Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Bullying has received significant attention in the past couple of years by lawmakers, the public and national and local media. I think this heightened attention to an issue that can be emotionally devastating is healthy for all of us and educators need to pay particular attention to this.

Here at the State Board of Education we have received a significant increase in the amount of complaints from parents about bullying and questions about local policies and how situations should be handled. We had not tracked this information in the past, but we will begin to track this now.

In 2009, we also added a question in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), asking students if they have ever been bullied on school grounds. The baseline results showed 21 percent of students had been bullied. We will soon begin the YRBS 2011 survey and should have results in August. I hope by collecting this data it will allow us to have a more accurate picture of what is occurring and where, so that we can better address the issue.

Additionally, the School Bullying Prevention Task Force was established in law this past spring and is charged with exploring the causes and consequences of bullying in schools and identifying promising practices to reduce incidences of bullying. As part of its work, the Task Force will be evaluating the effectiveness of current anti-bullying policies and other bullying prevention programs. The Task Force is due to complete its work and report to the Governor and General Assembly by March 1, 2011.

I also want you to be aware of a new video the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) released that provides guidance on what DOJ can do to stop bullying in our schools. Members of the DOJ relate personal stories and also highlight the ability of the DOJ to step in to assist students and others who may be bullied. Please share the following link with teachers and staff: http://blogs.usdoj.gov/blog/archives/1088.

This week the State Board of Education will be meeting in Springfield to discuss a variety of topics, including the FY 12 budget recommendation that they will approve next month. The Board will also be discussing the rulemaking around the issue of when a high school student can take the Prairie State Achievement Examination and how that assessment will be counted for federal accountability purposes.

We have worked with a number of stakeholders over the past several months and have received significant feedback on this topic. We have had additional conversations with the U.S Department of Education and we have drafted a rule that would allow a school district to assess a student based on when the student becomes an 11th-grader in accordance with that school district’s policy. In other words, a school district may assess a student during the Spring of his or her third year in high school or, if the student does not at such time have enough credits under local school district policy to be an 11th grader, the school district could assess the student in the Spring of his or her fourth year in high school (however, the student would not be able to become a 12th-grader until he or she has taken the high school assessment).
Districts shall administer the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) or the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA), if applicable under subsection (d) of this Section, to students in grade 11. (See Section 2-3.64 of the School Code.) For the purpose of this subsection (b)(4), “grade 11” means the point in time when a student has earned the number of credits necessary for enrollment in grade 11, as determined by his or her school district in accordance with Sections 1.420(b) and 1.440 of this Part. A district shall not promote a student to grade 12 status until that student has taken either the PSAE or IAA, as applicable.

We have received verbal approval from U.S. Department of Education staff that the direction taken in the language above would be acceptable. Though we had hoped, and have asked for, approval in writing, we have not yet received it. Notwithstanding that fact, we are proceeding forward and bringing the language to the Board for adoption this week.

I want to thank all of you who have commented and participated in this discussion. I believe this is a rule that balances the needs of the students, while still meeting the federal accountability requirement.

The Weekly Message will not be published during the next two weeks but will return during the first week of January.

Happy Holidays

Chris

Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- Last day for filing the Annual Statement of Affairs (ISBE form 50-37) to ISBE – Dec. 15
- 2010-11 Teacher Service Record data deadline – Dec. 15
- National School Lunch and National School Breakfast verification summary report submission deadline – Dec. 15
- Part 228 (Transitional Bilingual Education), Part 235 (Early Childhood Block Grant), and Part 575 (School Technology Program) – Public comment period ends Dec. 27
- 2010-2011 Nonpublic Registration, Enrollment, and Staff Report deadline – Dec. 31
- Local policy based on the Guidelines for Managing Life-Threatening Food Allergies implementation deadline – Jan. 1
- Emancipation Proclamation Week – Jan. 3-9
- Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly in Spring – Jan. 7
- Econ Illinois K-12 Teacher Conference on Financial Literacy – Jan. 21
- HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) mini-grant application deadline (www.kidseatwell.org) – Jan. 14
- Econ Illinois’ Economics Challenge registration – Jan. 1-Feb. 1
- 2010-11 Teacher Salary Study Form deadline – Feb. 1
- 2010-11 Noncertified Staff Salary Study deadline – Feb. 1
- Mathematics and the Common Core: Helping Illinois Educators Prepare for New Standards conference in Chicago – Feb. 16
- Illinois New Teacher Collaborative’s Induction and Mentoring Conference in Springfield – March 1-2
- Illinois Young Authors’ Conference – May 21
- 2010-11 Eye Examination Data Collection deadline – June 30

