Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

We are moving forward with our Race to the Top (RT3) application, which is due Jan. 19, 2010. The tight turnaround will mean an aggressive timeline for all parties involved.

We expect later this week to post a draft of our RT3 application for review. We will send out a special notice to you all when this occurs, and I would encourage you to carefully review the draft. While the immediate goal is to win a competitive grant from the federal government, we truly are looking at the components of our RT3 application as driving sustainable education reform in Illinois.

The federal government’s RT3 application calls for local district participation. Half of any sum of money Illinois receives through RT3 will go directly to “Participating LEAs” that agree to implement RT3 goals and strategies. In order to be considered a “Participating LEA” a district superintendent must sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the state (the federal government will give states extra points if the memoranda of understanding are also signed by the local board president and the leader of the local teacher’s union). We will be including the MOU for your review when we post the draft RT3 application.

Many of you will wonder how much money your district may be able to receive. While funds will be distributed according to Title I formulas, we don’t yet know what the amounts will be until we apply and receive a federal grant and until we determine how many districts are interested. Overall we will be applying for $400 million which would leave $200 million to be distributed to participating districts in accordance to Title I formulas.

We are also aware of the difficulties this creates for local districts in deciding whether or not to make this commitment with the short timeframe and the fact it is happening during the holiday season. Several Chief State School Officers, including yours truly, made a request to the U.S. Department of Education that these timelines be extended. Last week we learned, however, that the U.S. Department of Education is not willing to extend the time by which the applications from states are due. Thus, we have no choice but to press forward as best we can.

We are planning a special Webinar on Dec. 18, whereby we can further explain the MOU and other components of Race to Top. It may be prudent for you to consider whether you will need to have board approval in order to sign the MOU and to schedule a board meeting early in January (it may be best to schedule such a meeting between Monday, Jan. 4, and Friday, Jan. 8 as we likely will be asking for signed MOUs by no later than Monday, Jan. 11). Our application is due in Washington on Jan. 19.

Please note that we must include these signed memoranda of understanding along with our state application — and thus given the Jan. 19 submission deadline, we will need these signed memoranda returned to the state as soon as possible. Again, we know this is a tight turnaround time but commitments from local districts will be a major factor in how favorably our application is viewed by the federal government. I think it’s imperative that we have an application
during this first round, because if we are not successful we will gain valuable feedback to improve our application for the second round, with applications due in early June.

Chris

**Upcoming Dates and Deadlines**

- **ISAT Science and Math Item Presentation Pilot** – Dec. 7-11
- **FY 2011 Budget Hearing in Mundelein** – Dec. 9
- **Webinar on ARRA reporting procedures** – Dec. 11
- **National School Lunch Program Verification Summary Report deadline** – Dec. 15
- **FY 2010 NCLB Title I Comparability submission deadline** – Dec. 15
- **Reporting for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act** – Submit data by Dec. 18
- **Part 151 (School Construction Program)** – Public comment period ends Dec. 28
- **Nonpublic Registration, Enrollment, and Staff Report (87-01) deadline** – Dec. 31
- **Part 1 (Public Schools Evaluation, Recognition and Supervision) and Part 252 (Driver Education)** – Public comment period ends Jan. 4.
- **IAAE Service Recognition Awards nomination deadline** – Jan. 4
- **Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly in Spring 2010** – Jan. 8
- **Immigrant Education Program Student Report deadline** – Jan. 15
- **Part 228 (Transitional Bilingual Education) and Part 235 (Early Childhood Block Grant)** – Public comment period ends Feb. 15
- **Non-Certified Staff Salary Study survey deadline** – March 1
- **Illinois Young Authors’ Conference in Bloomington-Normal** – May 15
- **2009-10 Eye Examination Data Collection deadline** – June 30

**Department of Public Health**

**Warning Issued on H1N1 E-mail Scam**

Dr. Damon T. Arnold, Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health, is alerting Illinoisans to a nationwide H1N1 phishing e-mail scam. The fraudulent e-mails (phishing) claim to be from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and reference a CDC sponsored State Vaccination Program. The messages request that users must create a personal H1N1 (swine flu) Vaccination Profile on the CDC Web site. The message then states that anyone 18 years or older has to create a personal Vaccination Profile on the CDC Web site.

The Illinois Department of Public Health encourages anyone who receives these e-mails to delete them immediately as the CDC has not implemented a state vaccination program requiring registration on [http://www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). Users that click on the e-mail are at risk of having malicious code installed on their computer system.

People should take the following steps to reduce the risk of being a victim of this or other phishing attacks:

- Do not follow unsolicited links and do not open or respond to unsolicited email messages.
- Use caution when visiting un-trusted Web sites.
- Use caution when entering personal information online.

