Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Last week I participated in the 2012 International Summit on the Teaching Profession in New York City. U.S. Education Secretary Duncan and education leaders from 23 countries participated in discussions about how they go about preparing, selecting and supporting school personnel. These types of interactions are particularly helpful as we think about the global community in which your students will live and work.

I am also serving on the Commission on Standards and Performance Reporting, a national commission that is developing more rigorous performance standards for accreditation of educator preparation programs. The findings of the Commission will be used to guide the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation, which replaces the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education and the Teacher Accreditation Council, in its work to evaluate the current accreditation system and create new standards that will better serve new teachers and their students.

I have long been convinced that we need to improve how we prepare college students to become teachers. I remember as a newly certified teacher, beginning my profession with real students only to find I wasn’t prepared to teach reading. I went back to the institution that prepared me and insisted they provide me with the tools to help improve my students’ reading skills. Mine is not an isolated story; teachers around the state and the country have shared similar stories of being unprepared to lead a class and improve student achievement.

Working with higher education, and other educator preparation programs, at this time to improve teacher preparation makes great sense and is a key to our reform strategy. As we raise our learning standards and tie student performance to teacher and principal evaluations, ensuring that new educators are properly prepared is more important than ever. We want to ensure that every student has an effective teacher, and that every new teacher has the opportunity to succeed and stay in the profession they love.

Commission members include representatives from higher education, alternative providers, critics of educator preparation, local teachers and administrators, content experts in math and reading, state policymakers and members of the general public. We will focus on increasing institutional accountability through greater use of data.

Creating new standards through consensus with the diverse interests represented in our industry is a daunting task, but it is a challenge that we must overcome together to move our country’s education system forward. Classroom teachers are the linchpin to our students’ success and ensuring they are prepared truly holds the key to our students’ future.

Have a great week!

Chris
Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- **Part 226 (Special Education) and Part 575 (School Technology Program)** – Public comment period ends March 26
- **Part 51 (Dismissal of Tenured Teachers under Article 24 and Dismissal of Tenured Teachers and Principals under Article 34 of the School Code)** – Public comment period ends April 2
- **Truants’ Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP) Request for Proposal (RFP) deadline** – April 20 (RFP can be found at [http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/taoep.htm](http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/taoep.htm))
- **New Part 475 (Contested Cases and Other Formal Hearings), Repeal of existing Part 475 (Contested Cases and Other Formal Hearings), and Repeal of Part 485 (Appeal Proceedings before the State Teacher Certification Board)** – Public comment period ends April 23
- **Illinois RtI Network Request for Applications** – Deadline April 25 (Details at [http://www.isbe.net/RtI_plan/default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/RtI_plan/default.htm))
- **Maintenance Grant Program application deadline** – May 1
- **Action for Healthy Kids’ School Grants for Healthy Kids application deadline** – May 5 ([http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/upcoming-events/grant-opportunities/school-grants-for-healthy.html](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/upcoming-events/grant-opportunities/school-grants-for-healthy.html))
- **Part 226 (Special Education)** – Public comment period ends May 7
- **ISBE offices closed for Memorial Day** – May 28
- **2011-12 Eye Examination Data Collection deadline** – June 30
- **ISBE offices closed for Independence Day** – July 4
- **2011-12 Regional Safe Schools Program (RSSP) student reporting deadline** – July 31
- **ISBE offices closed for Labor Day** – Sept. 3
- **ISBE offices closed for Columbus Day** – Oct. 8

PERA

**Performance Evaluation Growth Through Learning Training Program Under Way**

The CEC Partnership Group has been selected by ISBE to design and implement a Performance Evaluation Growth Through Learning Training for teacher and principal evaluators that considers student growth measures as well as assessments of professional practice.

The Consortium for Educational Change (CEC) will provide general oversight and coordination of the Performance Evaluation Growth Through Learning Training Program, with support from the members of the CEC Partnership Group: the Center for the Study of Educational Policy at Illinois State University, the DuPage Regional Office of Education, Teachscape, the Danielson Group, and the Value-Added Research Center at the University of Wisconsin.