Innovation and Improvement

Pre-application Needs Assessment for FY 2012 School Improvement Grants

The Innovation and Improvement Division has released the FY 2012 SIG 1003(g) Pre-application Needs Assessment at http://www.isbe.net/sos/pdf/43-45L_pre_app_needs_assessment.pdf. Districts and school teams are guided through a step-by-step process that assists with the analysis of the needs of each eligible school, as well as the selection of a required USDE intervention model. The Needs Assessment must be
completed for each Tier I and Tier II school the district plans to include in its FY 2012 SIG 1003(g) application.

Districts with eligible Tier I and Tier II schools that plan to submit an application for the FY 2012 School Improvement Grant funded under Section 1003(g) were invited to participate in the Pre-Application Needs Assessment webinar that was hosted by ISBE at 2 p.m. Monday, Dec. 13. The webinar, Power Point and related resources will be posted at ISBE School Improvement Grant webpage at [http://www.isbe.net/sos/htmls/sip_1003.htm](http://www.isbe.net/sos/htmls/sip_1003.htm).

On Wednesday, Jan. 5, 2011, ISBE will be conducting an all-day meeting in Springfield for all eligible Tier I and Tier II districts and schools to review the requirements for the FY 2012 SIG 1003(g) Request for Proposals. Information on the time and location will follow.

Ongoing updates and detailed information regarding this federal grant, including access to the USDE Federal Guidance and school improvement resources, are available on the ISBE School Improvement Grant webpage at [http://www.isbe.net/sos/htmls/sip_1003.htm](http://www.isbe.net/sos/htmls/sip_1003.htm). Should you have any questions related to the Pre-Application Needs Assessment or the FY 2012 SIG 1003(g) grant, contact Marti Woelfle at mwoelfle@isbe.net or call 217-524-4832.

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**ISBE Introduces a Parent Involvement Webinar Series**

The Illinois State Board of Education’s Innovation and Improvement Division has planned a series of four 90 minute Parent Involvement Webinars as part of a statewide parent involvement initiative. The webinars will examine areas of best practices pertaining to parent involvement and provide tools and resources for implementing evidence-based strategies. These sessions are open to district staff, school staff, parent facilitators and parents. Here is the description of the first session:

**School-Home Communication, 3:30 to 5 p.m. Jan. 27, 2010:** The reliability of a three-legged stool depends on each of its parts and if you were to remove the seat, the function of the remaining pieces becomes subject to speculation. The seat is the piece that joins the three legs and gives it value in its purpose. School-Home Communication is like the seat of the stool – it is the piece that brings the student, the family and the school together in a purposeful relationship. This webinar will offer evidence-based tools, strategies and resources that help schools to develop better communication with families and help to build relationships that support student success. Register at [https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/552317264](https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/552317264).

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**Early Childhood**

**Early Childhood Block Grant – Intent to Submit a Proposal for FY 2012**

The notices of intent to submit a proposal for the FY 12 Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) Preschool for All Children Ages 3 to 5 Years and the Prevention Initiative Birth to Three Years programs are posted on the early childhood website under “What’s New” at [http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/default.htm).

Only school districts and agency/entities that were eligible for funding in FY 10 and/or FY 11 and are currently in good standing may submit a proposal for funding in FY 12. Funding for parental training will not be available.

For FY 12, the Preschool for All Children Ages 3-5 and the Prekindergarten at Risk program will be combined into one grant. If you currently have both programs, you will only need to submit one intent to submit a proposal form for the 3-5.

