Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Last week I testified before the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee for the first of at least six hearings on our budget before members of the House of Representatives. The second hearing occurs tomorrow. I discussed the Board’s budget priorities, including providing as much funding as possible for General State Aid and Mandated Categoricals and the importance of transportation funds. Members asked several thoughtful questions on a variety of topics and I look forward to this continued dialogue with our legislators as the budget making process continues.

I encourage you to engage your local legislators as we move deeper into the legislative session because the potential impact on you, your staff and students is quite real. The topics being discussed in Springfield that will impact schools are wide-ranging and there is a need to stay abreast of proposals and be ready to provide input to our elected leaders.

Each year staff at ISBE review every bill introduced by both houses of the General Assembly to determine what, if any, effect they may have on schools and what position we may take on particular bills. So far during this year’s spring legislative session more than 6,000 bills have been introduced for consideration in the General Assembly, of which we are closely tracking about 400.

We are still reviewing bills, but as a general rule during this legislative session we will be opposing any bills that create new instructional mandates or unfunded and underfunded other mandates. Some examples of bills for which we have completed our review and will be opposing include:

**HB 292** — requires student instruction on all-terrain vehicle safety

**HB 1406** — enhanced requirements and added assessments related to civics education

**HB 1566** — requires schools to offer flavored milk

In addition to the bills that we will be opposing, there are several bills that we will support to alleviate some of the burdens on districts or to clean up duplicative legislation. Some examples of legislation we are in support of include:

**HB 189** — requires that, when determining the percentage of “students with IEP” in a general education classroom, students receiving only speech services outside the general education classroom shall not be considered “students with an IEP”

**HB 1071/SB1643** — bills that would increase maximum fee for driver’s education from $50 to $250
HB 1533 — makes it a goal that the Governor and General Assembly appropriate funds for school districts prior to March 1 of every year

HB 1831 — would require Chicago Public Schools to submit claims to ISBE for bilingual education like all other districts rather than to receive a disproportionate amount of State bilingual funds as part of a block grant

These are just a few of the bills that we are taking positions on during this spring session. We will continue our review of legislation that has been introduced and take positions accordingly. In addition, we will remain focused on budget issues for the coming fiscal years and even the current one as the Emergency Budget Act has been extended and gives the Governor power to make even further reductions in FY 11 if he determines they are necessary.

Chris

Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- Illinois Coalition for Educating At-Risk Youth spring conference – March 10, 11
- Receipt deadline for ordering PSAE Day 1 State-Allowed accommodations test materials – March 11
- Part 226 (Special Education) – Public comment period ends March 16
- Part 1 (Public Schools Evaluation, Recognition and Supervision) and Part 350 (Secular Textbook Loan) – Public comment period ends April 18
- Illinois Young Authors’ Conference – May 21
- 2010-11 Eye Examination Data Collection deadline – June 30
- Prekindergarten At-Risk Program Record and the Preschool For All Program Record deadline – June 30
- 2010-11 Early Childhood – Parent Evaluations/Demographics survey deadline – July 15
- Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly in Fall 2011 – Aug. 12

School Business Services

Qualified Zone Academy Bond Program

The Qualified Zone Academy Bond Program (QZAB), created in 1997, has been extended for another year by the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010. The QZAB program provides federal tax credits in lieu of interest on bonds designated as QZAB’s by the issuing school district. QZAB proceeds may be used for rehabilitating or repairing public school facilities, investing in new equipment and technology, developing challenging course materials or training teachers; but they cannot be used for new school construction.

In order to designate bonds as QZAB’s, a school district must receive an allocation of the State’s volume cap through application to the State Board of Education. To qualify for an allocation, the school or program designated as a qualified zone academy by the school district must be located in an empowerment zone or an enterprise community; or there is a reasonable expectation that at least 35 percent of their students are eligible for free or reduced-cost lunches under the National School Lunch Act. Additionally, private business contributions that total at least 10 percent of the face value of bonds to be designated as QZAB’s must be secured by the issuing district on behalf of the zone academy.

