Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

I attended the spring legislative conference of the Council of Chief State School Officers last week. We met with Education Secretary Arne Duncan, and we heard from legislators on both sides of the aisle discussing the long-awaited reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

While everyone seems hopeful that reauthorization will occur prior to this fall, the simple reality is that it’s complex legislation that will compete for priority with other important issues, both foreign and domestic, and will be debated during the difficult budget battle at the federal level. The Senate is currently working on reauthorization of the ESEA as a single bill, while it appears that the House of Representatives will likely tackle it in a series of smaller pieces of legislation. The general thought is that even though both chambers are considering reauthorization in very different ways, they will be able to reconcile the separate legislation in the conference committee process.

Secretary Duncan says the administration remains committed to seeing reauthorization prior to the beginning of the next school year and he continues to emphasize a need for having the “courage” to do what’s necessary to raise student achievement. In our meeting with the Secretary, he made it clear that the administration firmly supports increasing standards for students and teachers as well as restructuring how teachers are evaluated. In addition, the administration believes that reauthorization will need to include stringent accountability requirements and will require those who are responsible for failing schools to do some very hard things, such as closing schools and increasing state interventions.

It’s important that you reach out to your members of Illinois’ Congressional delegation so that they understand the urgency for action. We all know that 2014 contains unrealistic expectations and if ESEA is not reauthorized prior to the Presidential campaign kicking off this fall, it possibly won’t happen until after 2014. You can find contact information for your federal representatives at http://www.contactingthecongress.org/cgi-bin/newseek.cgi?site=ctc2011&state=il.

I also had the opportunity to meet with most of the staffs of our Congressional delegation last week. It was a productive meeting, providing clarification on issues here at home, but also helping to set the table for our hopes on federal reauthorization. You may access a fact sheet we provided congressional staff at http://www.isbe.net/board/supt/pdf/congressional_handout0311.pdf.

Have a great week.

Chris

Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- ARRA FTE jobs and vendor data for the reporting quarter ending March 31, 2011, deadline – April 5
• Illinois Youth Digital Safety Contest Deadline – April 15
• Illinois Association of Educational Office Professionals Spring Conference in Springfield – April 15-17
• Part 1 (Public Schools Evaluation, Recognition and Supervision) and Part 350 (Secular Textbook Loan) – Public comment period ends April 18
• ISBE Parent Involvement Regional Summits registration deadline – April 25
• Illinois School Wellness Conference in Decatur – May 3
• ISBE Parent Involvement Regional Summit, Oak Lawn (Ill.) Hilton – May 5
• ISBE Parent Involvement Regional Summit, Lisle (Ill.) Hilton – May 6
• ISBE Parent Involvement Regional Summit, Abraham Lincoln Hotel & Conference Center in Springfield – May 9
• ISBE Parent Involvement Regional Summit, Williamson Co. Pavilion in Marion – May 17
• 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 General Assembly in Fall ’11 – Aug. 12
• 2010-11 Teacher Service Record submission deadline – Aug. 15
• 2010-11 High School Students Taking Community College Courses system district-level data submission deadline – Sept. 15

Data Analysis and Progress Reporting

2010-11 Teacher Service Record – Spring Data Collection Period

The 2010-11 Teacher Service Record is open in IWAS for districts and other reporting entities to provide data on all full- and part-time employees who worked at any time during the 2010-11 school year in a position that requires a teaching, administrative, or school service personnel certificate issued by ISBE. This includes any retiree who worked in a position requiring certification, performing duties other than as a substitute.

The spring data collection period is for educator updates (additions and changes since the fall data collection period) and for 2010-11 salary submissions. The deadline to submit is Aug. 15, 2011.

Questions about completing the Teacher Service Record can be directed to the ISBE Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division at tsr@isbe.net or (217) 782-3950.

Innovation and Improvement

ISBE’s 2011 Parent Involvement Regional Summits to be Offered in May

The Illinois State Board of Education’s Division of Innovation and Improvement is pleased to announce the 2011 Parent Involvement Regional Summits to be offered at four Illinois locations. The Regional Summits, created for Title I District and School Teams, have been developed to assist districts and schools in the development and planning of strategies that sustain parent partnerships and to improve skills that join families and schools on a common path to student achievement.