The CEC Partnership Group will design and implement a training program for approximately 9,000 teacher and principal evaluators that will enable school districts in Illinois to meet requirements of the Performance Evaluation Act (PERA) of 2010.

To read more, go to [http://www.isbe.net/PERA/pdf/pera-perf-eval-training-release-0312.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/PERA/pdf/pera-perf-eval-training-release-0312.pdf). In addition, a new document of frequently asked questions on the Performance Evaluation Reform Act and the evaluation system will be available soon on ISBE’s website at [http://www.isbe.net/PERA/default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/PERA/default.htm).

**Funding and Disbursement Services**

**March 31, 2012, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Data Due April 5, 2012**

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs and vendor data for the quarter ending March 31, 2012, is due at the Illinois State
Board of Education on or before Thursday, April 5, 2012. This data is required for all ARRA projects that had activity after Dec. 31, 2011.

ARRA data reporting includes two primary elements: the number of jobs funded in the reporting quarter with ARRA dollars and a single payment made to a vendor, using ARRA dollars, in the amount of $25,000 or more. All ARRA data must be reported via the ARRA Reporting System in IWAS. Please refer to the ARRA Reporting Instructions at http://www.isbe.net/arra/pdf/arra_reporting_inst.pdf for detailed reporting procedures.

IMPORTANT: Grant recipients with active ARRA projects must report regardless of whether any jobs were funded or any payments were made to a vendor of $25,000 or more in the reporting quarter.

Please follow these three steps below to properly calculate the jobs FTE that must be reported for the period ending March 31.

- **Step 1:** Determine the number of hours in a full-time schedule for ARRA funded employees between Jan. 1 and March 31 (i.e. an employee works 40 hours a week for 13 weeks, the quarterly hours in a full-time schedule is 520 hours). Note: This figure may change depending on the type of employee.
- **Step 2:** Determine the number of hours employees were paid with ARRA funds for the reporting quarter ending March 31.
- **Step 3:** Divide the number calculated in Step 2 by the quarterly hours in a full-time schedule calculated in Step 1. This calculation should be performed for each employee funded with ARRA dollars. The formula for reporting can be represented as:

  \[
  \text{Total Number of Hours ARRA Funded Within Reporting Quarter} / \text{Quarterly Hours in a Full-Time Schedule} = \text{FTE}
  \]

Mar. 31 ARRA data must be reported for the following ARRA programs for all local education agencies with active ARRA projects after Dec. 31, 2011:

- Title I Low Income – Revenue Code 4851, CFDA #84.394
- Title I Low Income Neglected – Revenue Code 4852, CFDA #84.394
- Title I Low Income Delinquent – Revenue Code 4853, CFDA #84.394
- Title I School Improvement – Revenue Code 4854, CFDA #84.394
- Title I School Improvement (1003g) – Revenue Code 4855, CFDA #84.388
- Title II D Enhancing Education Through Technology – Revenue Code 4861, CFDA #84.386
- Education Jobs Fund Program – Revenue Code 4880, CFDA #84.410 (If compensation and/or benefits have been or will be requested for employees from Jan through Mar)

If you have any questions, contact Funding and Disbursement Services at (217) 782-5256.

EDUCATION JOBS ARRA REPORTING REMINDER – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY: If the LEA has submitted or plans to submit an expenditure report requesting reimbursement of qualifying expenditures (i.e. compensation and benefit costs) that occurred between Jan. 1 and March 31, the full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs and vendor data must be reported for the period ending March 31 even if an expenditure report for reimbursement has yet to be filed for that period of time. For example, if the LEA is going to submit in mid-April an Ed Jobs expenditure report requesting reimbursement of compensation and benefits expended during the reporting quarter ending March 31, the LEA is required to report FTE jobs and vendor data to ISBE on or before the required ARRA reporting deadline of April 5, 2012, even though the expenditure report has not yet been submitted by the LEA. This is true for any subsequent quarter.

