Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

The U.S. Department of Education will release specific details next month on their plan to allow states to request waivers from some aspects of No Child Left Behind. NCLB has been up for reauthorization since 2007 and, in that time, its artificial performance targets and punitive measures have continued to put pressure on districts throughout the country.

Here in Illinois, we will likely see a major increase this year in the number of schools and districts not making Adequate Yearly Progress. In fact, I believe that, for the first time, our statewide average score will be lower than the performance target (which is 85 percent). This will be for a variety of reasons, including changes in the calculation of the graduation rate and an increase in the number of 11th-graders taking the PSAE.

My preference is still to see a newly authorized NCLB. Short of that, however, I will likely suggest to the members of the Illinois State Board of Education that we seek a waiver, provided any conditions for such a waiver are not too prescriptive or would undo the positive reforms we’ve worked so hard to achieve. Based on U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan’s previous statements about what states will need to do in order to receive a waiver – adopt and implement college and career ready standards; provide evaluation systems designed to improve teacher and principal performance; develop and implement statewide longitudinal data systems; and intervene in the lowest performing schools – I believe we are well positioned to receive such a waiver.

Any waiver request we would seek would still have a robust accountability system. However, it would be my intent to develop one that is more realistic, focusing on student growth and improved achievement rather than on unrealistic and arbitrary benchmarks.

There are still a lot of unanswered questions about the possible waivers that the U.S. Department of Education could offer from NCLB. While we still need to see the details before we commit to seeking a waiver, I do want us to be ready to seek one sooner, rather than later. We have developed a survey to gauge interest and support for a variety of possible waivers. You can access the survey at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ESEAWaivers and provide us with your feedback on what might be contained in a possible Illinois waiver.

Thanks and have a great week.

Chris

Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- **2010-11 Teacher Service Record submission deadline** – Aug. 15
- **2010-11 annual Pupil Transportation Reimbursement Claim deadline** – Aug. 15
• Affidavit of School Treasurer Bonds submitted by Regional Superintendents/ Intermediate Service Centers – Sept. 1
• 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
• 2011-12 School District Budget form – Adopted by Sept. 30 and due to ISBE by Oct. 30
• 2010-11 LEA Annual Financial Report – Due to ROEs/ISCs Oct. 14 and due to ISBE Nov. 15 (with the exception of those who received an “Extension of Time” approval letter)
• FY 12 School Technology Revolving Loan Program (STRLP) application deadline – Dec. 1

Early Childhood

Feedback Sought for Early Learning Challenge Grant Application Process

Illinois is pursuing additional funding for early childhood education from the U.S. Department of Education through the recently announced Early Learning Challenge. Parents, guardians, early childhood practitioners and other stakeholders can contribute to the process by answering a survey at http://www2.illinois.gov/earlychildhood/Pages/EarlyLearningChallenge.aspx.

Additional information about the grant is also available at the Web page, including a summary of the grant program and the official announcement from the U.S. Department of Education. The goal in pursuing these funds is to design a system, from birth through school entry, that more tightly coordinates all early learning initiatives paid for with state and federal dollars, better facilitates transitions of students and ensures our work force has the skills and knowledge to maximize overall child development, language and numeracy skills, and social and emotional development.

Funding and Disbursement Services

Interrupted School Days/Heat

The health and safety of students are a primary concern for every school superintendent. Section 18-12, of the School Code allows the use of Interrupted School Days for “adverse weather conditions” including extreme heat as well as extreme cold. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) allows four options with regard to extreme heat:

• Amend the public school calendar to start school at a later date
• Dismiss after 5-clock-hours of instruction
• Utilize an Emergency Day
• Utilize an Interrupted Day

If an Emergency Day is utilized, it is recommended that an Amended Calendar be submitted electronically through IWAS to the Regional Office of Education (ROE) for approval, to assure that the most up to date Public School Calendar is available online via the School Calendar Inquiry. If an Interrupted Day is utilized, an Amended Calendar must be submitted electronically through IWAS, within 30 days of occurrence, to the ROE, who will forward it to ISBE for approval as required by statute. The Calendar Code for Emergency Day is ED. The Calendar Code for an Interrupted Day is XID. When amending the calendar code to XID, Student Attendance Time is required to verify a minimum of 1 instructional clock hour was conducted, as well as a brief explanation of why the day was interrupted.

ISBE’s policy further states that if the announcement is made in advance (i.e., on the previous day) that school will be closing on any day or days after less than 5 clock hours because of heat, you must use an emergency day(s). The shortened day may not be counted as a full-day of attendance under those circumstances.