A qualified zone academy is a school or program that provides education and training below the postsecondary level if: (1) the public school or program is/was designed in cooperation with business to enhance the academic curriculum, increase graduation and employment rates, and better prepare students for the rigors of college and the increasingly complex workforce, (2) students in the public school or program will be subject to the same academic standards and assessments as other students educated by the eligible local education agency, and (3) the comprehensive educational plan of the public school or program is approved by the eligible local education agency.

The federal legislation provided for a national allocation of $400 million for calendar year 2011. The Internal Revenue Service notice (IRS: Revenue Procedure 2011-19) provides that Illinois’ share of these allocations is $14,932 million.
Allocations will be based on the relative degree of poverty as reflected by the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch, with preference given to those school districts that have not previously been awarded an allocation.

The State Board of Education will be accepting applications and supporting materials for the calendar year 2011 allocations beginning March 14, 2011, through 4 p.m., April 22, 2011. Applications and additional information are available on the ISBE web site at http://www.isbe.net/construction/html/qzab.htm.

For further questions or inquiries, call Lou Ferratier, School Support Services, at 217-785-8779.

Data Analysis and Reporting

2010-11 Prekindergarten Program Record on IWAS for Data Entry

The 2010-11 Pre-K Program Record is available for data entry in IWAS. The deadline for completing this report and submitting it to ISBE is June 30, 2011. All Prekindergarten At-Risk and Preschool for All projects are required by law to submit data for their programs by completing this report.

The instructions for completing the report are available at www.isbe.net/research/pdfs/86-36_iwas_inst.pdf.

If you have questions related to this report, please contact Kalpana Desai in the ISBE Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division at (217) 782-3950 or kkdesai@isbe.net.

Early Childhood – Parent Evaluations/ Demographics Survey Now Available

The 2010-11 Early Childhood – Parent Evaluations/Demographics survey is available for data entry in IWAS. The deadline for completing this survey and submitting it to ISBE is July 15, 2011. All Prevention Initiative and Parental Training projects are required by law to complete the Parent Evaluation portion of the survey, and all Prevention Initiative projects are required to also complete the Parent Demographic portion.

The instructions for completing the survey are available at www.isbe.net/research/pdfs/86-56A_60_instructions.pdf.

Innovation and Improvement

Strengthening NCLB: Early Notification to Parents Regarding Public School Choice

The Illinois State Board of Education is encouraging school districts with Title I schools in school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that can not exit status this year to notify parents about public school choice before the districts receive their Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determinations. School districts can implement Early Notification until the AYP Reports are released this summer, possibly in early June. Once AYP status is known, the LEA is required to send an official Public School Choice letter 14 days prior to the start of school. The Early Notification letter and the required parent notification for Public School Choice must be reviewed and approved by ISBE prior to sending. The guidance document for Early Notification, with links to U.S. Department of Education documents, can be found at the following ISBE web site: http://www.isbe.net/grants/html/choice.htm.

If you need further assistance, contact Evelyn Deimel, Innovation & Improvement Division, at (217) 524-4832 or edeimel@isbe.net.

Information on the Truants’ Alternative and Optional Education Program RFP

Bidders’ conferences for the Truants’ Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP) Request for Proposal (RFP) will be Friday, March 11, 2011, at the DoubleTree Hotel and Conference Center, Brickyard Rooms V and VI, 10 Brickyard, Bloomington from 9:15 to 11:30 a.m. and through a webinar on Friday, March 18 from 1 to 3 p.m.

To register for the webinar go to https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/799636049. The deadline for submitting the TAOEP RFP is Monday, May 2, 2011. The FY 2012 TAOEP RFP may be found at http://www.isbe.net/grants/html/taoep.htm.

For additional information, contact Sally Veach (sveach@isbe.net) in the Innovation and Improvement Division, 217-524-4832.
**Nutrition**

**Illinois Schools Celebrating National School Breakfast Week**

Kudos to the 3,100 plus breakfast schools feeding over 330,000 students each school day in Illinois. Schools will be celebrating breakfast programs this week, March 7-11, 2011, during Illinois School Breakfast Week. Illinois School Breakfast Week was established in 1989 and highlights the positive role breakfast plays in the learning environment. Breakfast contributes important nutrients to help students perform better. Many schools are opting for nontraditional breakfast services such as breakfast in the classroom, second chance breakfasts, breakfast kiosks and other serving means.


