Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Illinois is committed to seeking a waiver from No Child Left Behind and we are working to develop a proposal that will provide flexibility to districts while still maintaining a stringent accountability system. Last week, we gathered educators from around the state to discuss the waiver and to get their feedback on our initial ideas. This group included teachers, principals and superintendents chosen by statewide education groups. Their feedback was excellent, but we want to hear from as many voices as possible as we shape our waiver application.

Earlier this year, before President Obama announced that he would solicit waivers to NCLB from the states, we surveyed educators about general themes. We received feedback from more than 500 individuals and that dialogue is helping to shape our initial thoughts. We have developed a page on our website specifically for information about the NCLB waiver process: http://www.isbe.net/nclb_waivers. We’ll utilize this page as a clearinghouse for information, and once we have a draft application we will post it for your review. You can also provide us with feedback and your ideas by sending an email to nclbwaiver@isbe.net, and we will have additional opportunities for input.

I know the changes that are coming with the Performance Evaluation Reform Act and SB 7 have many of you asking questions. We have worked with a number of stakeholder groups to develop a new, non-regulatory guidance document that will assist you in your implementation. You may access this helpful tool on our website at http://www.isbe.net/PERA/pdf/pera_guidance.pdf. As indicated in the Introduction to that document, if you do have questions about PERA, SB 7 and/or the non-regulatory guidance, you can send an email to edreform@isbe.net.

I also want to make you aware that we formally submitted Part I of our Race to the Top Phase III (Race 3) application last week. Illinois secured our place in Race 3 by our strong showing as a finalist in each of the first two Race to the Top competitions. We will receive $42 million to implement parts of our Phase II application, including funds to support implementation of the Common Core standards and training for the new evaluation systems. We’ll have more information later this month when we submit our final proposal.

Finally, I wanted to make you aware that Illinois has joined with 25 other states to develop new science standards that will clearly define what students need to learn from kindergarten through grade 12. The Next Generation Science Standards are the next step in the common standards process, following English Language Arts and Mathematics. As a partner in this process, Illinois will help guide the standards writing during the next year. Drafts of the NGSS will be available for public input at least twice during the development process and the standards should be complete by the end of 2012.

Have a great week!

Chris
Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- **Annual Statement of Affairs (ISBE Form 50-37) Submission**: Posted in newspaper by Dec. 1 and submitted to ISBE by Dec. 15
- **2011-2012 Teacher Service Record data deadline** – Dec. 15
- **Part 1 (Public Schools Evaluation, Recognition and Supervision) and Part 151 (School Construction Program)** – Public comment period ends Dec. 19
- **Certificate of Tax Levy (ISBE Form 50-02)** – Must certified and submitted to the county clerk by Dec. 26
- **Deadline for Request for Proposals for Child Find Public Awareness Project** – Dec. 29
- **Nonpublic Registration, Enrollment, and Staff Report deadline** – Dec. 31
- **Deadline for Request for Proposals for Child Find Public Awareness Project** – Dec. 29
- **Certificate of Tax Levy (ISBE Form 50-02)** – Must certified and submitted to the county clerk by Dec. 26
- **Deadline to submit written opt-out petition to regional superintendent of schools for Summer Food Service Program mandate (Public Act 096-0734)** – Jan. 15
- **Part 1 (Public Schools Evaluation, Recognition and Supervision) and Part 151 (School Construction Program)** – Public comment period ends Jan. 17
- **Part 1 (Public Schools Evaluation, Recognition and Supervision) and Part 235 (Early Childhood Block Grant)** – Public comment period ends Jan. 30
- **2011-12 Teacher Salary Study data form deadline** – Feb. 1
- **2011-12 Noncertified Staff Salary Study survey** – Feb. 1
- **2011-12 Eye Examination Data Collection deadline** – June 30

**Educator Certification**

**Certification Fees Set to Increase at the Start of the New Year**

Please be advised that pursuant to PA 97-0607, signed on Aug. 26, 2011, that educator certification fees will increase on Jan. 1, 2012. The new fees are as follows:

- $75 application fee for each educator certificate
- $50 for each subsequent endorsement application
- $10 per year registration fee for the course of the validity cycle*

*The registration fee must be paid in its entirety. For example, the registration fee for a certificate with a five-year validity cycle would be $50. Any application that ISBE receives on or after Jan. 1, 2012, will be held to the new fee structure. If you are unsure as to whether or not an application and fee will reach the Illinois State Board of Education by Dec. 29, 2011, please utilize the Educator Certification System (ECS).

Applicants may apply online for most certificates through midnight of Dec. 31, 2011. Note that all fees continue to be non-refundable and non-transferable. Please contact Educator Certification at (217) 557-6763 with any questions.

