Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Everyone should be officially back from spring break and ready for the homestretch to the end of the school year. The past week has brought some particularly stormy weather and now is a good time for you to review your emergency procedures and plans for continuity. Whether it is a tornado, flash flood or the rising waters of a river, natural disasters are a part of life and the only thing we can do is to prepare for them as best we can.

I hope you, your students, staff and communities are spared from the worst. More information about preparation, planning and responding to weather related disasters follows this column.

I also wanted to let you know that we are once again promoting summer reading and the use of the ‘Find-a-Book’ website at http://lexile.com/findabook as a resource toward that effort. As you may know, one review of the impact of summer reading found that children can lose up to 60 percent of their skills during a two-month vacation. Reading during the summer months, however, can sustain those gains and ensure students are better prepared when they return to school in the fall.

We are working with the offices of the Governor and Secretary of State on this summer reading campaign and we will soon be sending out letters to principals and public library directors about the ‘Find-a-Book’ website. We’re also developing a letter that schools and library districts will be able to download and send to parents.

The ‘Find-a-Book’ site uses a student’s Lexile score to provide quick and easy access to a list of books that will match a child’s reading level. Students can also search by their grade level and interests for books that appeal to them. The site allows users to narrow their search by investigating more than two dozen categories, from adventure and art to travel and true crime. Book lists can be further refined by award-winning authors.

A few moments discussing or visiting this website in the classroom can lead to increased summer reading and learning for students. Most importantly, a student’s positive experience with reading can lead to lifelong habits of reading for pleasure and for learning. To learn more about this program, please visit our summer reading page at http://www.isbe.net/htmls/summer_reading.htm.

Have a great week!

Chris

Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- Illinois School Wellness Conference in Decatur – May 3
- National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day – 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
- Applications for the Exception to the 1.0 Percent Cap due – May 13
- ISBE Parent Involvement Regional Summit, Williamson Co. Pavilion in Marion – May 17
- Illinois Young Authors’ Conference – May 21
- Illinois New Teacher Collaborative Beginning Teacher Conference – June 28
- 2010-11 Eye Examination Data Collection deadline – June 30
- 2011 Bilingual Education Program Delivery Report 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

School Business Services

Please Take Time to Review the School Safety Drill Act

As stated above, the past week has brought some particularly stormy weather in Illinois and other parts of the country and now is a good time for you to review your emergency procedures and plans for continuity. The School Safety Drill Act was signed into law on Aug. 16, 2005. This Act requires school districts to annually review their School Safety Plan with first responders and update as necessary and to conduct school safety drills. This act was put in place to ensure that district personnel and students are adequately prepared if a disaster should happen at their school(s). The School Safety Plan should cover all incidents such as but not limited to fire, tornadoes, nuclear facility incident, bomb threats, hostage situations/shootings, floods, earthquakes, etc.

The School Safety Drill Act requires districts to perform a minimum of three school evacuation drills during each school year and one of these three drills requires the participation of the appropriate local fire department/district. In addition, the district is also required to conduct one bus evacuation drill, one law enforcement drill and one severe weather and shelter-in-place drill. For the specific Act, Joint Rules of the State Fire Marshal and Illinois State Board of Education, and a School Safety Plan template, visit the ISBE website at http://www.isbe.net/safety/guide.htm. The Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) also has a Severe Weather Preparedness document located at http://www.state.il.us/ieima/disaster/pdf/severeweatherpreparedness.pdf.

If your district should experience such a disaster, please contact your Regional Superintendent and the ISBE to inform us of the incident. This will assist the district with their ability to be approved for the use of Health/Life and Safety funds if such a need should occur. In the case of an emergency where the cost for the emergency repair is less than the amount specified in Section 10-20.21 [105 ILCS 10-20.21] of the School Code, the district may proceed with such repairs prior to the approval of the State Superintendent. But a district must comply with Section 17-2.11 [105 ILCS 17-2.11] of the School Code and the State Board Rules as soon as possible thereafter. For emergency repair costs that are more than the amount stipulated in Section 10-20.21 of the School Code, the district must conform with Section 10-20.21 and the State Board’s rules and (if Health/Life and Safety Funds are necessary) the district must received the State Superintendent’s approval before any work can be started. Again, please call your local regional superintendent and ISBE.