Submit the form no later than Jan. 12, 2011, to assist ISBE staff in determining the number of reviewers that will be necessary. Submission of this notice is not a prerequisite for submitting a proposal, nor does it obligate the organization to submit a proposal.

If you have questions, call 217-524-4835.

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**Department of Public Health**

**Applications Available for CATCH Program for Elementary Schoolchildren**

The Illinois Department of Public Health is accepting applications from Illinois school districts to implement the Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH). CATCH is a coordinated school health program designed to promote physical activity, healthy food choices and prevent tobacco use in elementary schoolchildren.

CATCH focuses on coordinating four components: the Eat Smart school nutrition program, K-5 classroom curriculum, a physical education program and a family program. CATCH reinforces positive healthy behaviors throughout a child’s day and makes it clear that good
health and learning go hand-in-hand. CATCH features classroom activities, schoolwide efforts to improve nutrition and physical activity, and take-home material to encourage parents to participate along with their children.


REALITY Illinois Encourages Teens to Take a Stand Against Tobacco

The Illinois Department of Public Health is providing funding to create, maintain and sustain REALITY Illinois Chapters that include a teen advisory panel, consisting of high school students, to plan and to implement tobacco prevention and control projects, events and initiatives in the county/jurisdiction.

Each chapter is to strengthen youth community-based efforts consistent with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs. REALITY Illinois encourages teens to take a stand against tobacco use by educating their peers and others about the adverse health consequences of tobacco use and to communicate with decision-makers on youth-focused tobacco prevention and control.

This grant is open to any organization, such as a local health department, school or community-based organization. The deadline for submitting applications is 5 p.m. Dec. 17, 2010. For more information, go to http://www.idph.state.il.us/fundop.htm.

Data Analysis and Progress Reporting

2010-11 Teacher Service Record – Fall Data Collection Reminder

This is a reminder that the deadline to submit 2010-11 Teacher Service Record (TSR) data this fall is Dec. 15, 2010. For the fall data collection, you are required to report full- and part-time employees working as of Oct. 1, 2010, 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.

Please ensure that:

- A new race/ethnicity code is provided for each employed educator. (The old codes in the 2009-2010 TSR did not roll over to pre-populate the 2010-2011 TSR.)
- Your superintendent has approved the data in the “Teacher Service Record Data Wizard” and submitted the data to ISBE. (Salaries are not required for the fall data collection.)

Thank you for your cooperation in submitting complete and accurate data by the deadline. Questions about completing the 2010-11 TSR can be directed to the ISBE Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division at tsr@isbe.net or 217-782-3950. On Dec. 15, staff will be available to respond to e-mails and take calls until 4 p.m. CST.

Funding and Disbursement Services

Estimated Best Three Months Average Daily Attendance IWAS Application

The annual “Estimated Best Three Months Average Daily Attendance” application is available on IWAS. We respectfully request that the estimate be provided to the Illinois State Board of Education on or before Jan. 14, 2011. The figure you will report is the estimated best three months average daily attendance for the 2010-11 school year.

The estimates you provide will be used as a resource by the General Assembly to determine the General State Aid (GSA) appropriation level for the 2010-11 claim year payable during Fiscal Year 2012. Accurate estimates are critical for district level budget purposes, as projected GSA entitlements will be based on these estimated figures.

Any questions regarding this system can be directed to Jason Hall (jhall@isbe.net) at 217-782-0249 or Jim Mathes (jhall@isbe.net) at 217-782-5256.


American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs and vendor data for the reporting quarter ending Dec. 31, 2010, is due at the Illinois State Board of Education on or before Wednesday Jan. 5, 2011, for all local education agencies (LEAs) that are operating a project in FY 2011 with ARRA funds. ARRA data reporting includes two primary elements: the number of jobs funded in the reporting
quarter with ARRA dollars and a single payment made to a vendor, using ARRA dollars, in the amount of $25,000 or more. All ARRA data must be reported via the ARRA Reporting System in IWAS. Please refer to the ARRA Reporting Instructions at http://www.isbe.net/arra/pdf/arra_reporting_inst.pdf for detailed reporting procedures.