Summit 1: This module will center on ESEA Parent Involvement expectations and discuss best practices of parent involvement. It will feature field experts who will share their experiences. Participants will receive an overview of the tools and resources that will assist each team in their preparation for Summit 2 in the fall of 2011.

Outcomes:
- Empowerment to utilize information and resources in order to enhance Parent Involvement initiatives
- Receive examples and strategies related to best practices for meaningful parent and family engagement

District Title I Teams or School Title I Teams, which may include administrators, Title I coordinators, curriculum coordinators, and parent coordinators, are encouraged to attend one of the sessions below:
- Thursday, May 5 – Oak Lawn Hilton, Oak Lawn
- Friday, May 6 – Lisle Hilton, Lisle
- Monday, May 9 – Abraham Lincoln Hotel & Conference Center, Springfield
• Tuesday, May 17 – Williamson Co. Pavilion, Marion

All sessions are from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. with check-in beginning at 9 a.m. Lunch will be provided.

Districts or schools may register their teams of two or more for one of the sessions online at http://www.adi.org/registration/registration.aspx. Registration ends at close of business on Monday, April 25, 2011.

Summit 2: Offered in the fall of 2011, this module will resume the work started during Summit 1. It will lead the team through the final stages and fine tuning of an action plan to be implemented during the 2011-2012 school year. Special attention will be given to enlisting and activating parents in the accomplishment of the action plan goals.

The Illinois State Board of Education’s Parent Involvement Regional Summits are the collaborative work of the Academic Development Institute, Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center, and the Illinois Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC).

Department of Defense
Resources Available to Insure Support for Children of Military Families

Here are some upcoming professional development opportunities on supporting children of military families:

• Illinois National Guard Outreach Program Presentation: Educator’s Guide-Military Children – Attendees will receive a copy of the Educator’s Guide along with information regarding community supports offered and grant opportunities. For more information, contact Ann Strahle, State Youth Coordinator, at (217) 761-3842.

• Supporting Children of the National Guard and Reserve Institute, May 11-12, 2011, Springfield, Illinois – This training opportunity will provide information for reaching out in a support network to the children and families of the National Guard and Reserve. The institute is open to guidance professionals, school administration and other caring adults interested in learning more about the military child. A save-the-date flyer can be found at http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/national_guard_family_flier0511.pdf. Visit http://www.MilitaryChild.org and click the “Upcoming Trainings” tab to register. For more information about this training or other professional development opportunities, contact Jaime Cahn at (254) 953-1923 or jaime.cahn@militarychild.org.

Military Families Expected to Relocate in U.S. Following Disasters in Japan

The Department of State has authorized a voluntary departure from the Island of Honshu, Japan, for U.S. military family members. The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) is requesting the support of school district leaders to provide a continuum of education for the children of our families impacted by recent events. They are anticipating that some families with school-age children will choose to relocate.

“To the extent that children of military families will temporarily enroll in your schools, we ask that you partner with us in easing the burden on the students affected by this tragic natural disaster,” DoDEA Acting Directing Marilee Fitzgerald states in a letter to school administrators. “To that end, we have encouraged our families to resume the stability and routine of school once settled at a safe haven. We know that a significant element of support for these children is the educational setting; one that provides not only a quality education but that recognizes and responds to each child's unique needs.”

Read the letter in its entirety at http://www.dodea.edu/home/docs/letter-stateside.pdf. For additional information and questions, contact Kathleen Facon at kathleen.facon@hq.dodea.edu or (703) 588-3191. Visit http://www.dodea.edu/home/ for more resources.

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 now in effect. These rules have been posted on the agency’s website at http://www.isbe.net/rules. Please choose “Rules Currently in Effect” and scroll to 2 Ill. Adm. Code 5001.

2 Ill. Adm. Code 5001 (Access to Information of the State Board of Education under the Freedom of
Information Act): Updates the rules to conform with the provisions of P.A. 96-542, effective January 1, 2010. Affected Sections: 5001.110, 5001.200, 5001.210, 5001.300, 5001.400, and 5001.510 Effective Date: March 17, 2011

Student Opportunities

K-12 Students Eligible for Illinois Youth Digital Safety Contest

The deadline for the statewide Illinois Youth Digital Safety Contest is fast approaching. The contest, open to students in grades kindergarten through 12th, encourages students to create a poster or electronic message addressing this year’s theme on “Digital Citizenship,” defined as someone with the ability to think critically about the ethical opportunities and challenges of the “digital world.