**Professional Development Opportunities Support School Wellness**

Illinois Nutrition Education and Training Program has a number of free webinars available for school staff involved in wellness activities. The webinars can be completed at your leisure and all handouts can be downloaded from the [www.KidsEatWell.org](http://www.kidseatwell.org) website. Participants can e-mail [ilnet@kidsroe.org](mailto:ilnet@kidsroe.org) to obtain continuing education credit. Please include your title and school in the email. These webinars are only available for a short time, so take advantage now.

**Go for the Gold: Join the HealthierUS School Challenge** – Learn how your school can earn national and state recognition as well as financial incentives in this USDA program. Intended Audience: All school staff involved in implementation of school wellness policies (teachers, school foodservice, administrators, school nurses)

**Refuel Afterschool Food and Fitness** – Learn how you can incorporate fun, hands-on nutrition and fitness activities in afterschool programs. Intended Audience: Afterschool coordinators and staff

**Whole Grains for Healthier School Meals** – Learn cost-saving ways to add student-pleasing whole grains to school menus in preparation. The information in this webinar will also help you prepare to meet new nutrition standards for school meals that are on the horizon. Intended Audience: School foodservice directors and staff

**Special Education**

**State Board Seeks Public Comment on FFY 2011 Draft IDEA Part B Application**

The State Board’s Division of Special Education Services has completed the grant application under Part B of IDEA as amended in 2004. Upon receipt and approval of the required assurances, certifications and information in the application, the state is eligible to receive Part B funds.


The plan includes a checklist of assurances that Illinois has policies and procedures in effect to comply with the requirements of the December 2004 amendments to IDEA. Where Illinois is not in compliance with the IDEA amendments of 2004, a date is given by which Illinois assures that policies and procedures will be in effect. The plan for expenditure of state-level IDEA funds by category is also a component of the state plan.

Written comments will only be accepted March 30 to April 29. To submit a written comment, go to [http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/IDEA_PartB_app11_comment.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/IDEA_PartB_app11_comment.pdf).

In addition, public comments may be e-mailed to [partbapplication@isbe.net](mailto:partbapplication@isbe.net) or mailed to David Andel, Division Administrator, Illinois State Board of Education, Division of Special Education Services, 100 N. First St. – N-253, Springfield, IL 62777-0001.

Interested persons can review a copy of the plan and comment form at the Illinois State Board of Education office at 100 N. First St., Springfield, IL, in the Information Center located on the first floor in 1 South.
2009-10 District Special Education Profiles Available for Review

In a continuing effort to disseminate data to local education agencies and to the public, the Illinois State Board of Education will again post District Special Education Profiles on its website. District Special Education Profiles allow the reader to access all special education performance information in one location. The reader has the ability to view a district's progress toward improving results on critical performance indicators in the areas of student performance, educational environment and school completion.

School district superintendents may preview their Profile using their ISBE Web Application Security (IWAS) District Admin user login name at https://sec1.isbe.net/iwas/. The District Special Education Profiles system can be found under the category of Reporting on the IWAS “System Listing” page. The 2009-10 Profiles will be open to the public after the initial district superintendent review period and will be found via the ISBE Special Education Profiles site (http://webprod1.isbe.net/LEAProfile/Searchcriteria1.asp) after March 14, 2011.

Questions regarding the District Special Education Profiles can be directed to Scott Beever or Gwen Williams at (217) 782-5589.

Curriculum and Instruction

Illinois Youth Risk Behavior Survey Shows Heightened Risks for Gay Youth

There is a new Child Health Data Lab (CHDL) Data Brief exploring the mental health-related behaviors of Illinois adolescents in relation to their sexual orientation. The data reported are from the 2009 Illinois Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which asked a sample of Illinois high school students about their sexual orientation for the first time. The Illinois Youth Risk Behavior Survey has been conducted since 1995 and queries a sample of approximately 1,500 Illinois high school students. The survey is overseen by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Illinois State Board of Education and focuses on areas that are most likely to lead to poor health outcomes for adolescents.

The main findings of the current CHDL Data Brief are:

1. Students who report that they are gay, lesbian, bisexual or who are unsure of their sexual orientation (GLBU) are more than three times as likely as heterosexual youth to report being threatened at school. They are more than twice as likely to have skipped school at least once in the previous 30 days because they felt unsafe at school.