**Curriculum and Instruction**

**ARRA Enhancing Education Through Technology Competitive Grant: Illinois School Reform Through Technology Initiative**

The State Board has released an RFP for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) Competitive Grant: Illinois School Reform Through Technology Initiative (IL-SRTT). The purpose of the
grant is to provide an unprecedented one-time opportunity for eligible applicants to acquire low-cost laptop/ultra-portable netbook computers to create fully integrated, state-of-the-art learning environments.

The RFP is available at the following site: http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/elearning/default.htm.

Applications Available for 2010 National Youth Science Camp

Applications to attend the 2010 National Youth Science Camp are available online at http://www.nysc.org/2010/. Two graduating high school students will be selected to represent Illinois at the all-expenses paid honors program, which will be held from June 29 through July 23.

To apply, download the application packet from and follow the enclosed instructions. For more information about the camp, visit the Web site or contact Gil Downey at 217-557-7323 or gdowney@isbe.net. The National Youth Science Camp is hosted and operated by the National Youth Science Foundation (http://www.nysf.com).

Applications must be received by Jan. 22. Mail the completed application to Attn: Gil Downey, Principal Consultant, National Youth Science Camp, Illinois State Board of Education, 100 North First Street, C-215, Springfield, IL 62777.

Data Analysis and Progress Reporting

2009-10 Teacher Service Record – Fall Data Collection Reminder

This is a reminder that the deadline to submit 2009-10 Teacher Service Record (TSR) data is Dec. 15. For the fall data collection, you must do the following no later than midnight Dec. 15:

- Report and make any necessary updates for full- and part-time employees working as of Oct. 1, 2009, in a position that requires a teaching, administrative or school service personnel certificate issued by the Illinois State Board of Education. (This includes any retiree working in a position requiring certification, performing duties other than as a substitute.)
- Ensure that special education teachers have at least one teaching assignment beyond assignment 1.
- Indicate if a teacher is paid (in part or in full) with Title I funds.
- Enter the number of classes for each teaching assignment.
- Ensure that your superintendent has approved the data in the “Teacher Service Record Data Wizard” and submitted the data to ISBE.

Salaries are not required for this data collection; the salary field has been intentionally disabled.

Questions about the 2009-10 TSR fall data collection may be directed to the ISBE Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division at TSR@isbe.net or 217-782-3950.

Office of the Governor

Survey Under Way on Illinois Green Cleaning Schools Act

Being environmentally conscious is something that we can all do to help our earth. However, it is something that needs to be taught and practiced everyday to be successfully integrated into our everyday lives.

In 2007, legislation passed regarding “green cleaning” for schools. Please help us understand the impact of this law and let us know how your school is implementing a green cleaning program at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5PG662R.

This survey will take less than 15 minutes to complete and will maintain your anonymity. Please submit your survey by Dec. 21.

More information on the actual Green Cleaning Schools Act, an overview fact sheet and more is available at http://www.standingupforillinois.org/green/school_cleaning.php.

The Sustainable School Compact is available at http://www.standingupforillinois.org/green/compact.php. This is a voluntary program for K-12 schools focusing on environmentally friendly initiatives. Our hope is that green habits can become part of the daily life for students at all Illinois institutions.

Nearly 400 schools have already signed on to making a difference in our state. Schools can join efforts to “go green.” By signing this document, you will be joining a group committed to a better quality of life, thus improving the world for future generations. Schools will receive a monthly newsletter with updates on how other
campuses are integrating green programs, as well as information on grants and funding resources. Visit the Web site above for the school compact, which needs to be signed and can be returned by e-mail with an electronic signature (preferred) or mail. Gov. Pat Quinn will then sign the document and you will receive a copy of the compact.

For more information, contact Eric Heineman at eric.heineman@illinois.gov.

Rules and Waivers

Notice of Completed Rulemaking

Please be advised that a set of amendments recently adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education are in effect. These rules have been posted on the agency’s Web site at http://www.isbe.net/rules. Please choose “Rules Currently in Effect” and scroll to the Part number.

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

Adds new revenue account numbers and other material related to funds received pursuant to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA); makes other technical corrections.

Affected Sections: 100.120, 100.130, 100.Appendix C

Effective Date: Nov. 23, 2009

Funding and Disbursements

PA 96-0640 – Changes for Coding the Public School Calendar

As previously announced in the Aug. 31, 2009, Illinois State Board of Education’s Weekly Message, Public Act 96-0640 was enacted on Aug. 24, 2009. This Public Act added new language to Section 24-2 of the Illinois School Code stating that a school board or other eligible entity is authorized to hold school or schedule teachers’ institute, parent/teacher conferences, or staff development activities including school improvement and in-service training on five legal school holidays provided the school board or other eligible entity follows through on two conditions:

1. Hold a public hearing about the proposal after notification of the time, date, location, as well as a description of the proposal has been provided to educators and parents. It must also be indicated that during the hearing, public testimony regarding the proposal will be taken.
2. Recognize the person(s) honored by the holiday through instructional activities conducted on that day or, if the day is not used for student attendance, on the first school day preceding or following that day.

