There has been much discussion during the past week about statements by a particular education advocacy group claiming credit and victory for the Senate Bill 7 education reforms. It is frustrating and insulting to all who worked so hard on collaboratively negotiating the reforms that this conversation is even occurring. This type of gamesmanship has no place in education policymaking and distracts all of our education stakeholders from advancing the interests of the only victors who matter — our Illinois students.

The reforms that we are now working so hard to implement are bigger than any one actor. We need to remember that these reforms began, not in the fall of 2010, but prior to the Federal Race to the Top competition. Then, with Race to the Top, we at the State Board of Education worked with the Governor as well as the teachers’ unions, school management and Illinois advocacy groups to hone a powerful education reform agenda — a roadmap for where, together, we wanted to take the Illinois’ education community in the coming decade. It was hard work. There were disagreements. But what emerged was a reform agenda shaped by all of us, supported by all of us — for kids.

Meaningful reform in Illinois cannot, should not be, and was not forced down anyone’s throat. The adults involved in working to develop and implement education reform should never tout themselves as winners, or others as being defeated. Again, the only winners I care about, and the only winners I know the teachers in the classroom and administrators in the building care about, are our students. We are going to need to continue to work together with students foremost in our minds to successfully implement these reforms.

On another subject, applicants were notified last week about the status of preschool grants. Staff and outside experts reviewed and scored 554 proposals from agencies and districts outside Chicago and approved 458 for funding in FY 2012. Previously, these grants were awarded through a re-application process but for the first time in 20 years, the agency required competitive bids to ensure that declining state resources serve children most at risk.

Reviewers took into consideration each program’s performance on previous grants and student demographics. In addition to the quality of each program, consideration was given to low income rate, percentage of Hispanic students, percentage of African American students, the number of 3- and 4-year-old children whose families are living at or below 185 percent of the poverty level, and the number of Head Start funded slots.

You can access the list of downstate districts awarded funds under the state’s Early Childhood Block grant for preschool programs in 2012 at http://www.isbe.net/news/2011/pdf/12_PFA_3-5_RFP_Recommendations.pdf. Finally, the window for the PSAE corrections period is now open. Notice was sent out Friday with information on how to check your data. You have until 4 p.m. July 26 to make data corrections. You can reach the Student Assessment Division at (217) 782-4823 or the Student Information Helpdesk at (217) 558-3600 if you have any questions.

Have a great week!

Chris
Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- Part 1 (Public Schools Evaluation, Recognition and Supervision), Part 25 (Certification), Part 75 (Incentive Grants for Agricultural Science Teacher Education), and Part 228 (Transitional Bilingual Education) – Public comment period ends July 25
- 2011 Illinois Immunization and Communicable Disease Conference in Bloomington – Aug. 8-9
- 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
- School Safety Conference in Hillside – Sept. 8
- 2010-11 High School Students Taking Community College Courses system district-level data submission deadline – Sept. 15
- ISBE’s Transition Institute in Bloomington – Sept. 19-21

Special Education

2011-12 Planning Calendar for Special Education Directors Now Available

The Illinois State Board of Education Special Education Services and Supports Division is pleased to announce the release of the 2011-12 Planning Calendar for Special Education Directors. This resource was developed by ISBE in collaboration with Dr. Gineen O’Neil, director of Southwest Cook County Association for Special Education. We hope that this resource will assist administrators by raising awareness of the various data reporting and submission requirements related to IDEA.

This document does not replace any official notifications of deadlines and requirements; instead it is intended to be used as an additional resource to assist district and Special Education cooperative administrators. Several web-based resources are listed on the last page of this document to provide links to the official up-to-date information regarding deadlines and requirements across the agency.

The 2011-12 Planning Calendar for Special Education Directors is available under the “What’s New” section at http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed.

Directors of Special Education Asked to Complete Brief Survey

The Philip J. Rock Center and School is conducting a brief survey for directors of special education regarding services for children with sensory (vision-hearing) and additional significant disabilities.

The Philip J. Rock Center and School is a state-funded program providing residential school and limited outreach services for families and schools in Illinois that have children who are deaf-blind. Children do not have to be totally deaf and totally blind to qualify, but must have a combined vision-hearing loss.

More information is available at http://www.project-reach-illinois.org/prc.html.

The survey will help set priorities to expand the services of the school and service center. The survey takes about 3 to 10 minutes. Complete the survey at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DD3HG5Y.

Changes Announced for National Instructional Materials Access Center

The Special Education and Support Services Division has made changes to the number of Authorized Users (AUs) for the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC). Any district/teacher that needs materials from the NIMAC for their students who are blind/visually impaired or have a print disability may contact one of the four state-approved AUs listed below:

1. Illinois Instructional Materials Center
2. Infinitec
3. Learning Ally (formally RFB&D)
4. Bookshare

For more information about the state-approved AUs and their contact information, please visit http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/nimas_nimac.htm.