2. GLBU youth are two to four times as likely to report having depressive feelings as are heterosexual youth, depending on the measure:
   a. Over half of the GLBU youth report having been sad for two or more weeks in the previous 12 months (compared to 25.5 percent of heterosexual youth).
   b. More than 40 percent of GLBU youth report considering suicide in the previous 12 months (compared to 12.8 percent of heterosexual youth).
   c. Thirty percent of GLBU youth report having attempted suicide in the previous 12 months (compared to 7.2 percent of heterosexual youth).
   d. Ten percent of GLBU youth report having gotten injured while attempting suicide (compared with 2.3 percent of heterosexual youth).

3. GLBU youth are two to three times more likely to report using extreme weight control methods (fasting, taking pills or vomiting) than heterosexual youth.

There has been a great deal of media attention about the heightened risk gay, lesbian and bisexual youth face from bullying by peers, and the poor mental health that many of these youth develop over time. This CHDL Data Brief indicates that Illinois youth are no different than those highlighted in the media. These youth may benefit from supports and services to cope with these challenges. The CHDL Data Brief provides resources that some of these youth, their families, and schools may find helpful. The full report can be found here: http://www.childrensmrc.org/uploadedFiles/Research/Smi th_Child_Health_Research/Child_Health_Data_Lab (C HDL)/2011%20YRBS%20sexual%20orientation.pdf.

Assessment

Online Survey Seeks Opinions on ISAT From Principals and Teachers

The Illinois Assessment Consequences Evaluation (IACE) is conducting an online survey to learn about the consequences of ISAT testing from principals’ and teachers’ perspectives. Information gathered from this
study may contribute to the development of a long-range strategic plan for the Illinois Assessment and Accountability Program. A randomly selected sample of principals and teachers (grades 3-8) will be receiving an e-mail with the survey link and are strongly encouraged to participate.

All survey results are confidential. For more details, please contact Katherine Ryan, Principal Investigator, at 217-333-7177 or e-mail iace@illinois.edu.

---

**Certification**

**Educators Asked to Update E-mail Address in ECS**

The Certification Division would like to encourage all school administrators to instruct educators in their district/school to update their e-mail address in the Educator Certification System (ECS) when their district email has changed.

The Certification Division’s primary method of communication with Illinois educators is through email. Recently we have had hundreds of emails bounce back as undeliverable due to changes in district email addresses. *Any* email change should be reported whether it reflects a district email or a personal email. The e-mail address is especially important when an advanced degree is reported to ISBE.

---

**School Opportunities**

**Apply for the Excellence in Science School Award**

The Illinois Science Teachers Association announces an innovative program to recognize excellence in science teaching and learning at the school building level. The Excellence in Science School Award aims to recognize schools whose teachers of science embody a special creativity and dedication in their work, developing a solid understanding of science for their students. The association invites school teams to apply for the 2011-12 awards, with recognition at the Illinois Science Education Conference, Oct. 28, 2011, at the Tinley Park Conference Center.

The ISTA Excellence in Science award program, designed for school-building level teams throughout Illinois, is built on the concept of “Critical Mass.” Critical Mass describes the contributions of each member of the school’s team, all working toward achieving a common goal associated with success in the sciences for their students. Critical Mass depends on the special talents and skills of each member, realizing that the success of science teaching and learning is a shared, common responsibility of the teachers, administrators and the school’s community. The Excellence in Science Award will celebrate holistically envisioned science programs that are designed and implemented by each of the team members. Such a program is driven by the anticipated success of all students and guided by the professional learning community for science teaching.

Interested schools are encouraged to apply at [http://www.ista-il.org](http://www.ista-il.org). Deadline for applications is June 1, 2011. Selected schools will be notified by July 1, 2011.

For more information, contact Harry Hendrickson, Executive Director, Illinois Science Teachers Association, at hrhendrickson@comcast.net or (217) 498-8411 or Tara Bell, Awards Chairperson, at taracmcdonald@gmail.com.

---

**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](http://www.isbe.net/hr/Default.htm).

---

**In the News**

**Weekly News Clips**