The five holidays for which this process is available are:

- the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (third Monday in January)
- the birthday of President Abraham Lincoln (Feb. 12)
- the birthday of Casimir Pulaski (first Monday in March)
- Columbus Day (second Monday in October) and
- Veterans Day (Nov. 11)

Days utilized by Public Act 96-0640 on the Public School Calendar no longer require a special code. These days may be coded with the appropriate calendar code depending on the activity to be conducted on the holiday, (i.e. X – Pupil Attendance Day, TI – Teacher Institute, etc.) provided the education entity has fulfilled the previously mentioned conditions. An education entity that currently has an ISBE approved modification may continue to use the waiver calendar code (XH – Pupil Attendance Holiday Waiver, TIH – Teacher Institute Holiday Waiver, etc.) until which time the approved modification expires. Then, if the entity wishes to use the day as something other than a holiday, the previous conditions must be met and then the appropriate calendar code may be entered on the legal school holiday on the official public school calendar.

Public Act 96-0640 also updated Section 18-8.05 of the Illinois School Code to specify allowable parent/teacher conferences configurations. The allowable configurations are:

A minimum of five clock hours of parent/teacher conferences. The calendar code for the day which the conferences are held would be FPT – Full Day Parent/Teacher Conference. The conference times should be reported as the Activity Time.

Both a minimum of two clock hours of parent/teacher conferences held in the evening following a full day of pupil attendance and a minimum of three clock hours of parent/teacher conferences held on the day immediately following evening parent/teacher conferences. The calendar code for the attendance day that at least two hours of conferences are held in the evening after a full day of pupil attendance would be X – Pupil Attendance Day and the following day that conferences are conducted for a minimum of three hours, but no pupil attendance, would be FPT – Full Day Parent/Teacher
Conference. The conferences times for the previous evening should be included in the Brief Explanation for verification purposes.

Multiple parent/teacher conferences held in evenings following full days of pupil attendance, in which the aggregate time used for parent/teacher conferences is equivalent to a minimum of five clock hours. The days for evening conferences that are conducted after a full day of pupil attendance are coded at X – Pupil Attendance Day. The ‘comp’ day which neither teachers nor students are present would be coded as FPT – Full Day Parent/Teacher Conference. The Activity Times should reflect the normal school day start and end time. The dates and times of the multiple evening conferences should be included in the Brief Explanation for verification purposes.

The Public School Calendar system via IWAS has been updated to include these calendar code changes. If you have further questions please see the User Guide available as a menu item in the Public School Calendar system or contact Marj Beck at mbeck@isbe.net or 217-782-5256.

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**Nutrition**

**School Breakfast Program Mandate**

The Childhood Hunger Relief Act (Public Act 096-0158) mandates that a school must provide a breakfast meal if it had 40 percent or more students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches in the preceding school year. For additional information on this mandate, including how to determine which schools are mandated and how to request an exemption from this mandate, go to [http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/hb_756.htm](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/hb_756.htm).

**School Meals: Building Blocks for Healthy Children**

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academies recently released the report titled “School Meals: Building Blocks for Healthy Children” as commissioned by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to develop recommendations on improvements to the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs to align them with the latest Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

The USDA is reviewing this report and will “develop a proposed rule to determine the best ways to improve the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program based on IOM’s final report. Stakeholders and the public will have ample opportunity to comment on the USDA's proposed rule.”


**Culinary Courses Help Schools Meet School Meal Recommendations**

The National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) is developing a series of six free online courses designed to help child nutrition teams prepare healthier school meals that appeal to students' tastes. The Culinary Techniques for Healthy School Meals courses help school food service staff initiate food production and culinary techniques that incorporate principles of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans into the planning and preparation of school meals.

Illinois school food service staff members that complete all six courses are eligible to receive a stipend reimbursement of $75 and a set of dietary guidelines posters for their cafeteria while funding lasts. The stipends were made available by a USDA Team Nutrition Training grant.

The launch of the NFSMI culinary courses is particularly timely as the Institute of Medicine just released a report on school meals commissioned by the USDA. The IOM’s School Meals: Building Blocks for Healthy Children (http://vovici.com/wsb.dll/s/17fb9g417fb) report provides recommendations for revising the standards and requirements for the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. The USDA will use the report to draft proposed rules for revising these programs.