A guidance document defining NIMAS, NIMAC and other key terms associated with the NIMAS mandate was released in January 2011. The document provided sample language for districts to use in their contracts when purchasing instructional materials. To view the guidance document, please visit http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/nimas_guidance.pdf.
**Nutrition**

**Illinois Selected for USDA’s Community Eligibility Option for School Year 2011-12**

The Illinois State Board of Education’s Nutrition Programs Division was notified that the Community Eligibility Option (CEO) will be available to Illinois schools for school year 2011-12. CEO is an alternative to collecting, approving and verifying household eligibility applications for free and reduced price eligible students in high poverty local educational agencies (LEAs) for schools participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. Illinois, Kentucky and Tennessee are the only states that were awarded this option through a competitive application process for school year 2011-12.

For a LEA to be eligible to use the CEO for school year 2011-12, the LEA must have one or more schools that have directly certified 40 percent or more of their students for free meals in school year 2010-11. The LEA and school must also agree to offer all students in the school breakfasts and lunches at no cost (free) and cover any cost above the federal reimbursement received with non-federal funds for four successive school years. Reimbursement for schools participating in CEO will be based on claiming percentages derived from the percentages of students directly certified.

The due date to apply to participate in CEO for the 2011-12 school year is by the first day of school for year round schools or by Aug. 15, 2011, for those with traditional school years. Information and application materials for CEO are available on our website at [http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/nslp_hhfka_implementation.htm](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/nslp_hhfka_implementation.htm).

If you have questions related to this new Community Eligibility Option, please contact ISBE's School-Based Child Nutrition Program staff at (800) 545-7892 or by e-mail at [cnp@isbe.net](mailto:cnp@isbe.net) (type "CEO" in the subject line).

**Additional Information Regarding CEO Participation**

As schools within Illinois evaluate their option to apply for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Community Eligibility Option (CEO) for School Year 2011-12, we would like to share some additional information with you regarding CEO participation and the impact on Title I funds.

The U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) recently released a letter outlining guidance for schools and local educational agencies (LEAs) that may be considering CEO for their schools and districts. This letter is available on our website at [http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/pdf/usde_ceo_ltr_052011.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/pdf/usde_ceo_ltr_052011.pdf).

In addition to this information, staff with the USDA, working directly with the USDOE, have provided the following information:

The number of children receiving free or reduced school lunch does not impact LEA awards of Title I Part A funds.

In general, the number of students in a school district who receive free or reduced school lunch has no impact on the amount of Title I, Part A funds a school district receives. The primary factors in determining a school district’s Title I, Part A allocation are the Census Bureau’s annually-updated estimate of the number of children ages 5-17 residing in families below the poverty line in each school district and each State’s per-pupil expenditures that the States report to USDOE’s National Center for Education Statistics. School lunch data do not factor into either of these data elements.

LEAs typically use school lunch data to distribute Title I, Part A funds within the LEA. This is why the letter focused on within-LEA allocations and not an LEA’s total allocation.

The following USDOE guidance explains how Title I, Part A funds flow from ED to SEAs to LEAs: [http://www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/seaguidanceforadjustingallocations.doc](http://www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/seaguidanceforadjustingallocations.doc).

Finally, we continue to receive questions from schools regarding the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) E-Rate Program and the impact of CEO on that program. As soon as information is available regarding this, we will post to our website. Please continue to share your questions and concerns with our office regarding CEO. This is a great opportunity for many schools within Illinois, and we want to ensure that you have the best information available to make an informed decision if participation in CEO is right for your schools and community.
The Community Eligibility Option website including application materials for the State of Illinois is http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/nslp_hhfa_implementation.htm. Please contact the Nutrition Programs Division staff of the Illinois State Board of Education at (800) 545-7892 or via electronic mail at cnp@isbe.net with any questions.

**U.S. Department of Education**

**Applications Now Available for Promise Neighborhoods Program**

The U.S. Department of Education has released the application for the second phase of the Promise Neighborhoods program, including new implementation grants and a second round of planning grants, totaling $30 million. The program will again have Absolute Priorities for serving rural and tribal communities. Nonprofits, institutions of higher education and Native American tribes are eligible to apply for funds to develop or execute plans that will improve educational and developmental outcomes for students in distressed neighborhoods.

Applications will be due by Sept. 6, 2011. Winners will be selected and awards will be made no later than Dec. 31. Officials from the Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement will conduct several webinars for potential applicants. All webinars require participants to register in advance. Registration and additional information about the Promise Neighborhoods program is available at http://www2.ed.gov/programs/promiseneighborhoods/index.html.

**Introduction to Education Policy Seminars Scheduled for Teachers**

The U.S. Department of Education is inviting teachers to participate in Summer Seminars at Six: An Introduction to Education Policy. The series of four hour-long seminars will be held every other Thursday, starting at 6 p.m. July 14.


For more information and to register, go to http://usdoedregistration.ed.gov/profile/web/index.cfm?PKWebId=0x9138701.