Further, once the LEA begins to request Ed Jobs expenditure reimbursement they are obligated to report ARRA FTE jobs and vendor data via the ARRA Reporting System every subsequent quarter until all Ed Jobs Funds have been requested and reported, even if no expenditure reports for reimbursement have been submitted in the current ARRA reporting quarter. For example, if the LEA requested reimbursement and reported ARRA data through Dec. 31 and after doing so still has unexpended allocation, but has no Ed Jobs expenditures between Jan. 1 and March 31, they must still submit ARRA FTE jobs and vendor data for the March 31 ARRA reporting quarter that reflects that 0 FTE jobs or vendor payments were funded with Ed Jobs dollars during the reporting quarter. Again, the LEA must continue to submit ARRA data reports for each reporting quarter, beginning with the quarter in which the compensation funding start date occurs until all Ed Jobs funds have been requested and reported.
If you have further questions or concerns with the Ed Jobs program, contact Jim Mathes at jmathes@isbe.net or Marj Beck at mbeck@isbe.net. Both can be reached at (217) 782-5256.

**Employer TRS Contribution on Federally-Funded Salary**

Please be advised that for Fiscal Year 2013 (July 1, 2012, to June 30, 2013) the preliminary employer’s share of teachers’ retirement rate will be 28.05 percent for personnel employed with Federal grant funds.

This rate is preliminary and is subject to change. More information can be obtained from the TRS website at [http://trs.illinois.gov/subsections/employers/employerservices.htm](http://trs.illinois.gov/subsections/employers/employerservices.htm). The percentage is now determined annually according to the funding amount set by the state legislature.

If you have specific questions regarding TRS contributions, you can direct your inquiries to the TRS Employer Services Division at employers@trs.illinois.gov or phone (888) 877-0890.

**No Child Left Behind**

**Opportunity to Comment on Waiver Sought From U.S. Department of Education**

The Illinois State Board of Education is seeking the following waiver from the U.S. Department of Education. Please submit any comments on this waiver to nclb@isbe.net by March 27, 2012. ISBE hopes that by soliciting this waiver from the U.S. Department of Education, students of Illinois will be better served.

- Waive the period of availability of funds under state-administered Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) programs, specifically those funds appropriated under the School Improvement Program. The extended authority to obligate these funds would enable ISBE and its sub-recipients to increase the quality of instruction for students, improve their academic achievement and continue to assist the same populations served by the programs for which this waiver is being requested in accordance with applicable program requirements.

The full waiver request will be available at [http://www.isbe.net/nclb/htmls/waivers.htm](http://www.isbe.net/nclb/htmls/waivers.htm). Questions on this waiver should be directed to nclb@isbe.net.

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**Data Analysis and Progress Reporting**

**2011-12 Preschool for All Program Record Now Available on IWAS**

The Preschool for All Program Record IWAS system is open for school year 2011-12 data entry. All educational entities that received Preschool for All funds this school year to serve children ages 3-5 are required to submit these data to ISBE, per Section 2-3.71 of the Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/2-3.71).


Questions about using the Preschool for All Program Record system should be directed to the ISBE Help Desk at (217) 558-3600. Questions about the data to be submitted should be directed to Dr. Lilibeth Q. Gumia in the ISBE Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division at (217) 782-3950 or lgumia@isbe.net.

**2012 Bilingual Education Program Delivery Report Available on IWAS**

The Bilingual Education Program Delivery Report IWAS system is open for school year 2011-12 data entry. Each school district that received state transitional bilingual education funds this school year to serve students with limited English proficiency (LEP) in a transitional bilingual education (TBE) program or transitional program of instruction (TPI) is required to submit this report to ISBE, per 23 Illinois Administrative Code 228.40(c)(2).


Questions about using the Bilingual Education Program Delivery Report system should be directed to the ISBE Help Desk at (217) 558-3600. Questions about the data to be reported should be directed to Dr. Lilibeth Q. Gumia in the ISBE Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division at (217) 782-3950 or lgumia@isbe.net.
District Opportunities

Illinois RtI Network Request for Applications

The Illinois Response to Intervention Network (I-RtI Network), which is operated under a federally-funded grant that ISBE awarded to the Lee/Ogle Regional Office of Education, has issued a Request for Applications (RFA) to identify additional public school districts to participate in the Network for the 2012-13 school year. The I-RtI Network provides standardized professional development consisting of training, technical assistance and coaching to district and school teams and parents throughout the state. These services focus on improving the performance of students in grades K-12 through the implementation of a multi-tiered system of instruction, curricula, intervention and assessment, commonly known as RtI, with an emphasis on:

- Administrative leadership;
- Scientific, research-based reading and math curricula, instruction and interventions at grades K-12;
- Data-based decision making;
- Universal screening and progress monitoring; and
- Parent involvement.