If you have any questions regarding the School Safety Plan, the safety drills, or Health/Life and Safety needs or need to report an emergency, please contact School Business Services Division, Karen Shoup or Susan Weitekamp, at 217-785-8779 or by e-mail kshoup@isbe.net or sweiteka@isbe.net.

Be Sure to Verify Qualifications of CPA Firms for LEA Audits

It is that time of year to begin preparing for the Local Education Agencies (LEA) audit. When accepting bids from a Certified Public Accounting (CPA) firm, please be sure to verify the qualifications of the firm as part of
the decision making process by performing the following:

1. Request the most current review and acceptance/completion letter from the audit firm.
2. Obtain the firm’s license number and review the expiration date. Determine if the firm’s license is still in effect. Determine if there has been any disciplinary action.

Information regarding the status of the license is available from the Illinois Division Professional Regulation (http://www.idfpr.com/dpr/default.asp).

An LEA knowingly or unknowingly engaging an unqualified auditing firm for the audit of the Annual Financial Report (AFR) will have the LEA’s AFR returned. The LEA will be required to engage a qualified auditing firm to complete an audit. The additional cost for the audit will be the responsibility of the LEA.

If you have any questions regarding this requirement, please contact Toby Turek or Debbie Hemberger in the School Business Services Division at (217) 785-8779 or e-mail them at rturek@isbe.net or dhemberg@isbe.net.

Rules and Waivers

Proposal Made to Modify Rule

School districts have, over the past year, been voicing concern over the State Board of Education administrative rule requirement that by July 1, 2010:

- An administrator of a Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program in a district with 200 or more TBE or Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI) students have — in addition to a valid administrative certificate or a supervisor endorsement — a bilingual approval or endorsement or an English as a New Language (ENL) endorsement with a language designation; and

- An administrator of a Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI) only in a district with 200 or more Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI) students have — in addition to a valid administrative certificate or a supervisor endorsement — a bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL) approval or endorsement or an ENL endorsement.


While ISBE continues to believe it is important for administrators of bilingual education programs to have training in the relevant pedagogy, we recognize that it is difficult and costly for a school district to hire a new administrator in cases in which the current administrator cannot successfully complete a language examination in the non-English language being taught.

Therefore, we are proposing to modify our rule to require that, by July 1, 2014, an administrator of either a TBE or TPI program in a district with 200 or more TBE/TPI students — in addition to having a valid administrative certificate or a supervisory endorsement — only be required to have completed the 18 semester hours of coursework necessary to receive the bilingual endorsement. In other words, the administrator would not need to successfully complete a language examination in the non-English language being taught nor would he or she be required to complete 100 clock hours of clinical experience or 3 months experience teaching either bilingual education or English as a Second Language. Administrators who hold a bilingual approval or endorsement, an ESL approval or endorsement, and/or an ENL endorsement would all be eligible to serve. During the rulemaking process (i.e., prior to any revised rule taking effect), no compliance action will be taken against districts with administrators who lack the current qualifications.

Because we understand that some districts have been considering steps to hire an additional administrator in the near future, and in tight financial times, we wanted to get this message out to you now. Once we formally initiate a rulemaking, which we expect to do in May, you will be able to submit public comment to help further shape our actions.

If you have any questions, contact Robin Lisboa, Division Administrator, Division of English Language Learning, at rlisboa@isbe.net or (312) 814-2220.

Funding and Disbursement Services

2010-11 General State Aid Claim Deadlines

Please be advised that per Section 18-12 of the School Code, the 2010-11 General State Aid Claim must be
transmitted via IWAS to each respective Regional Office of Education by June 21 for districts with an official school calendar end date before June 15 or within two weeks following the official school calendar end date for districts with a school year end date of June 15 or later.

The regional superintendent shall certify and file with the State Superintendent of Education district State aid claims by July 1 for districts with an official school calendar end date before June 15 or no later than July 15 for districts with an official school calendar end date of June 15 or later. Failure to file by these deadlines constitutes a forfeiture of the right to receive payment by the State until such claim is filed and vouchered for payment.

