appropriate.

LINK TO POSTER ON IDOL WEBSITE:
http://www.state.il.us/agency/idol/forms/pdfs/Safety%20Poster.pdf

Student Opportunities

Essay Contest on religious freedom

As the 2008/2009 school year winds down and you are planning for the upcoming year, summer workshops, etc., we invite you to alert your social studies and English teachers to the First Freedom Student Competition. We have enjoyed participation from Illinois students in the past, and we look forward to more entries from your students in the upcoming school year.

The First Freedom Student Competition is a national essay contest offering high-school students an
opportunity to compete for a $3,000, $1,500 and $750 award, as they examine religious freedom, its history, current importance, and relevance in today’s world. The 2009/2010 topic will focus on religious freedom as a part of international human-rights policy.

The upcoming school year’s topic, guidelines, student flyer and classroom poster can be found at www.firstfreedom.org (click on the red button under First Freedom Center News). Model U.N. advisors may find this topic of particular interest, as well.

The competition is open to 9th through 12th grade students in the United States and U.S. territories, and to American schools and American home-schooled students worldwide.

Please let us know if you have any questions. For more information, please call (804) 643-1786 or visit: competition@firstfreedom.org

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. 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.

**Children and Youth Funding Grants**

President Obama’s stimulus plan includes billions of dollars in new funding for children, seniors and minority populations.

To reflect these changes, *CD Publications* has revamped and widened the focus of *Children & Youth Funding Report*, one of our continually-updated, interactive news services.

Two recently posted funding opportunities on *Children & Youth Funding Report* are:

- **Best Buy Children’s Foundation**
  - Deadline: June 15
  - Best Buy Children's Foundation supports local communities with the Community Grants Program that is led by employee committees in each of its eight territories across the United States. Employees select non-profit organizations that support programs and services that provide opportunities for young teens related to education, life skills, leadership skills or relationship development.

- **Nike Inc. Cash Grants**
  - Deadline: Eligible proposals are reviewed throughout the year.
  - The corporation works with experienced partners in youth and education to address needs of vulnerable populations by linking experts with low-income youth, minorities, young women, and youth living in conflict situations.

If you’d like to review these and other funding opportunities posted on *Children & Youth Funding Report*, click on or cut and paste the following link into your Web browser and sign up for 2-weeks free access: http://www.trycdpubs.com

When you reach the site just scroll down and check *Children & Youth Funding Report*. Or call toll-free at 1-800-666-6380

**Recycle Offer from Apple**
For a limited time, Apple will collect any brand of unwanted computers and peripherals from your school for free* and recycle them in a secure and responsible way. You'll not only keep your school green, but also free up more storage space. For details, go to www.apple.com/education/recycle or call 1-800-APPLE-LN.

**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

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**In the News**

**Weekly news clips**

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