Dec. 31 ARRA data must be reported for the following ARRA programs if your LEA has been awarded or received funds:

- Title I Low Income – Revenue Code 4851
- Title I Low Income Neglected – Revenue Code 4852
- Title I Low Income Delinquent – Revenue Code 4853
- Title I School Improvement – Revenue Code 4854
- Title I School Improvement (1003g) – Revenue Code 4855
- IDEA Part B Preschool – Revenue Code 4856
- IDEA Part B Flow Through – Revenue Code 4857
- Title II D Enhancing Education Through Technology – Revenue Code 4861
- McKinney Vento Homeless Education – Revenue Code 4862
- Education Jobs Fund Program – Revenue Code 4880 (If compensation and/or benefits have been or will be requested for employees from October through December)

Further, once the LEA begins to request Ed Jobs expenditure reimbursement they are obligated to report ARRA FTE jobs and vendor data via the ARRA Reporting System every subsequent quarter until all Ed Jobs Funds have been requested and reported, even if no expenditure reports for reimbursement have been submitted in the current ARRA reporting quarter. For example, if the LEA requested reimbursement and reported ARRA data through Sept. 30 but has no Ed Jobs expenditures between Oct. 1 and Dec. 31, they must still submit ARRA FTE jobs and vendor data for the Dec. 31 ARRA reporting quarter that reflects that 0 FTE jobs or vendor payments were funded with Ed Jobs dollars during the reporting quarter. Again, the LEA must continue to submit ARRA data reports for each reporting quarter, beginning with the quarter in which the compensation funding start date occurs until all Ed Jobs funds have been requested and reported.

If you have further questions or concerns with the Ed Jobs program please contact Jim Mathes at jmathes@isbe.net or Marj Beck at mbeck@isbe.net. Both can be reached by telephone at 217-782-5256.

**EDUCATION JOBS ARRA REPORTING REMINDER; PLEASE READ CAREFULLY:** If the LEA has submitted or plans to submit an expenditure report requesting reimbursement of qualifying expenditures (i.e. compensation and benefit costs) between Oct. 1 and Dec. 31, the full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs and vendor data must be reported for the period ending Dec. 31 even if an expenditure report for reimbursement has yet to be filed for that reporting quarter. For example, if the LEA is going to submit in mid-January an Ed Jobs expenditure report requesting reimbursement of compensation and benefits expended during the reporting quarter ending Dec. 31, the LEA is required to report FTE jobs and vendor data to ISBE on or before the required ARRA reporting deadline of Jan. 5 even though the expenditure report has not yet been submitted by the LEA. This is true for any subsequent quarter.

If you have any questions, contact Funding and Disbursement Services at 217-782-5256.

**Governmental Relations**

**Public Act 96-1238 Designates Emancipation Proclamation Week**

House Bill 5463, which became Public Act 96-1238 on July 23, 2010, designates the first full week of each January as Emancipation Proclamation Week to honor and remember the work of President Abraham Lincoln and others in emancipating Americans from slavery and in leading to the end of slavery in America.

Emancipation Proclamation Week is to be observed throughout the state of Illinois as a week for holding appropriate educational and celebratory events and observances in the public schools and elsewhere. Read the full text of the public act at http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/96/pdf/096-1238.pdf.

**Assessment**

**Illinois Alternate Assessment Teacher and Coordinator Webinar Training Set**

The Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) Teacher and Coordinator Webinar Training schedule is as follows: 2-3:30 p.m. Dec. 16 and 8:30-10 a.m. Dec. 17. If you are
unable to attend one of the December webinars, another session will be scheduled in January. Registration will begin Dec. 8 and will be posted at http://www.isbe.net/assessment/iaa.htm.

The IAA Teacher and Coordinator Webinar Training will provide necessary information to begin preparing for the 2011 IAA. Veteran teachers and coordinators who are familiar with the assessment from last year will get up-to-date information on a few changes that have been made since 2010. New teachers and coordinators who did not administer the IAA last year will receive training on all aspects of the IAA. This session will review:

- Calendar of Events
- Test Preparation
- Task Administration
- Online Scoring
- Materials Management

For more information, contact Jessica Dare at jdare@isbe.net or 217-782-4823.

