



Aug. 25, 2009

Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

The annual Board retreat was last week in Bloomington. The retreat offers Board members a chance to study some issues more in depth than they are able to during regular Board meetings. This year they focused on strategic planning and the development of a competitive Race to the Top application.

I want to thank those of you who made the trip to attend the retreat in person, as well as those of you who provided feedback in other ways. Specifically, I'd like to thank Shirley Morris from Marian Catholic High School, Jack Denny of Leyden Community High School District #212 and Michael Kelly from Carlinville Community Unit School District #1, who spoke to Board members about their experiences in improving the quality of their schools. The Board always appreciates hearing from local educators, and their input proves valuable as the Board develops policy and strategy for education.

As part of the Board's strategic planning, Board members reviewed preliminary results of the 2009 state assessment. Typically, we do not release preliminary data, but members of the media were in attendance and several decided to report on what was being discussed. You can access this information at http://www.isbe.net/board/meetings/2009/august_retreat/2009_strat_plan_session.pdf.

The preliminary results are mixed. ISAT scores are holding steady or slightly increasing while the PSAE results show a decline in all areas — reading, math and science. We do not have results for writing at this point in time.

The PSAE results underscore the concerns we share regarding the connection between our elementary and high school standards in Illinois. This is another reason why our review of those standards with the American Diploma Project and the Common Core State Standards Initiative are so important. We need to be able to determine what students should know in order to be successful after graduation, and align those standards all the way back to preschool. This work will allow us to connect our standards in a meaningful way and then develop the corresponding accountability tools to measure achievement of those standards.

During the retreat, the Board had a lengthy presentation and discussion of the development of the Illinois Race to the Top (RT3) application. As has been discussed in this column before, the Board has positioned us to be competitive in the RT3 areas of standards and assessments and data systems, but we will continue to look at ways to improve in those areas as we develop Illinois' application.

In the area of great teachers and leaders, Illinois will need to take significant steps and will require new legislation to move forward. Illinois will need to make comprehensive changes to how teachers and principals are evaluated, and must be able to tie teacher and principal evaluations to student growth. The State Board of Education will also be examining the certification process as well as working closely with higher education on the redesign of teacher education programs. Illinois will also need to expand opportunities for alternative certification programs, and focus on ensuring highly effective teachers and principals work in the schools where they are most needed.

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In the final RT3 area, improving struggling schools, Illinois has made some initial gains by enacting legislation that allows for the increase in charter schools. However, more extensive reform is needed that may include strategies such as public-private partnerships to turnaround underperforming schools, using available state and federal resources to encourage districts to shut-down chronically low-performing schools and replace them with high quality options, or possibly utilizing RT3 funds to encourage districts to reorganize or consolidate.

You can review the entire RT3 briefing draft the Board discussed at http://www.isbe.net/arra/pdf/race_to_the_top_draft.pdf.

We are moving quickly on this application because Phase I applications must be completed by December of this year. We have already begun meeting with stakeholder groups, and I would encourage you to reach out to the organizations you belong to with suggestions you may have.

Have a great week!

Chris

Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- **Affidavit of School Treasurer Bonds submitted by Regional Superintendents** – Sept. 1
- **Hooked on Hydroponics application deadline** – Sept. 18
- **Bright Green Dream Challenge entry deadline** – Sept. 25
- **National Public Lands Day** – Sept. 26
- **State Farm’s Youth Advisory Board service-learning grants deadline** – Oct. 2
- **U.S. Senate Youth Program and Hearst Scholarship application deadline** – Oct. 7
- **Illinois Youth Dropout Prevention Summit** – Oct. 12
- **Annual Superintendents’ Conference in Springfield** – Oct. 27-28
- **School District’s Adopted Budget due at ISBE** – Oct. 30
- **Annual Statewide Transition Conference** – Nov. 8-10
- **Veterans Day moment of silence** – Nov. 11
- **Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet deadline** – Nov. 16
- **Annual Financial Report due at ISBE** – Nov. 16 (excluding those granted extensions due Dec. 15)

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

Correction Made to Guidance for Securing DUNS Number and CCR Registration

Corrected guidance has been provided by the federal government for carrying out the reporting requirements included in Section 1512 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). In the Aug. 11 and Aug. 18 issue of the Weekly Message, it was stated that all sub-recipients that receive ARRA funds, such as districts, regional offices of education, joint agreements and other local education agencies must secure a Data Universal Numbering System (D-U-N-S) number but did

not have to register with the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) site.