The Illinois State Board of Education, Attorney General Lisa Madigan’s office and the Illinois Lieutenant Governor’s Office are teaming up on the contest to raise awareness about making safe and respectful choices through digital communications.

Students in any public or non-public district can enter the contest by submitting an entry as a poster or in an electronic media format (video, podcast or slideshow). Districts must have all entries mailed to the Illinois State Board of Education and postmarked by April 15, 2011. Representatives from all three sponsoring government agencies will judge submissions.

Winners will be honored at a State Board of Education meeting and at an award ceremony at the Governor’s Mansion. Winning entries will be shared on participating school and state websites.

More about this year’s contest rules, terms and conditions can be found at http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/html/internet_safety.htm.

Poster Contest for Fifth-Graders Promotes Benefits of Bicycling

The Active Transportation Alliance, League of Illinois Bicyclists and others are teaming up to offer a poster contest for fifth-graders. The theme is “Bicycling is fun … and healthy too!” and the deadline is April 22.

Before students pick up their art materials, visit http://www.bikelib.org/2011/02/poster-contest-to-promote-bicycling-launched/ for complete rules and additional information.

One winner from each school will be eligible to compete in a statewide contest, with the winning student winning a mountain bike, a helmet and a bike light. The winning student’s school wins a bicycle parking rack. The state winner will compete in a nationwide contest for a trip to the 2012 National Bike Summit in Washington, D.C.

High School Students Invited to Compete in Online National Civil War Challenge

To commemorate the 150th anniversary of the start of the Civil War, the History channel and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt are presenting the National Civil War Student Challenge. The academic competition invites high school students from across the U.S. to participate in an online trivia contest.

Registration and a study guide and practice game are available online at http://www.civilwarchallenge.com, along with the official rules and additional information. The National Civil War Student Challenge is set for April 7-9 online. The top 30 students will advance and take a final exam on April 25. Scholarships totaling nearly $30,000 will be awarded. Teachers with students in the final round will have a chance to win classroom supplies.

For questions, contact Ben Turk at (212) 426-7006 or civilwarchallenge@cegny.com.

School Opportunities

Grant Opportunity Available for Award-Nominated Books

The Illinois School Library Media Association/Library Book Selection Service Endowment Fund will donate complete sets of the Monarch, Bluestem, Caudill and Lincoln book award nominees to selected libraries. Grant recipients must be registered with the corresponding Illinois Readers’ Choice Book Award program by May 15.


The online grant application and additional information is available at http://www.Lbssfund.org. The deadline to apply is May 15. Grant recipients will be determined this summer and books will be shipped in August.
Professional Development

Meeting Coming Up in Chicago to Look at STEM Education Reforms

Those interested in learning about progress made in implementing the state’s STEM Education Reform Agenda are invited to a meeting set for 12:30 to 5 p.m. April 28 at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago. The state has been working with a broad range of public and private partners to advance STEM education reforms.

Bill Symonds, project director for the Harvard Graduate School of Education’s “Pathways to Prosperity” report, will be a special guest speaker at the meeting. “Pathways to Prosperity” is nationally recognized as being a call to action to transform college and career preparation.

RSVP by April 15 by e-mailing Helga Interrante at helga.interrante@caruscorporation.com. For directions to the Museum of Science and Industry, visit http://msichicago.org/visit-the-museum/museum-info/getting-here/.

Immunization and Communicable Disease Conference Scheduled for Aug. 8-9

Mark your calendar: The 2011 Immunization and Communicable Disease Conference will be held Aug. 8-9 in Bloomington at the Marriott Hotel & Conference Center. The conference is sponsored by the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois Public Health Association.

Additional details will be posted at http://www.ipha.com/tabs/events/eventdetails.aspx?EventId=182 as they become available. For questions, contact the event coordinator, Angie Wanger of the Illinois Public Health Association, at (217) 522-5687 or awanger@ipha.com.

Illinois Association of Educational Office Professionals Plans Spring Conference

The Illinois Association of Educational Office Professionals will hold their annual spring conference April 15-17 in Springfield.

Conference presenters include Whitney Thorpe-Klinsky of New Baden who was crowned Miss Illinois 2010 last June.

The registration deadline for the conference is April 5. For more information, visit the IAEOP web site at http://www.iaeop.com/

Employment Opportunities

Illinois Association of School Administrators Maintains 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.

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