Confirmations Sent for Requested Changes to ISAT, ACCESS Test Windows

The application deadline to request changes in the test windows for ISAT and ACCESS was Dec. 1, 2010, and Oct. 29, 2010, respectively. ISBE provided signed confirmations to districts via fax. Please contact Daniel Brown, Assessment Division Supervisor, at 217-782-4823 if you have questions regarding your request(s).

Curriculum and Instruction

Free Financial Literacy Conference Scheduled for Next Month in Chicago

Registration is under way for the third 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. 21 at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, 230 S. LaSalle St. To register, go to http://econed-il.org/icee/prog_pd_w_cofl.shtml. A $50 participation stipend and up to $100 in curriculum materials are available for each eligible K-12 teacher in Illinois. Reservations will be accepted through Jan. 14 or until all spots are taken.

Additional information is available at http://econed-il.org or by calling 815-753-0356.

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.


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 from Jan. 1 to Feb. 1. For more information, visit http://www.econed-il.org/icee/econchal.shtml.

Apply for a College Board AP Fellows Scholarship

Applications are available for a 2011 College Board AP Fellows Scholarship. Recipients are awarded $1,000 to attend a College Board-endorsed AP Summer Institute. Scholarships are for AP teachers at schools that serve a majority of underrepresented minority or low-income students.

AP Summer Institutes attract teachers from around the world to exchange ideas and information about AP courses and exams.

The application deadline is Feb. 15. Visit http://www.collegeboard.com/apfellows for more information.

Professional Development

Conference on Common Core State Standards for Mathematics Scheduled

A conference focusing on the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, which have been adopted as the new Illinois Learning Standards, will be held Feb. 16 in Chicago.

Registration for the one-day conference, titled “Mathematics and the Common Core: Helping Illinois Educators Prepare for New Standards,” opens on Jan. 1
for the general public. Register at http://www.regonline.com/mathematics_and_the_common_core.

The conference is being organized by University of Illinois at Chicago’s Learning Sciences Research Institute on behalf of the West Cook Math Initiative and the South Cook Math Initiative, the Chicago Public Schools Office of Teaching and Learning Mathematics, West 40 Intermediate Service Center, and South Cook Intermediate Center.

Keynote speakers include Phil Daro, who co-directed the development of the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics; Diane Briars, president of the National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics; and Doug Sovde and Kaye Forgione, Senior Mathematics Associates at Achieve Inc., which is coordinating development of new assessments to be used in Illinois.

Illinois School Library Media Association Develops New Guidelines


A task force made up of ISLMA members developed the document, which outlines school library program guidelines in the areas of teaching for learning, learning environment and leadership. Training on implementing the new guidelines will be available.

The price for the document is $20, which includes shipping and handling. Copies of the publication can be ordered at http://islma.org. Questions? E-mail islma@islma.org.

Student Opportunities

Poetry for the President Contest Marks 100 Years Since Ronald Reagan’s Birth

A Poetry for the President contest is under way to commemorate the 100th birthday of former President Ronald Reagan, who was born in Tampico, Ill. Elementary, middle and high school students across Illinois are eligible to compete in three divisions.

The deadline for students’ original poetry entries is Jan. 15, 2011. Entries must be submitted to the students’ Regional Office of Education. Local winners will advance to an area-wide competition and then to statewide competition, where the finalists’ poems will be judged by Illinois Poet Laureate Kevin Stein.

The contest is sponsored by the Illinois Reagan Centennial Commission, Illinois Press Association and the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools. For details about the contest, visit http://www.leeogle.org. Additional information is available at http://illinoisreagancentennial.com. For questions, e-mail poetryforpres@leeogle.org or contact your local Regional Office of Education/Intermediate Service Center.

Reagan lived and worked in Dixon, Ill., and attended college in Eureka, Ill., before moving to California to become an actor. He appeared in more than 50 films before serving as governor of California from 1967 to 1975. He served as president from 1981 to 1989 and died in 2004.