We have recently learned that the information provided to us was in error. All sub-recipients that are awarded ARRA funds must secure a D-U-N-S number and register with the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) site. We apologize for the confusion this may have caused.

Q: What is a D-U-N-S number and who provides it?

A: Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) maintains a business database of information on businesses worldwide. D&B provides a D-U-N-S number, which is a unique 9-digit identification number for each physical location of a

business organization. For school districts and other local education agencies this would be the physical location of the central administrative office. D-U-N-S number assignment is free for all entities required to register with the U.S. federal government for contracts or grants.

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

Q: What is a CCR?

A: The Central Contractor Registration (CCR) is the primary database for the federal government. CCR collects, validates, scores and disseminates data in support of agency acquisition missions. Since October 2003, it is federally mandated that any organization wishing to do business with the federal government under a Federal Acquisition Regulation-based contract must be registered with CCR before being awarded a contract. There is no cost to registrants. Additional information is available at <http://www.ccr.gov>.

Please check with your business office to determine whether your local education agency is registered with a CCR, and if not, access the CCR link and register. Note: You must have a D-U-N-S number before registering with CCR.

If your district needs to obtain a D-U-N-S number and/or register with CCR, please allow sufficient time to complete the process.

English Language Learning

Annual English Language Proficiency Assessment

The result of the 2009 ACCESS for ELLs report indicated that a substantial number of school districts did not annually administer the ACCESS for ELLs to all students who have been identified as having a limited English proficiency.

As you know, Illinois school districts are required to annually assess the English language proficiency (including aural comprehension [listening and speaking], reading and writing of all English Language Learner (ELL) students, whether enrolled or not in bilingual education programs (20 USC 6826, Sec. 3116(b) (3) (c), 23 Ill. Adm. Code, Section 228.25 (c) (1) and Section 14C-3 of the School Code), using the English language proficiency assessment (ACCESS for ELLs), prescribed

by the State Superintendent of Education, until such time where the student achieves an English “proficient” score.

We urge you to review your assessment and enrollment procedures with your staff to make sure that your ELL students are properly identified and reflected on the Student Information System (SIS). Any students who, during the ACCESS for ELLs test administration window are identified as ELLs, are required to take this test.

Should you have any questions please contact the Division of English Language Learning at 312-814-3850.

Curriculum and Instruction

Technology Integration Plan Information

Several federal and state funding programs for schools and districts in the state of Illinois require a Local Educational Authority (LEA) to have an approved technology plan. The Illinois State Board of Education serves as the approving entity of tech plans for public schools and/or districts outside of the city of Chicago.

ISBE is also certified by the Universal Service Administrative Co. (USAC) to approve technology plans, and will serve as the Technology Plan Approver (TPA) for public schools and/or districts registered with ISBE for the purpose of E-Rate.

Schools and/or districts applying for E-Rate that have a Technology Integration Plan expiring on June 30, 2010, are required, by USAC, to complete a Basic (Draft) Plan before posting a Form 470. ISBE recommends that applicants complete the Basic Tech Plan no later than **Oct. 1** in readiness for the E-Rate Year 12 (2010-11) funding year filing windows to be posted at <http://www.usac.org/sl/>. Schools and/or districts holding plans that will not expire in 2010 must complete an annual review of their plan and document monitoring set forth in the monitoring section. More information about the annual reviews is available on the Technology Integration Plan information page at <http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/elearning/default.htm>.