**Funding and Disbursement Services**

**Claimable Pre-kindergarten Students on Nonexclusive Transportation Routes**

Please be advised that PA 96-1264 effective Jan. 1, 2011, allows for pre-kindergarten students who are transported on nonexclusive routes to be claimable for transportation. Specifically the language states, “When calculating the reimbursement for transportation costs, the State Board of Education may not deduct the number of pupils enrolled in early education programs from the number of pupils eligible for reimbursement if the pupils enrolled in the early education programs are transported at the same time as other eligible pupils.”

Please note that this new language does not allow any prekindergarten students to be claimed who are transported on exclusive pre-kindergarten routes. The new law only provides for pre-kindergarten students to be claimed on Jan. 1, 2011, and after who are “transported at the same time as other eligible pupils” (e.g. transported on a regular route with a sibling).

Pursuant to this law, when reporting pre-kindergarten pupils on the 2010-11 Pupil Transportation claim payable in FY 2012, districts should report the following:

**Line 3** – Pre-kindergarten Headcount – Number of pre-kindergarten pupils enrolled to be transported (Regular Route-Not Exclusive);

**Line 5** – Total number of days pupils are enrolled to receive regular transportation – prior to Jan. 1, 2011, days should be reported on Line 5(b) – Regular Education Pre-kindergarten Pupils; however, the days enrolled after Jan. 1, 2011, should be reported on Line 5(a) – Pupils residing 1.5 miles or more or on Line 5(d) – Pupils residing less than 1.5 miles with an approved Serious Safety Hazard;

**Line 13** – Total nonreimbursable miles. Mileage is still reported on line 13(b) – Total Prekindergarten miles prior to Jan. 1, 2011. After Jan. 1, 2011, the mileage for pre-kindergarten students on nonexclusive transportation routes should be reported on Line 10 (a) – Total regular route miles.
If you have any questions, please contact Jamie Johnson via telephone at (217) 782-5256 or via e-mail at jjohnson@isbe.net.

Student Opportunities

Students Bring Home the Gold From SkillsUSA Championship

A team of four students from the Kankakee Area Career Center brought home a gold medal in the entrepreneurship team contest at the annual National Leadership and Skills Conference and SkillsUSA Championships. The winning team was Jake Hines and Andrew Bond, both 2011 graduates from Herscher High School; Giovanni Schiavone, a junior at Beecher High School; and Brianna Jones, a 2011 graduate of St. Anne High School.

The team presented a business concept, competing against 14 other states in Kansas City, Mo., June 22-23. Team member Brianna Jones stepped in for Joe Volek, a senior from Beecher High School, who won with the team at the state level competition.

The SkillsUSA Championship is for high school and college level students who are members of SkillsUSA. The students compete in technical, skilled and service occupations. For more information, visit http://www.skillsusa.org.

Registration Under Way for Cyber Foundations High School Competition

Registration is open for the Cyber Foundations High School Competition, which is sponsored by the U.S. Cyber Challenge, a coalition consisting of the Air Force Association (CyberPatriot), the Center for Internet Security, the Department of Defense Cyber Crime Center and the National Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition.

The competition is a learning opportunity for students interested in cyber security and information systems management. The competition includes online tutorials and video education materials and quizzes covering networking, operating systems and system administration. The competition is part of the coalition’s goal to strengthen the work force with skilled cyber professionals.

The registration deadline is Sept. 30 and costs $100 per school or $25 per individual. For more information, go to http://www.usecyberchallenge.org.

In the News

Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity Publishes Newsletter

The Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity recently published a newsletter aimed at helping create opportunities for more physical activity in schools and better physical education programs. The alliance cites statistics showing Illinois ranked third among states with the most obese and overweight children per capita.

The newsletter includes information on the recent work of the Illinois Enhanced P.E. Task Force, which is chaired by ISBE’s Dr. Christopher A Koch, State Superintendent of Schools.

The newsletter is available online at http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs070/1103010793095/archive/1106519318810.html.

LaSalle-Peru High School to Receive Award from High Schools That Work

LaSalle-Peru High School will receive the Outstanding High Schools That Work School Award at a ceremony later this month in Nashville, Tenn. The award is given to schools that have made noteworthy improvements in such areas as graduation rate, the percentage of students meeting college readiness as measured by the ACT, significant improvement on state assessments and other similar measures.

The award ceremony is set for July 20 at the start of the 2011 High Schools That Work Summer Staff Development Conference. High Schools That Work is a nationwide school improvement initiative for high school leaders and teachers. For more information, visit http://www.sreb.org/page/1078/high_schools_that_work.html.

National Parenting Gifted Children Week Kicks Off

National Parenting Gifted Children Week kicked off on July 17. The annual special designation is sponsored by Supporting Emotional Needs of Gifted (SENG). The nonprofit organization uses the week to bring attention to “the joys and challenges of raising, guiding and supporting bright young minds.” For more information, go to http://www.sengifted.org.
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.