A final school calendar must be transmitted and approved before the General State Aid claim can be transmitted. If you need technical assistance with completing the final school calendar, you may contact your Regional Office of Education or Marj Beck, Funding and Disbursements, at mbeck@isbe.net. Questions related to completing the General State Aid Claim can be directed to Jim Mathes, Funding and Disbursements, at jmathes@isbe.net. Marj and Jim can also be reached in the Division of Funding and Disbursement Services at 217-782-5256.

Filing 2010-11 Final Public School Calendars

The ability to file the 2010-11 Final Public School Calendar is now available 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 2010-11 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, Funding and Disbursements, 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 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

2011 Annual School Bus Driver Instructor Trainings Scheduled

Please be advised that the 2011 Annual School Bus Driver Instructor Trainings are quickly approaching and are required per Section 1.515 of the 23 Illinois Administrative Code. Trainings have been scheduled at the following locations:

- **Monday, June 20, 2011**: Timber Creek Inn & Suites and Convention Center, 3300 Drew Ave., Sandwich, IL 60548
- **Thursday, June 30, 2011**: Amish Land Red Barn, 1304 Tuscola Blvd., Tuscola, IL 61953

For more information please access the following documents:


If you have any questions regarding these materials please contact Cinda Meneghetti at cmeneghe@isbe.net or phone (217) 782-5256.

Department of Human Services

Support Services Teams to Observe Eligible Students With Disabilities

A Department of Human Services (DHS), Support Services Team may contact your district/school to request permission to observe a student eligible to
receive their services. It is a matter of district discretion whether or not to allow DHS to observe classrooms, consistent with any applicable local guidelines for school-based observations of classrooms.

Support Services Teams (SSTs) are a relatively new service for persons with a developmental disability, funded by the Department of Human Services (DHS). They are mobile crisis teams that help persons who are challenged to continue to live in the community. The six Support Services Teams cover the entire state. Referrals are made to the teams by the Division of Developmental Disability staff.

The interdisciplinary SSTs are comprised of: nurses, social workers/counselors, behavior analysts, and developmental services professionals. They also have access to other professionals, as needed, such as psychiatrists. The team will observe the referred person across all his/her environments, collect data, talk with family and providers, and review medical, behavioral and educational records and history. They will make recommendations and assist in the implementation of the agreed recommendations. That assistance may take many forms, such as training, assistance implementing a behavior plan, and identifying resources.

SST staff has been cleared through a DCFS and criminal background check to be with children and have signed a confidentiality statement. The SST staff will provide the district/school with a signed permission form from the parent or guardian of the child to be observed granting SST staff permission to observe the child, review the child’s records and to speak to the child and their educators.

If there are any questions about this service, you may contact Carolyn Cochran Kopel in the Division of Developmental Disabilities at (217) 782-9403 or (217) 652-8432. More information about SSTs is available at http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=50861.

Early Childhood

FY 12 Prevention Initiative Birth to Age 3 Years RFP Released May 2

The Prevention Initiative 0-3 Request for Proposals (RFP) is being released today, May 2, 2011, for school year 2011-2012 (FY12). Entities that currently have a Prevention Initiative 0-3 (Preschool for All-Cont. 0-3 Early Childhood) and/or Preschool for All – Prevention Initiative 0-3 (Preschool for All-Prev Initiative 0-3 Early Childhood) program and/or received an allocation for one of these programs in FY 2010 are eligible to apply. Proposals must be received at ISBE no later than 4 p.m. on June 16, 2011.

An FY 12 Prevention Initiative Birth to Age Three Years Competitive Application Process Webinar will be held on Tuesday, May 10, 2011, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. CDT. Participation in the webinar is recommended but is not required. To register for the webinar, go to https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/876096177.

The RFP is at http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/html/birth-3.htm. The RFP can also be obtained by contacting the Early Childhood Division at (217) 524-4835.

Special Education

Online Survey for Special Education Directors, District Superintendents

The Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) are taking steps to ensure that students who are in the care of DCFS are provided with timely and appropriate educational services at all times. We are requesting your input regarding if and where problems occur when attempting to enroll and provide regular and/or special education services to students who are in the care of DCFS. This includes students in foster care as well as those living in residential treatment facilities.