Go to [http://www.KidsEatWell.org](http://www.KidsEatWell.org) for details about the NFSMI courses, the reimbursement stipend and posters.

**National School Lunch Program Verification Summary Report Deadline**

Verification is the confirmation of eligibility for free and reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). Annually, each local educational agency (LEA) participating in the NSLP and/or SBP must select and verify a sample of household applications approved for benefits. The LEA must submit a Verification Summary Report (VSR) summarizing the results of verification efforts. The VSR must be submitted electronically
through IWAS, to the Illinois State Board of Education by Dec. 15.

Instructions on accessing and completing the VSR are available at [http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/vsr.htm](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/vsr.htm). Basic information regarding the verification process is at [http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/pdf/verification_process.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/pdf/verification_process.pdf).

For questions regarding the verification process and the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, contact ISBE at cnp@isbe.net or 800-545-7892.

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**Illinois Service Resource Center**

**Center Supports Deaf and Hard of Hearing Student Behavioral Needs**

Next week’s 13th annual Statewide Deaf Finger-Spelling Bee is a good time to take a closer look at the Illinois Service Resource Center.

The Illinois Service Resource Center is the component of the Illinois State Board of Education’s Illinois Statewide Technical Assistance Center that supports deaf and hard of hearing student behavioral needs.

ISRC provides technical assistance, resources and training for parents and educators of students who have hearing problems and behavioral challenges. The center offers services tailored for individual students.

For more information, go to [http://isrc.us](http://isrc.us). A 24-hour hot line is available, too. Call 800-550-4772 for resources and crisis intervention.

The Statewide Deaf Finger-Spelling Bee is set for Dec. 11 at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield. Competition begins at 1:30 p.m.

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**Professional Development**

**Toolkit Aims to Help School Leaders Support Military Children**

The American Association of School Administrators is offering free, online materials for school leaders to help them meet the needs of children whose parents are deployed with the military. The toolkit is available at [www.aasa.org/MilitaryChild.aspx](http://www.aasa.org/MilitaryChild.aspx).

“Children of military families often face multiple stressors, including frequent moves and extended periods of separation from loved ones,” said Mark Bielang, the president of the AASA. “School leaders play an important part in helping these students maintain a sense of stability and stay on track to achieve their educational goals.”

The toolkit, which was developed with a grant from the Veterans Support Foundation, features videos and a variety of documents, including fact sheets, a Q and A and more.

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**Conference on Financial Literacy Slated**

Registration is under way for the second annual K-12 Teacher Conference on Financial Literacy, which is organized by Econ Illinois, a non-profit organization that provides professional development and resources to K-12 teachers.

The free conference is set for Jan. 22 at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, 230 S. LaSalle St.

Registrations are accepted via e-mail only. Go to [http://econed-il.org/icee/prog_pd_w_cofl.shtml](http://econed-il.org/icee/prog_pd_w_cofl.shtml). Participation is limited to 100 attendees. For more information, visit [http://econed-il.org](http://econed-il.org) or call 815-753-0356.

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**Student Opportunities**

**Econ Illinois Offers Contests for High School Students**

Econ Illinois, a non-profit organization that provides professional development and resources to K-12 teachers, is offering two competitions for high school students.

The Illinois Personal Finance Challenge targets consumer education and personal finance students that compete in teams. Twenty teams advance to the state finals in Chicago and a state championship team will compete at the national stage in Kansas City on May 20. Registration deadline for the preliminary online competition is Feb. 1. Go to [http://econed-il.org/icee/ipfc.shtml](http://econed-il.org/icee/ipfc.shtml) to register.

Econ Illinois’ other contest is the Illinois Economics Challenge, an online only competition for high school students. Registration for the preliminary round will be accepted through Feb. 1. For more information, visit [http://www.econed-il.org/icee/econchal.shtml](http://www.econed-il.org/icee/econchal.shtml).

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**Art Contest Seeks Submissions**

Students ages 5-15 are eligible to compete in an art contest that will select a winner from each state to be
featured in a national touring exhibition, starting in Washington, D.C. All submitted work will be included in an online gallery and an interactive kiosk in the exhibition.

The theme is “State of the Art: The United States is a country made up of many cultures and environments. How do you fit into your community and what makes where you live unique? Is it the landscape or the people around you? What about a tradition passed on from your family? What can you say through your artwork? Consider all the questions when depicting your environment.”

The contest is organized by VSA arts and CVS Caremark, in partnership with Artsonia. For more information, visit http://www.artsonia.com/allkidscancreate, where submissions can be made. The deadline is Feb. 5. Arts education resources can be found at http://www.vsarts.org.

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