Scholarship Program to Honor 25 Scholar Athletes Across the Country

Nominations are being sought for the Scholar Athlete Milk Mustache of the Year 2011 Award Program. Twenty-five senior scholar athletes will be selected from across the country.

Winners in the 14th annual SAMMY awards receive a $7,500 college scholarship, an invitation to attend an awards ceremony in June and an opportunity to be pictured in a Milk Mustache ad in national publications.

The awards program is presented by America’s Milk Processors and USA Today, joined by the American Association of School Administrators, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education, the American School Counselor Association and the National School Public Relations Association.

For the online application and more information, visit http://www.bodybymilk.com. The deadline for nominations is March 4, 2011. Students can nominate themselves.

Entries Sought for the Annual Christopher Columbus Awards

The Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation is seeking entries for its annual awards program. The Christopher Columbus Awards challenge students, in teams of three or four with an adult coach, to identify a problem in their community and apply the scientific method to create an innovative solution to the problem.
Students in sixth, seventh and eighth grades across the country are eligible to compete. The deadline to enter the free contest is Feb. 7, 2011. Entry forms, rules and additional information about the contest are available at http://christophercolumbusawards.com.

For questions, contact Stephanie Hallman at (800) 291-6020, ext. 3154, or e-mail shallman@mmseducation.com.

**Classroom Opportunities**

**Risk Watch Workshops Take Aim on Helping Prevent Injuries to Youth**

The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) and Illinois Risk Watch is offering three free Illinois Risk Watch New Community trainings in 2011 across the state. Risk Watch, a non-profit organization operated by the OSFM and the National Fire Protection Association, aims to fight simple preventable injuries for children pre-k through eighth grade.

The workshops will include curriculum and training on how to use Risk Watch in schools. The curriculum correlates with the Illinois Learning Standards, teaching children how to prevent injury and death while also teaching math, English and other subjects.

The first workshop is scheduled for 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 25, in Mount Vernon. To register, go to http://www.sfm.illinois.gov/documents/MtVernon11.pdf. The second workshop is set for 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, Feb. 18, in Champaign. For more information, visit http://www.sfm.illinois.gov/documents/Champaign11.pdf. Risk Watch training in Chicago Ridge will be held 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 23. Go to http://www.sfm.illinois.gov/documents/Chicagoridge11.pdf.

Space is limited, and is first come, first serve. More information on Risk Watch is available at http://www.sfm.illinois.gov/public/riskwatch.aspx.

**School Opportunities**

**Nominations Sought for Annual National School Change Awards**

Applications are available for the National Principals Leadership Institute’s National School Change Awards. The annual awards, co-sponsored by the American Association of School Administrators and Panasonic, go to six schools across the country.

Schools are asked to measure themselves against criteria and consider the degree to which they have improved and grown. Winners will receive $5,000 including Panasonic products and will be honored with a ceremony at their individual schools. An awards presentation by the U.S. Department of Education will also recognize the winners.

The deadline is March 7 for nominations. For more information and applications, visit http://npli.org/nsca.

**Cubs Caravan Visits My School Contest Deadline Set for Dec. 17**

Illinois schools in Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake and McHenry counties are eligible to enter the Cubs Caravan Visits My School Contest. (Lake and Porter counties in Indiana are also eligible.)

The winning school will be visited on the afternoon of Jan. 12 by the Cubs Caravan, which includes players, coaches and front office personnel. The annual Cubs Caravan is a two-day excursion to visit hospitals, Boys and Girls Clubs and other destinations across Illinois and Northwest Indiana.

In cooperation with their students, teachers or principals are asked to submit an essay of 400 words or less to say why the Chicago Cubs should visit your school during the 2011 Cubs Caravan.

The deadline to enter is 8 p.m. CST on Dec. 17. To read the official rules and to enter the contest, visit http://chicago.cubs.mlb.com/chc/community/caravan_contest.jsp.

**In the News**

**Weekly News Clips**


**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.