At this time, all 2011-12 Public School Calendars should now have ROE approval, making the calendar available for those interested to view on the ISBE’s School Calendar Inquiry Web page. Per Section 10-19 of the School Code, any changes to the calendar must be approved by completing and submitting an amended calendar via IWAS prior to the change taking effect.

It is our hope that this information is helpful for the upcoming school year. If you require technical assistance or have further questions regarding the public school calendar, please contact your Regional Office of Education or Marj Beck at mbeck@isbe.net or (217) 782-5256.
FY 2012 General State Aid Finalized

The Fiscal Year 2012 General State Aid (GSA) calculations have been finalized. The first FY 2012 GSA payment will be made on Aug. 10. The $6,119 GSA foundation level was utilized in the GSA calculation based on a total budgeted FY 2012 appropriation of $4,448,104,514. The final GSA net entitlement based upon local tax revenue and average daily attendance information calculated to $4,679,299,867, leaving a shortage of $231,195,353. This shortage requires a proration of 95 percent, which has been applied towards the gross entitlement for each school district and regional office. The 95 percent proration is not being proportionally applied over the entire year. Consistent with prior years, the entire reduction is instead being applied in full to the last scheduled payments in June. For most districts, it eliminates the June 20 payment entirely. Final computations and individual claim information for school districts and regional offices can be accessed in GSA Inquiry at http://webprod1.isbe.net/gsainquiry/asp/default.asp.

If you have any questions about General State Aid or the computations, please contact Jim Mathes at jmathes@isbe.net or phone (217) 782-5256.

PARCC

Feedback Sought on Model Content Frameworks for Common Core Standards

On Aug. 3, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers released draft model content frameworks for public review. The model content frameworks identify the main ideas in the Common Core State Standards for each grade level and will help determine the focus for various assessments being developed.

The draft frameworks in English language arts/literacy and mathematics will be posted on the PARCC Website at http://www.parcconline.org//parcc-content-frameworks until Aug. 17. Feedback is sought from K-12 educators, curriculum and assessment experts and other stakeholders via a survey at the site listed above. All feedback will be reviewed and final model content frameworks will be released in the fall.

PARCC is 24-state consortium working to develop common assessments, which is funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The alliance is led by the member states and Achieve, a nonprofit group that aims to align K-12 education policies with the demands of employers and the postsecondary community. Visit http://www.parcconline.org for more information.

Special Education

Registration Under Way for 2011 ISBE Transition Planning Institute

Registration is now open for the second annual Illinois State Board of Education Transition Planning Institute set for Sept. 20-21, 2011, at the Doubletree Hotel in Bloomington. The Transition Institute is sponsored by ISBE in collaboration with Illinois State University Department of Special Education and the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC).

This two-day event is for district teams who are new to the Transition Planning Institute and will include content sessions, team planning time and opportunities to talk to content experts and presenters. The focus of the institute is to assist selected school teams in reviewing their district’s transition-related data, learning from content experts and engaging in a facilitated action planning process in order to improve and/or scale-up implementation of transition-focused planning and education. Priority will be given to those districts who have been working with ISBE staff on the IND 13 Determination or Data Verification Audit. There is no registration fee and food will be provided.


For further information, contact Sue Walter at swalter@isbe.net or (618) 651-9028, Melanie Fleenor at mfleenor@isbe.net or Todd Williams at todwilli@isbe.net or (217) 782-5589.

Legal

New Law Allows School Districts to Charge More for Driver’s Education

Under Illinois law, school districts have been able to charge a fee not to exceed $50 to students who participate in a driver’s education course, unless a student is unable to pay for the course, in which event the fee must be waived. Public Act 97-145, signed by the governor on July 14, 2011, amends Section 27-24.2 of
the School Code [105 ILCS 5/27-24.2] to allow a district, following a public hearing and via board resolution, to increase this fee to an amount not to exceed $250 (but must continue to waive the fee for students unable to afford the course).

Please note, however, that this increase in the fee that may be charged for driver’s education does not allow districts, in determining a reasonable fee, to include any portion of the salaries or benefits of school district personnel providing driver’s education in that equation.

Districts that wish to increase the fee for driver’s education to the new limit of $250, and that wish to use salaries and benefits to justify the cost of this increase, will need to seek a waiver of rules (Section 252.30(a)(3)) from the State Board of Education to allow for consideration of personnel costs in setting the district’s fee. Information on the waiver process can be found online at [http://www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/default.htm) or call Rules and Waivers at (217) 782-5270.