**U.S. Presidential Scholars Program**

**ISBE Seeks Nominations From Principals for Award Program to Honor Top Seniors**

The Illinois State Board of Education is asking high school principals for help nominating the state’s top seniors for the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program, which is administered by the U.S. Department of Education’s Commission on Presidential Scholars. The program has honored more than 6,000 outstanding high school seniors since being established by President Lyndon Johnson in 1964.

Students are selected on the basis of outstanding scholarship and promise of future success. Except for the first dozen or so years of the program’s existence, nominees have been invited to apply for Presidential Scholars recognition based solely upon SAT and ACT scores. In part to address this “identification gap,” starting in 1979, students who demonstrated ability and accomplishment in the visual and performing arts or creative writing have also been included in the Presidential Scholar pool. This year, two additional students from Illinois will be nominated:

Illinois high school principals are encouraged to nominate one student from their school who, while demonstrating outstanding scholarship, might not
otherwise be nominated through the current SAT/ACT or arts recognition processes. All high school seniors graduating between January and June of 2012 who are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents, who attend public, parochial or independent schools, as well as those who are homeschooled are eligible.

Please send a nominating letter to Ann Muraro of the Illinois State Board of Education’s Public Information Division at amuraro@isbe.net. The deadline is Dec. 19. For questions, call (217) 782-4648. All nominations will be reviewed and two students will be selected for possible national recognition. As in the past, the 2012 U.S. Presidential Scholars will be selected by the Commission on Presidential Scholars and will receive the Presidential Scholars Medallion and an expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., in June.

To learn more about the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program and the Commission on Presidential Scholars, visit http://www2.ed.gov/programs/psp/index.html.

Title I SIG Program

Notice Inviting Public Comment on School Improvement Grant Waiver Request

As part of the Title I School Improvement Grant (SIG) program authorized by Section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) has provided states with the opportunity to apply for a waiver of certain Title I requirements.

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) intends to apply to DOE for a waiver from Section I.A.2(d)(1)(i)(B) of the final requirements of the SIG, which requires a local educational agency (LEA) to develop and implement teacher and principal evaluation systems that meet certain standards during the first year a school is implementing the transformation model. Those systems must be rigorous, transparent and equitable and take into account data on student academic growth as a significant factor as well as other factors, such as multiple observation-based assessments of performance, ongoing collections of information on professional practice reflective of student achievement and increased high school graduation rates. The systems must comply with Article 24A of the School Code and ISBE's administrative rules promulgated under Article 24A [See proposed Rules for Part 50 (Evaluation of Certified Employees under Article 24A of the School Code), at http://www.isbe.net/rules/proposed/default.htm.] This waiver would permit ISBE, in accordance with criteria Illinois develops, to permit an LEA that is implementing the transformation model in one or more schools to take additional time to develop and implement high-quality teacher evaluation systems that meet these requirements.

This waiver would apply only to teacher evaluation systems for cohort 1 and cohort 2 SIG schools as follows:

- A school that began implementing the transformation model during the 2010-2011 school year (cohort 1) and that was not able to complete the development and implementation of its teacher evaluation systems during that year must develop them during the 2011-2012 school year and, at a minimum, pilot them for all teachers at the school no later than the 2012-2013 school year. The piloted systems should be capable of being used for decisions regarding, for example, retention, promotion, compensation, and rewards, no later than the 2013-2014 school year.

- A school that begins implementing the transformation model in the 2011-2012 school year (cohort 2) must develop its teacher evaluation systems during that year, pilot them for all teachers during the 2012-2013 school year, and use the system in the school, including for decisions regarding, for example, retention, promotion, compensation, and rewards, no later than the 2013-2014 school year.

For both cohorts, the pilot would include administration of both the teacher practice and student growth components of the evaluation system, although only the teacher practice component would be used for the final summative evaluation during the pilot year.

You are invited to provide comments to ISBE that will be forwarded to DOE along with Illinois’ waiver application.

Please submit comments or questions by Dec. 7, 2011, to Robin Staudenmier at estauden@isbe.net.
Data Analysis and Progress Reporting

Department of Public Health Adopts Changes for Immunization Requirement

Recently, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) amended its rules to comply with recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for providing increased protection for infants against pertussis disease. Specifically, the ACIP recommends that a dose of combined Tetanus/Diphtheria/acellular Pertussis vaccine (Tdap) be administered at 11 to 12 years of age. To that end, the Illinois Department of Public Health proposed adding the following language to 77 Illinois Administrative Code 665.240(a):

5) Beginning with school year 2011-12, any child entering sixth grade shall show proof (see Section 665.250(b) of receiving one dose of Tdap (defined as tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis) vaccine regardless of the interval since the last DTaP, DT or Td does.