Technical Assistance and training sessions relative to the writing of a tech plan are offered at various times during the year by through the Learning Technology Centers (LTC) throughout the state. Contact your local LTC director for dates and information. Additional information regarding Technology Plan writing and USAC requirements is available online at <http://www.usac.org/sl/>.

For more information, contact **Faith Bishop** at 217-557-7323 or fbishop@isbe.net.

AGED500 Introduction to Natural Resources for Teachers

This graduate level course (four graduate hours) is the first of a series of courses developed for distance education by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in conjunction with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to provide an introduction to Illinois natural resources. This course can be taken without being admitted to a graduate degree program at the U of I by registering through the Office of Continuing Education at <http://www.outreach.uiuc.edu> as a non-degree seeking student.

Class discussion sessions operate live through a virtual classroom using the Elluminate distance education system (www.illuminate.com) as well as outside independent work. Course software is provided at no cost and high speed internet is required. Class sessions are 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Tuesdays from Sept. 8 to Dec. 1. Course cost is \$1,416 (\$354 per credit hour).

For more information contact **Heather Miller**, program director at 217-265-6568 or hmiller1@illinois.edu.

School Business Services

School District Annual Budget – Dates to Remember

The School Code, Section 17-1 (105 ILCS 5/17-1) requires school districts within or before the first quarter of each fiscal year to adopt and file with the Illinois State Board of Education an annual balanced budget. These budgets are to be entered and adopted on the applicable Form 50-36 provided by ISBE at the following link: <http://www.isbe.net/sfms/budget/2010/SDB2010FORM.xls>.

By Sept. 1 – Tentative Budgets: The budget should be prepared in tentative form by some person or persons designated by the school board, and in such tentative form made conveniently available to public inspection. At least one public hearing is required on this tentative budget prior to the final action. Notice of the availability for public inspection and of the public hearing is to be given by the district at least 30 days before the hearing.

By Sept. 30 – Adopted Budget: The budget is adopted by the school board at a public meeting held after the budget hearing.

By Oct. 30 – Budget Filed with ISBE: The adopted School District Budget Form 50-36 is to be electronically submitted to ISBE within 30 days of adoption and no later than Oct. 30.

By Oct. 30 – Deficit Budgets: School districts that adopt an unbalanced budget in the operating funds must complete a Deficit Reduction Plan (DRP) to balance the budget within three years. The DRP, if required, is filed with ISBE at the same time as the budget.

Other Budget Dates to Remember:

- Deadline for filing a certified copy with the county clerk – Within 30 days of adoption.
- Deadline for posting on the district's Web site – Immediately after adoption.
- Deadline for amending the budget – No later than June 30.
- Deadline for submitting an amended budget to ISBE – Within 30 days of adoption or no later than June 30.

If you have any questions, please contact the School Business Services Division at 217-785-8779.

The FY 2008-09 School District/ Joint Agreement Annual Audit

For the year ending June 30, the Illinois State Board of Education provides the Illinois School District Annual Financial Report (AFR) (Form 50-35) and Joint Agreement Annual Financial Report (Form 50-60) electronically and is supported in Excel version 97-Excel 2003 workbook version. These forms are used for the financial reporting requirement by all school districts and joint agreements.

Section 3-7 of the School Code sets forth the duties and responsibilities needed to meet the audit requirement.

There are several items regarding the FY09 AFR that we would like to bring to your attention.

- Filing deadline for the AFR. Statute requires that the AFR and attachments be filed this year on or before Oct. 15 with the appropriate Regional Superintendent. In extenuating circumstances, the Regional Superintendent may grant up to 60 days extension per Section 3-7 of the School

Code. If an extension has not been granted, the AFR must be forwarded by the Regional Superintendent to ISBE on or before Nov. 16, 2009 (Cover page through page 8 with all signatures).