Districts with an approved waiver from the General Assembly to raise fees above the former $50 limit set in the School Code will continue to hold that waiver until its expiration date. At that time, districts will face three possible situations:

- Districts intending to charge $250 or less, and not planning to use salary or benefits costs in their fee calculations, will not need to apply for a waiver, but will need to hold a public hearing and set the new fee via board resolution in accordance with PA 97-145.

- Districts intending to assess a fee of $250 or less, and planning to use salary and benefit costs in their fee calculations, will need to seek a waiver of rules from the State Board of Education allowing them to include such costs in their calculations.

- Districts choosing to request driver’s education fees above $250 will need to continue to seek a waiver of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/27-24.2) from the Illinois General Assembly. Districts should note the timelines that govern submission of such waiver requests (see the Website link above), since a waiver may not be implemented by a district until it has been approved by the General Assembly.

### School Business Services

#### Requirements Regarding School Treasurer Bonds

Section 3-8 and Section 8-2 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/3-8 and 105 ILCS 5/8-2) require Regional Superintendents of Schools to file an affidavit with the Illinois State Board of Education showing which treasurers of school districts in their region are properly bonded. This affidavit must be filed before Sept. 1 of each year. Copies of the actual school treasurer bond should not be filed with ISBE.

Section 8-2 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/8-2) requires each treasurer of a school district to be properly bonded. The penalty of the bond shall be 25 percent of the amount of all bonds, notes, mortgages, moneys and effects of which the treasurer is to have custody at any given time. The bond shall be increased or decreased from time to time, as the increase or decrease of the amount of notes, bonds, mortgages, moneys and effects may require. The bond shall be payable to the township trustees of schools over the district or payable to the school board of the district, whichever is applicable. The bond shall be filed with the Regional Superintendent of Schools. School districts should not file a copy of their bonds with ISBE.

For additional information on the State Board of Education interpretation of this Section, please refer to the State Superintendent’s Weekly Message for May 3, 2010, and May 11, 2010, which can be accessed at [http://www.isbe.net/board/archivemessages/archivemessage.htm](http://www.isbe.net/board/archivemessages/archivemessage.htm).

Section 3-8 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/3-8) describes the duties of the Regional Superintendent of Schools upon receipt of the treasurer bonds. When the bond of any school treasurer is filed with the Regional Superintendent of Schools, the Regional Superintendent shall carefully examine it. If the bond is found to be in all respects according to law and the sureties sufficient, the Regional Superintendent shall endorse his/her approval and file it with the papers of his/her office. If the bond is in any respect defective, or if the sureties are insufficient, the bond shall be returned for correction.

In Cook County, the responsibilities and duties of the Regional Superintendent of Schools detailed in Section 3-8 and Section 8-2 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/3-8 and 105 ILCS 5/8-2) will be assumed by the respective Intermediate Service Center.
Student Opportunities

Application Available for U.S. Senate Youth Program and Hearst Scholarship

Information for the U.S. Senate Youth Program and Hearst Scholarship is available online at http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/hearst.htm. Each high school will receive a mailing from the state superintendent about the program and scholarship during the second week in August.

The first phase of this program brings two students from each state to Washington, D.C., March 3-10, 2012, to participate in the U.S. Senate Youth Program (USSYP). Delegates will be immersed in Washington activities throughout their weeklong stay. The William Randolph Hearst Foundation will pay all expenses for the week, including transportation, hotel and meals.

The second phase awards both recipients a college scholarship of $5,000. The Hearst Foundation requires that to obtain scholarship funds, a student must, within two years after high-school graduation, enroll at an accredited college or university in the U.S. The student is encouraged to include courses in government or related subjects to his or her undergraduate program.

In addition to the application in the August packet, applications can be obtained on the Illinois State Board of Education Web site at http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/hearst_brochure.pdf. A hard copy must be received by ISBE no later than 5 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2011.

More information on this program can be obtained at http://www.hearstfdn.org/ussyp/, or contact Sally Veach, principal education consultant, at (217) 782-5589 or sveach@isbe.net.

Employment Opportunities

ISBE External Vacancy List

An electronic version of the Affidavit, and other information, can be found online at www.isbe.net/fsms/html/t_bonds.htm.

Please contact Michelle Heninger, School Business Services Division, at (217) 785-8779 or mheninge@isbe.net with any follow-up questions.

In the News

Weekly News Clips


An External Vacancy List for the Illinois State Board of Education is available at http://www.isbe.net/hr/Default.htm.