District superintendents and special education directors will be receiving an online survey in the next week. The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete and will ask for the role of the person responding. Therefore, feel free to pass the survey on to whoever is appropriate. We are looking for as much input as possible, so more than one person in the district can respond. For more information, please contact Sarah Sebert at ssebert@isbe.net.

Survey results will be used to develop a guidance document clarifying the roles and responsibilities of both education and DCFS personnel in the enrollment and education of youth in care.

Feedback Sought on iePoint System Via Online Survey

ISBE is seeking your input as we work collaboratively with Harrisburg Project to develop a web-based reporting system that will eventually replace the current desktop
versions of iePoint>, integrate the Funding & Child Tracking System (FACTS) and the Student Information System (SIS) collections, and provide districts and Special Education cooperatives the ability to create electronic IEP software. ISBE is currently analyzing the needs and requirements for this new system, and a timeline for release to districts and Special Education cooperatives has not yet been defined.

In the interim, ISBE is planning to solicit input and feedback from districts and Special Education cooperatives on a variety of issues as the new system is developed.

Currently, ISBE is seeking input from districts and Special Education cooperatives on Class Enrollment, Pupil Reimbursement Claims, Transportation and the Electronic IEP portions of iePoint>. Your response is voluntary, but the responses will help ISBE understand the overall statewide needs for this new system.

If you wish to provide feedback on these issues, please complete the survey at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FDKGFMB by Friday, May 20, 2011.

**National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day Scheduled for May 3**

National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day is a day to join the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration, communities, organizations, agencies and individuals nationwide in raising awareness that positive mental health is essential to a child's healthy development from birth and that children with behavioral health needs can thrive in their communities.

This year, the national theme will focus on building resilience in young children dealing with trauma. To learn more, visit http://www.samhsa.gov/children.

**Curriculum and Instruction**

**National Science Teachers Association Offers New Science Teachers Academy**

The National Science Teachers Association offers second- and third-year, middle and high school science teachers the opportunity to participate in the New Science Teachers Academy, a one year professional development and mentoring program. Emphasizing quality science teaching, enhanced teacher confidence, classroom excellence and solid content knowledge, participants enjoy topnotch, face-to-face and online services with an ISBE certified Mentoring Provider best suited to meet their needs.

A complete listing of certified Mentoring Providers approved to offer mentoring services as well as information about the INPM Program can be found at http://www.ilprincipalmentoring.org. Please note that mentoring is for those who will be in their first year as a building principal, not for experienced principals new to your district.

As the ISBE Program Manager for the INPM Program, the Illinois Principals Association is asking for your assistance to enhance planning for the 2011-12 school year. Per Section 35.20 a) of INPM Rules and Regulations:

**Reminder:** No later than June 30, each district superintendent shall report to the State Superintendent of Education, or to the State Superintendent’s designee, the name(s) of first-year principal(s) who are expected to be working in the district in the coming school year, administrative certificate numbers, and assigned school(s) of the individual(s) chosen. If you have not already done so, send these names in as soon as possible.

Though hiring for the 2011-12 school year continues, please e-mail the name(s) of any first year principal(s) new to the profession you have hired to Lynne Woodrum at lynne@ilprincipals.org as soon as possible. You will receive additional e-mail reminders as the June 30 deadline approaches. Any additional new principals employed before or after the June deadline are to be reported at the time of employment.

Thank you for your leadership and assistance to ensure that new principals receive the support they need to be successful in their first year and beyond.
support and access to comprehensive educational resources.

**Academy Fellow Benefits:**
- Full membership in the National Science Teachers Association
- Access to facilitated, web-based curriculum devoted to content and classroom pedagogy
- Professional development web seminars conducted by leaders in science education
- E-mentoring from experts in the Fellow’s science discipline and grade level
- Attendance at a Professional Development Institute or a Research Dissemination Conference
- All expenses paid (accommodations, airfare, meals, and registration fees) attendance to the NSTA National Conference on Science Education

**Eligibility:**
- Applicants must reside in the United States.
- Applicants must be entering their second or third year of teaching.
- Applicants must be working a schedule with 51 percent of their classes in middle or high school science.

Additional information regarding the New Science Teachers Academy may be found at [http://www.nsta.org/academy/](http://www.nsta.org/academy/).