- When filing the AFR electronically to ISBE, the CPA firm and school district are required to file using the Attachment Manager Web site at the links provided below. From the Annual Financial Report FY09 Web page, Select: “Submit Your Completed AFR” then complete all required sender information. In the ISBE Receiver Name, Select “Annual Financial Report Group.” Note: The Audit, Management Letter, Opinion Letter, Compliance Notes, Financial Notes, etc., all must be embedded into the Opinion letters page of the AFR. To be consistent, all copies of documents must be filed with the School District and the Regional Office of Education (ROE).
- An A-133 Single Audit must be completed if total federal expenditures are \$500,000 or more. This report must be submitted electronically using the forms included in the AFR, if applicable. The sheets are unprotected for any necessary alterations. Note: All opinion letters must have the auditor signature.
- The “Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet” is included with the AFR and must be filed directly with ISBE on or before Nov. 16. (No provisions exist for extension of time or submission to the ROE)
- The Estimated Financial Profile Summary is included in the AFR on Page 4 and provides the district with a preliminary score/designation. The final profile score/designation will be released for verification in the spring of 2010.

The AFR and related material may be obtained from <http://www.isbe.net/sfms/afr/afr.htm> or at the ISBE homepage (www.isbe.net), select “Division Links,” then “School Business Services Division,” then “Forms” and then select “Annual Financial Report FY09.”

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact the School Business Services Division at 217-785-8779.

Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet

School districts must submit the completed Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet - Section 17-1.5 to

Illinois State Board of Education’s School Business Services Division by **Nov. 16**. The Illinois School Code requires school districts to limit the growth of “administrative” expenditures to a maximum of 5 percent from one fiscal year to the next. The provisions of Section 17-1.5 took effect July 1998.

School districts with administrative expenditures per pupil in the 25th percentile or below (4th quartile) that wish to waive the administrative cap via a school board resolution must:

1. Publish notice of a public hearing
2. Conduct a public hearing
3. Have an appropriate waiver resolution approved by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the school board
4. File a copy of such resolution with the State Board of Education within 45 days of approval

The Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet, quartile rankings for all school districts and a sample waiver resolution for qualifying districts can be accessed at www.isbe.net/sfms/AdminCaps/AdminCaps.htm.

Additionally, the Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet is included in the Illinois School District Annual Financial Report – June 30, 2009 (ISBE 50-35). The worksheet included in the School District Budget Form July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010 (ISBE 50-36) is a working document for local use only and will not be accepted for official submission of the Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet.

Submitted Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheets will be verified to the district’s submitted School District Budget Form July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010 (ISBE 50-36) and the district’s submitted Annual Financial Report – June 30, 2009 (ISBE 50-35). Inaccurate Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheets will be returned to districts for correction.

If you have any questions, contact **Michelle Heninger**, School Business Services Division, at 217-785-8779 or mheninge@isbe.net.

No Child Left Behind

DRAFT Waiver Notifications

ISBE has reviewed the U.S. Department of Education (ED) Guidance on Title I, Part A Waivers, and is preparing the following waivers for submission on behalf of the LEAs in the state. Additional information

and the draft waiver letters are available at <http://www.isbe.net/nclb/htmls/waivers.htm>.

3. **Waiver to exclude some or all of the Title I, Part A ARRA funds in determining an LEA's 20 percent obligation for choice-related transportation and SES**
 - If granted, this waiver will allow LEAs to exclude some or all of the Title I, Part A funds they receive under the ARRA in calculating their "20 percent obligation" for choice-related transportation and SES.
4. **Request to exclude Title I, Part A ARRA funds in determining the 10 percent professional development set-aside for an LEA in improvement**
 - If granted, this waiver will allow LEAs that are in improvement or corrective action status to exclude some or all of the Title I, Part A funds they receive under the ARRA in calculating their 10 percent professional development set-aside.
 - LEAs in improvement will still be required to provide the basic 10 percent set-aside.
5. **Request to exclude Title I, Part A ARRA funds in determining the 10 percent professional development set-aside for a school in improvement**
 - If granted, this waiver will allow schools in improvement status to calculate their 10 percent professional development set-aside in accordance with the specific formula.
 - Schools in improvement will still be required to provide the basic 10 percent set-aside.
6. **Request to exclude Title I, Part A ARRA funds in determining the per-pupil amount for SES**
 - If granted, this waiver will allow LEAs within Illinois to exclude some or all of the Title I, Part A funds they receive under ARRA in calculating the per-pupil amount for SES.
 - LEAs thus have the option, but are not required, to reduce the per-pupil amount for SES.