6) Students entering grades seven through 12 who have not already received Tdap are required to receive 1 Tdap dose regardless of the interval since last DTaP, DT or Td does.

The rules were adopted and became effective on Sept. 27, 2011. Because this was after the start of school year 2011-12, IDPH requested that the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) allow schools flexibility in implementing the changes this year. ISBE has determined that the rules should be enforced starting school year 2012-13, and the Illinois Department of Public Health agrees this is a reasonable approach.

Questions can be directed to the ISBE Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division at (217) 782-3950 or the IDPH Immunization Program at (217) 785-1455.


Assessment

PARCC Model Content Frameworks and Webinars Now Available

PARCC Model Content Frameworks in Math and English/Language Arts were recently released. In addition, Achieve recently produced two Webinars about the Content Frameworks.

To view the PARCC Model Content Frameworks and Webinars, please visit http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-content-frameworks.

Senate Bill 7

Reminder Regarding Establishment of a Reduction in Force Joint Committee

Section 24-12(c) of Senate Bill 7 (Public Act 97-8, effective June 13, 2011) requires that each school district and special education joint agreement use a joint committee composed of equal representation selected by the school board and its teachers (or if applicable the exclusive bargaining representative of its teachers) to address certain matters related to reductions in force. The RIF Joint Committee must be established and the first meeting must occur on or before Dec. 1, 2011. The number of individuals on the Joint Committee is to be determined by the school district and union, if one exists, or teachers, provided that there must be an equal number selected by each party.

A copy of Senate Bill 7 can be seen at http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/97/SB/PDF/09700SB00071v.pdf. The Illinois State Board of Education will post an updated Frequently Asked Question on Senate Bill 7 and the Performance Evaluation Reform Act later this week at http://www.isbe.net/peac/ along with additional resources.

Early Childhood

RFP Issued for Child Find Public Awareness Project

ISBE has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) titled “Child Find Public Awareness Project.” As detailed in the RFP (see link below), the Child Find Project provides resources and materials for local education agencies (LEAs) and other child referral sources to assist them in meeting their requirements for Child Find. Child Find is a component of the Individuals with Disabilities
Education Act (IDEA) that requires states to identify, locate and evaluate all children with disabilities, from birth through age 22, who are in need of early intervention or special education services.

The RFP and application forms are posted at http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/html/spec-ed.htm. Applications must be received by ISBE no later than Dec. 29, 2011. For questions about the RFP, contact Pamela Reising Rechner at (217) 524-4835 or preising@isbe.net.

Building Stronger Connections With Local Head Start Agencies

Every school district in Illinois is supported by a local Head Start program. To find the Head Start agencies in your area, go to the Illinois Head Start Association website at http://ilheadstart.org. Head Start agencies provide comprehensive (social services, health and parent engagement) and educational services to pregnant moms, babies, toddlers, preschoolers and their families, who live in poverty. Federal regulations require Head Start agencies to coordinate with school districts to promote the effective movement of children into the school system and increase continuity of pedagogy and support services. The school readiness agenda focuses on the importance of creating better continuity across Head Start and the early years of elementary school.

The emphasis on school readiness requires Head Start to establish school readiness goals with their local school district(s) to help prepare children to be successful when they enter school. Thus, Head Start will be working with their local school district(s) to jointly develop a school readiness plan that defines expectations for children entering school. Ongoing communication between local schools and Head Start that exchanges information about children and programs and aligns services for early learning, health and family engagement will create more continuity for children and families. Research and experience have taught us that when children’s experiences build on what has come before and connect to what comes next, they are more likely to be successful long-term learners.

This national effort recognizes the importance of creating more comprehensive systems of education that are linked from one stage of learning to the next — reducing the chances that children will be lost along the way and increasing opportunities for positive academic, social, and economic outcomes. We hope that you will support this national effort by engaging with local Head Start agencies to positively impact the school readiness and long-term success of children in your community.

Innovation and Improvement

Promote and Support the Illinois Youth Survey 2012

Please be sure that all schools in your district are aware of the time-limited opportunity to participate in the 2012 Illinois Youth Survey (IYS). All schools are encouraged to take advantage of this resource to support data-driven decision-making. Schools and their community partners have used their IYS data to inform plans and secure additional funding for Social and Emotional Learning, PBIS, bullying prevention and other efforts to support positive conditions for learning.

The Illinois Youth Survey (IYS) is a statewide self-reported adolescent survey administered every other year in Illinois schools and is designed to gather information about a variety of health and social indicators including alcohol and other drug use, nutrition and fitness, violence, bullying, gambling, depression, perceptions of school climate and more. Funded entirely by the Illinois Department of Human Services since 1990, the IYS is free in 2012 to all schools in the state when surveying sixth, eighth, 10th and/or 12th grade students. The IYS contract is now administered through the University of Illinois’ Center for Prevention Research and Development (CPRD).

