April 26, 2010

Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Last week we distributed to districts the Memorandum of Understanding for our Phase II Race to the Top application. We are asking that you review and return them by May 24. I apologize for the short timeline. I know that you will only have one board meeting before the deadline, however, the U.S. Department of Education set June 1 as the deadline for all state applications.

We have prepared some additional summary documents for you because I know the timelines are tight. In addition to the MOUs, we have developed a seven-page document that attempts to summarize in a user-friendly format the MOU’s “Scope of Work” and shows the alignment between the state’s RTTT application and ISBE’s mission and goals. We also have developed a one-page summary that can be provided to your board members and constituents. These documents along with the MOU are available online at http://www.isbe.net/racetothetop/default.htm.

We will be hosting a Webinar at 11 a.m. tomorrow, providing an overview of the Phase II application and process. You can register for this Webinar at https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/415844265. We will also host a Webinar on May 4 providing more information on the Learning Performance Management System (LPMS) and a demonstration of an LPMS that is currently in use. The state’s creation of a LPMS for school districts — which will not be possible without RTTT funds — is one of the most exciting components of our RTTT application and we want our districts and teachers to see the educational and financial benefits such a system will bring to Illinois. You may register for the LPMS Webinar at https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/644744016.

I have provided our Congressional delegation with an overview of our Race to the Top efforts, and we continue to be in contact with them about our ongoing educational needs here in Illinois. I am urging them to consider additional federal support to preserve teaching and other education positions, along with additional investments to support critically needed school modernization, rehabilitation and repair. A copy of the letter is available at http://www.isbe.net/pdf/congressional_memo042310.pdf.

I am hopeful that we will see movement on the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act this year. We need a federal law that invests in our state efforts and encourages true innovation so that we can develop policies that work best here in Illinois. I have shared with our Congressional delegation our priorities and will continue to communicate with them as this process continues to move forward.

Finally, I wanted to make you aware of the Student Growth Working Group that we are creating to advise us on the implementation of several initiatives that involve measuring and using student growth information for a variety of purposes. The group, made up of members of stakeholder organizations, technical experts, teachers, principals and superintendents will be meeting over the next 12 months to address the following:

- Identify and coordinate the various uses and timelines for assessing and using student growth information.

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• Develop a rigorous process for evaluating and comparing different approaches to assessing student growth.

• Advise the Superintendent and the State Board on the selection and use of growth information for instructional improvement, evaluation of teachers, principals and school effectiveness, resource allocation, school and district accountability.

• Evaluate progress and effectiveness of the development and use of student growth information.

We will be inviting individuals to join this group in the near future and if you are asked, I would urge you to serve.

Have a great week!

Chris

Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- PSAE initial test dates – April 28-29
- PSAE accommodations test window – April 28-May 13
- Bidders’ Conference for Illinois Learn and Serve America Grant RFP – April 30
- Title I Status Survey deadline – May 3
- Illinois School Wellness From A to Z Conference – May 4
- School Safety Conference in Schiller Park – May 5 (Registration deadline May 1)
- Investing in Innovation Fund grant deadline – May 11
- PSAE make-up test dates – May 12-13
- Student Advisory Council application deadline – May 14
- Illinois Young Authors’ Conference in Bloomington-Normal – May 15
- Part 24 (Standards for All Illinois Teachers) and new Part 210 (Illinois Hope and Opportunity Pathways through Education Program) – Public comment period ends May 24
- FY 2011 Regional Safe Schools Program application deadline – May 24
- Final 2009-2010 Public School Calendar deadline – last day of school
- Proposed 2010-2011 Public School Calendar deadline – June 15
- 2009-10 Eye Examination Data Collection deadline – June 30
- 2010 Bilingual Education Program Delivery Report deadline – July 30
- Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly in Fall 2010 – Aug. 13
- 2009-10 Teacher Service Record spring data collection period deadline – Aug. 15

Special Education Services

2007 Annual State Report on Special Education Performance Now Available


As in previous years, this report summarizes key performance data for students with disabilities that the Illinois State Board of Education regularly reports to the U.S. Department of Education. These performance areas include high school completion, student performance on statewide assessments and educational environments. Each of the three performance areas is introduced by providing the desired results as related to the Illinois State Performance Plan followed by overall observation. In addition, a background information section is provided to give an overall picture of students with disabilities in Illinois.