**Registration Under Way for AP and Pre-AP Summer Institutes**

The College Board endorses AP and Pre-AP Summer Institutes, which are subject-specific professional development opportunities. They provide teachers with the support and training needed to teach AP courses and use Pre-AP teaching strategies. Teachers from around the world come together at these institutes to exchange ideas and information about AP courses and exams.

Additional information can be found at [http://professionals.collegeboard.com/prof-dev](http://professionals.collegeboard.com/prof-dev) under the link for “Summer Institutes.”

**‘After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools’ Available Online**

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and the Suicide Prevention Resource Center have announced the release of “After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools.” The free, online resource was developed with national experts to help schools cope in the aftermath of a suicide.

The 49-page document includes guidelines for action, do’s and don’ts and covers such topics as helping students cope, working with the community, bringing in outside help and more. To view and download the toolkit, go to [http://www.afsp.org/files/Surviving/toolkit.pdf](http://www.afsp.org/files/Surviving/toolkit.pdf).

Additional resources and programs for schools from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention are available at [http://afsp.org/schools](http://afsp.org/schools).

**2012 APC – College and Career Success for All Students Program Grant Webinar**

Schools and districts interested in applying for the 2012 Advanced Placement Classroom (APC) – College and Career Success for All Students Program Grant are invited to participate in an informational webinar from 11 a.m. to noon on May 2, 2011.

Schools with a 40 percent or more low income population interested in developing or expanding a Pre AP/AP program or enhancing a program already in place may apply for the grant (feeder school data can be used to meet the 40 percent criteria). The goal of the grant is to recruit and increase the number of low income students participating in Pre AP/AP classes. Schools and districts can use money from the grant to train teachers in Pre AP/AP instruction, increase the number of classes offered, purchase materials needed for Pre AP/AP classes and provide tutoring opportunities. Twenty percent of the grant must go to College Board trainings and workshops.

The webinar will cover eligibility guidelines, the application process, timelines and fiscal information. Questions can be directed to Mike Hatfill at [dhatfill@isbe.net](mailto:dhatfill@isbe.net). Register at [https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/462280433](https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/462280433).

**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 2011-12 school year. There are 10 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 27, 2011. 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, contact the division of Curriculum and Instruction at (217) 557-7323.

**Professional development**

**High School Challenge Conference Set for June 13-14 in Bloomington**

The Coalition for Illinois High Schools’ sixth annual High School Challenge Conference is set for June 13-14 in Bloomington. This year's conference is entitled "Improving Student Learning” and features Mike Schmoker, author of “FOCUS: Elevating the Essentials to Radically Improve Student Learning.”

The conference is designed for all those involved with and interested in the work of high schools. The workshop fees are $200 for both days and $125 for a single day. For teams of three or more, it is $180 per person. For more information, visit http://cfihs.net. The deadline to register is June 4.

**School opportunities**

**Green Education Foundation Seeks Entries for Green In-Action Award**

The Green Education Foundation is seeking entries for its Green In-Action Award. Schools can submit their green projects for a chance to win.

Teachers are encouraged to send in photos, videos and artwork along with a description of their green initiative to service@greeneducationfoundation.org. The deadline for entries is May 13. For more information, visit http://www.greeneducationfoundation.org/.

The Green Education Foundation is a non-profit organization that aims to create a sustainable future through education by providing curriculum and resources to K-12 students and teachers worldwide.

**MacArthur Elementary in Schaumburg Honored as a Spanish School of the Year**

MacArthur Elementary School, Schaumburg SD 54, recently received third place in a national competition sponsored by the Spanish Ministry of Education for Spanish School of the Year.

Placing third in the elementary level of the contest, MacArthur was commended for the success of its dual language program due to a number of reasons: the quality of MacArthur’s staff and teachers; the numerous recognitions and nominations that staff members and the school have already been awarded with; the variety of pedagogical strategies and techniques that take place in the classrooms everyday; and the commitment to the development of authentically biliterate and multicultural students.

The Spanish Ministry will hold an award ceremony Friday, May 6, at the Spanish Embassy in Washington, D.C., to congratulate Principal Danette Meyer, the district and the staff at MacArthur for their achievement.

**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**