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

Student Assessment

ISAT Writing Pilot

ISAT writing is assessed in the spring at grades 3, 5, 6, and 8. As the pilot test is being administered in the fall, we will be pilot testing a grade up, meaning we will pilot test students in grades 4, 6, 7, and 9. Measurement Inc., our contractor, is in the process of contacting schools, including high schools for the grade 9 students. We appreciate your cooperation in completing this critical step in the assessment development process.

Nutrition

New Workshops on Purchasing in the National School Lunch Program

The Nutrition Programs Division is pleased to announce a new set of workshops focused on purchasing in the National School Lunch Program, The Competitive Edge: Purchasing in the National School Lunch Program.

The half-day workshops are designed to assist schools and districts with the processes involved in establishing procurement procedures, developing solicitations/contracts, issuing solicitations for bids and awarding contracts. Emphasis is placed on the state and federal rules and regulations that govern the purchasing of foods and goods for School-Based Child Nutrition Programs.

Registration for the workshops begins at 8:30 a.m. and the training is scheduled from 9 a.m. to noon. Complimentary beverages will be available, but no meals or snacks will be served.

Pre-registration is required and must be completed at <http://webprod1.isbe.net/cns/calendar/asp/EventList.asp>. There is no registration fee.

Here are the scheduled workshops: **Sept. 17 in Bloomington** at Eastland Suites Hotel and Conference Center; **Sept. 18 in Schaumburg** at the Radisson Hotel; **Sept. 25 in O'Fallon** at the Hilton Garden Inn and The Regency Conference Center; and **Sept. 30 in Springfield** at the Illinois Education Association Building.

Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Funds

Again this year, the Department of Defense (DoD) allowed participation in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable

Program to all schools that requested to participate subject to a \$500 allocation floor. The Illinois State Board of Education allocated the money it could spend with DoD amongst 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 has been allocated to them by selecting Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Participation on the Annual Order Forms menu option on the ICS.

Those schools that have funds allocated to them and do not have a login and password to the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Order Receipt System (FFAVORS) are advised to contact DoD at 215-737-3676 to begin placing orders. Any other questions related to the DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program can be addressed with Food Distribution Program staff at 217-782-2491.

Classroom Opportunities

Grants available for field trips to Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum

Grants for field trips to the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum in Springfield are available to certain Illinois schools and youth organizations with a high enrollment of low-income children. The application deadline is Sept. 11.

Midwest Generation, an Edison International Co., and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation are offering field trip grants to teachers of grades 4 through 12 in public and private schools that have a low-income enrollment of greater than 30 percent. Not-for-profit youth organizations that serve economically disadvantaged children are also eligible. The grants provide funding to visit the museum at no or reduced cost by deferring the cost of transportation, lunch or educational materials. School groups do not pay a museum admission fee.

Grant applications are available at www.alplm.org/education/grant_application_packet.pdf, and must be postmarked by Sept. 11. The grant awards will be announced in October. In 2008, a total of \$20,000 was awarded to 17 schools. For more information, call 217-558-9016 or e-mail randy.wiseman@illinois.gov.

Employment Opportunities

ISBE External Vacancy List

An External Vacancy List for the Illinois State Board of Education is available at <http://www.isbe.net/hr/Default.htm>.

In the News

Weekly News Clips

ISBE has posted highlights from last week's education news clips at <http://www.isbe.net/news/2009/newsclips/090821.htm>.