The Illinois State Board of Education publishes this report on an annual basis to ensure that parents, teachers, administrators, legislators and the public remain informed of the current performance and progress in improving results for students with disabilities.
Nutrition

Webinar on Electronic Direct Certification System Scheduled

From 10-11:30 a.m. on June 15, 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 2010-11. This is the second school year in which the system will be used; system enhancements will be discussed.

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. The Electronic Direct Certification System will be available July 1, 2010, for the school year 2010-11 eligibility determinations securely through Child Nutrition ACES.

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 Website (http://www.isbe.net/nutrition) no later than noon on Friday, June 11.

Space is limited. Pre-register for this Webinar at https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/174975848. If you have any questions, contact the Illinois State Board of Education, Nutrition Programs Division at 800-545-7892 or 217-782-2491. Staff can also be reached at cnp@isbe.net.

Funding and Disbursement Services

Filing for 2009-10 Final Public School Calendars Begins Soon

The ability to file the 2009-10 Final Public School Calendar will be available May 1, 2010, via IWAS. Please complete and transmit the Final Calendar to the appropriate Regional Superintendent by the last day of school. REMINDER: The document type Final Calendar must be submitted even if the district has submitted a document type Amended Calendar previously. A Final Public School Calendar must be transmitted and approved prior to filing the 2009-10 claims for General State Aid, Pupil Transportation and 18-3 Regular Education Orphanage.

HELPFUL HINT: The unused proposed emergency days (XED) that are coded at the end of the school calendar may be removed by correcting the Regular School End Date to the last day of actual school activity. Once the Regular School End Date has been corrected, the calendar codes after that date will be omitted.

If you have questions that are not addressed in the Public School Calendar Guidelines, you can contact the office of your Regional Superintendent or Marj Beck of the Illinois State Board of Education at mbeck@isbe.net or 217-782-5256. If you encounter technical issues with the Public School Calendar in IWAS please contact the ISBE Call Center at 217-558-3600 during business hours: 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Curriculum and Instruction

Bidders’ Conference for Illinois Learn and Serve America Grant RFP Coming Up

The Bidders’ Conference for Illinois Learn and Serve America Grant RFP will be held at 9 a.m. CDT Friday, April 30, 2010. The bidders’ conference will review items that writers need to include in the proposal for FY11. Participants will need to have a copy of the RFP as well as a copy of the RFP attachments when participating in the conference.

Space is limited. Reserve your Webinar seat now at https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/480244217. After registering you will receive a confirmation e-mail containing information about joining the Webinar.

Educator Certification

Clarification on Online Teaching Offered by myChinese 360

Educator Certification has responded to several questions regarding the online teaching of Mandarin Chinese offered by myChinese 360. Please note that this language course cannot be designated as a credit-bearing course
since the teachers are not state certified. However, if your
district is interested in offering myChinese 360 as a
source of enrichment and not for credit, such an offering
is permissible.

If your district is interested in offering Mandarin Chinese
as a credit-bearing language class and would like to learn
more about the feasibility of creating such a course,
please contact Cindy Hamblin, Director of the Illinois
Virtual School, at chamblin@ilvirtual.org. All educators
employed by the Illinois Virtual School are Illinois
certified teachers.

Career and Technical Education

Grants for Gateway to Technology
and Pathway to Engineering Programs

The Kern Family Foundation has announced the opening
of competition for grants to implement Project Lead the
Way’s Pathway to Engineering and Gateway to
Technology programs.

Detailed grant information, applications and instructions
The deadline is Nov. 5.

Project Lead the Way (http://www.pltw.org) is a not-for-
profit organization that promotes pre-engineering courses
for middle and high school students to build career
opportunities in a field.