Schools can register to participate in the Illinois Youth Survey 2012 at http://iys.cprd.illinois.edu/register before this opportunity passes. Because survey administration is funded by the state only every two years, the next opportunity to use the IYS at no cost will be 2014. If you have any questions or would like assistance with registration, please contact the IYS coordinator, Jessica Thomas, at (888) 333-5612 or email jthomas0@uillinois.edu.

An individual school report is sent to each participating school within 4-6 weeks in an easy-to-read format. A district summary can be provided if more than one school participates. No individual school or district results are released publicly without written permission from the school/district administrator.

Benefits:
- Schools and communities can use IYS to assess needs, track progress toward youth physical,
social and mental health goals, and evaluate student support services.

- Training and technical assistance is available to help schools interpret and use their data.
- Statewide results, based on a random sample of Illinois youth, are available. Schools and communities can therefore review their own local results and answer the question: “Compared to Illinois youth overall, should this issue/behavior be a priority for our school or community to address?”
- Schools have the option of adding up to 30 questions to get data on local issues not included in the pre-printed survey form.
- No names or personal identifiers (e.g. IDs) are collected from students in order to protect confidentiality and promote truthful responses.
- Schools, districts and their community partners have used IYS data to support grant writing and justify budget allocations for student support services during these economically uncertain times.

Each school chooses a date to administer surveys any time between Jan. 15 and April 30; based on timing that is least disruptive to the school’s calendar. The IYS is available in a traditional paper/pencil format as well as online, in both English and Spanish, and can be completed in one 40-50 minute class period. While instruction time is of highest priority, devoting one class period every two years to this effort will benefit schools, students and families in multiple ways.

**School Opportunities**

**Applications Available for TECH 2012 at the Illinois State Capitol Building**

TECH 2012, an annual student showcase at the Illinois State Capitol building, will be held Wednesday, May 2, 2012. At TECH 2012 schools from throughout the state will share classroom technology projects with state legislators and the general public. The purpose of the event is to raise awareness of the role technology plays in preparing students to succeed in today’s world and to show the need for increased funding for classroom technology.

For more information about the event, go to [http://www.iceberg.org/tech_2012](http://www.iceberg.org/tech_2012). Schools selected to participate in TECH 2012 will send a team of four (two or three students and one or two teachers) to Springfield to share a school project with state legislators from approximately 12:30 to 3 p.m.

School interested in participating should submit an application at [http://www.iceberg.org/tech_2012](http://www.iceberg.org/tech_2012). Applications will be reviewed in mid-January and notification of selection status will be shared at the end of January. Selected teams will represent a balanced distribution between legislative districts, grade levels and curricular areas. The goal of TECH 2012 is to have school representation from every legislative district throughout the state.

**Student Opportunities**

**Annual National Radon Poster Contest Under Way**

Students ages 9 to 14 are eligible to enter the annual National Radon Poster Contest. Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that can reach dangerous levels in buildings. The contest aims to raise awareness so that families can protect themselves from lung cancer caused by radon gas.

The American Lung Association in Illinois, the Ecology Action Center, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Radon Program, Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago, Southern Illinois Radon Awareness Task Force and University of Illinois Extension are partnering with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to sponsor the Illinois portion of the contest.

The winning poster will be distributed during National Radon Action Month in January 2013. The first-place winner in the nation will receive $1,000. There are additional cash prizes for national and Illinois winners.

Posters are due to Cindy Ladage at the Illinois Emergency Management Agency on or before March 1, 2012. For more information, visit [http://takeactiononradon.illinois.edu/resources/contest](http://takeactiononradon.illinois.edu/resources/contest), email cindy.ladage@illinois.gov or call (800) 325-1245. The web site includes rules, submission forms and fact sheets on radon to educate students.

**Entries Sought for National STEM Video Game Challenge**

The 2012 National STEM Video Game Challenge is under way. The challenge is in partnership with Digital Promise, a new initiative created by President Barack
Obama and Congress, supported through the U.S. Department of Education.

Entrants have until March 12, 2012, to submit their ideas and games. The contest is open to students and game designers in four levels: middle school, high school, college and graduate students, and educators.

Inspired by the Educate to Innovate Campaign, President Obama’s initiative to promote a renewed focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education, the National STEM Video Game Challenge is a multi-year competition whose goal is to motivate interest in STEM learning among America’s youth by tapping into students’ passion for playing and making video games.

For more information, visit http://stemchallenge.org/about/Default.aspx.

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**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.