Special Education Services

Social Emotional Learning Survey

The Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois
Children’s Mental Health Partnership are seeking
information from as many educators as possible to assist
in guiding state and local efforts to support Social
Emotional Learning (SEL) programming by conducting a
survey.

Participation in this survey is voluntary. We ask that you
provide the Survey Monkey link to your district teachers
and staff so that those interested in completing the survey
may do so. The survey will be available from April 12,
2010, through May 14, 2010, at
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NW8BBRB.

If you have any questions regarding the content of the
survey, please contact Michele Carmichael in the Special
Education Services division at mecarmich@isbe.net or via
phone at 217-782-5589.

Thank you in advance for participating in this survey.

Innovation and Improvement

FY11 School Improvement
1003(g) Grant Application Update

The FY 11 School Improvement 1003(g) grant
application is still in draft format. The dates on the
application are only placeholders; currently there is not a
due date for the grant application. The final application
will be released once the School Improvement Plan has
been approved by the U.S. Department of Education. At
that time we will schedule a Webinar as a bidders
workshop for the School Improvement 1003(g) grant for
the eligible schools on the Tier I and Tier II list.

For more information please refer to

Student Opportunities

National-Louis University Offers
Fellowships in Education, Business

National-Louis University is offering the Elizabeth
Harrison Fellowship for students interested in pursuing a
Bachelor of Arts in business administration or Bachelor
of Arts in elementary education.

The fellowship, named for NLU’s founding president, is
designed for full-time students attending during the day
at the university’s Chicago campus. The fellowship
covers about two-thirds of tuition or about $60,000 per
student over four years.

The deadline to apply is May 17. Applications are
available at http://www.nl.edu/harrisonfellows.

For questions or additional information, contact Jason
Almodovar, Harrison Fellowship adviser, at 312-261-
3043 or harrisonfellows@nl.edu.

High School Students Invited
to Join ISBE Advisory Council

The Illinois State Board of Education is accepting
applications for the Student Advisory Council for the
2010-11 school year. There are eight openings on the 15-
member council. Any Illinois public school student who
will be a sophomore, junior or senior is eligible to apply.

The Student Advisory Council was created in 1975 to
bring student concerns to the attention of ISBE. Each
year, the Student Advisory Council presents research and makes policy recommendations to the board. Council members attend board meetings and sessions of the General Assembly. Through this experience, students will gain an understanding of the educational issues facing Illinois schools.

An application is available online at http://www.isbe.net/SAC/default.htm. It must be returned to the State Board of Education by 4 p.m. Friday, May 14, 2010. The mailing address is: Illinois State Board of Education, Curriculum and Instruction, 100 N. First St, C-215, Springfield, IL 62777.

Activities of the Student Advisory Council in 2010-11 are contingent upon final state budget allocation. For more information, please contact the division of Curriculum and Instruction at 217-557-7323.

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### Professional Development

**Best Practices Day at Conference on Biotechnology Education Coming Up**

The Biotechnology Institute’s annual Best Practices Day at the Conference on Biotechnology Education is set for May 2 at Roosevelt University in Chicago.

Educators at middle schools and high schools who are actively engaged in teaching students life science and biotechnology are eligible. Registration cost is $25.

The program highlights exemplary biotechnology education curriculum, labs and programs. It will include panels on leading issues in biotechnology presented by renowned scientists.

For more information and to register, visit http://www.biotechinstitute.org/programs/bestpractices.html or call Rowena Douglas at 703-248-8681 or e-mail rdouglas@biotechinstitute.org.

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### Employment Opportunities

**Illinois Association of School Administrators Redesigns Job Bank**


Job seekers can look for openings throughout the state, using multiple search options such as grade level, county and position types. The site allows users to maintain profiles and resumes online. For employers, some of the new features include templates for job postings and the ability to save favorite candidates.

To read more about the redesign and new features of the job bank, visit http://www.iasaedu.org.

For assistance with the job bank site, e-mail jobbank@iasaedu.org or call 217-753-2213.

**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**