Further details of the services to be provided and the potential benefits to and expectations of participating districts are delineated in the RFA, which can be accessed at http://www.isbe.net/RtI_plan/default.htm. ISBE believes districts will find the services of the project to be well-aligned with the district improvement process and an invaluable asset to local efforts to strengthen classroom instruction and improve student performance.

Applications are due April 25, 2012. Questions about the RFA should be directed to the I-RtI Network Area Wide Instructional Leader for the geographic area in which a district is located (see Page 2 of the RFA for names and contact information). Other questions about the I-RtI Network can also be directed to Dr. Pamela Radford, Statewide Project Administrator, at pradford@west40.org or (708) 544-4278.

Capital Development Board

Update on the Early Childhood Construction Grant Program


The program was created to provide early childhood centers an opportunity to increase or enhance their facilities space with the primary goal of serving more young children, birth to age five. Priority for these grants will be given to projects located in those communities in the state with the greatest underserved number of young children.

A total of $45 million was appropriated for the program with up to $5 million available to centers. These funds, which require a 10 percent match, can be used for renovation and expansion of facilities to improve the early learning experience of the youngest Illinoisans. The application deadline was Nov. 30, 2011.

For more information, go to http://www.cdb.state.il.us/ecgp.shtml. The Capital Development Board can be reached at (217) 782-2864.

Nutrition

School Wellness and Recognition Conference Set for May 3 in Springfield

Registration is under way for the fifth annual School Wellness and Recognition Conference, which is set for 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. May 3 in Springfield at the Crown Plaza.

The conference, titled “Healthy Schools, Healthy Kids,” is jointly presented by Action for Healthy Kids Illinois, the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Nutrition Education and Training Program. Registration, which includes lunch, costs $50 per participant. Participants can earn five hours of continuing education credit for the full-day conference.

Adam Brumberg will be the featured speaker on “Making Healthy Choices Easy Choices.” Brumberg is a research specialist at Cornell University and deputy director of the Cornell Food and Brand Lab.

To read additional information and to register, go to http://take.actionforhealthykids.org/site/Clubs?club_id=1121&sid=3980&pg=event. Questions? Contact Joan Love at (800) 545-7892 or jlove@isbe.net.
Action for Healthy Kids Announces Details for Grant Opportunities

Action for Healthy Kids recently announced their School Grants for Healthy Kids opportunity for next school year. Grant awards will range from $1,000 to $5,000 (average $2,000) to more than 500 schools nationally. The deadline to apply is May 5.

Two different grant opportunities are available for Illinois schools meeting the eligibility requirements.

School breakfast program creation and/or expansion (alternative breakfast programs and universal breakfast programs): Schools receiving this grant must realize an increase in Average Daily Participation (ADP) of SBP by 25 percent as well as provide information to students/parents on the nutrition and calories of foods available at breakfast.

The second grant opportunity includes three focuses: summer feeding program creation and/or expansion, providing healthier foods in competitive food venues, and providing access to healthy foods.

Trainings on Game On! The Ultimate Wellness Challenge, Fuel up to Play 60 and Students Taking Charge (grades 7-12) will be available via webinar or local in-person workshops.

To be eligible, your school must participate in both the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program and have a free/reduced price eligibility greater than 50 percent. Priority will be given to schools with 500 or more students. Two webinars are scheduled to learn more about the grant opportunity, March 20 and March 27 from 2-3 p.m. Register at http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/upcoming-events/grant-opportunities/school-grants-for-healthy.html.

Innovation and Improvement

Webinar on Developing the SIG 1003(g) Needs Assessment Set for March 22

The Developing the SIG 1003(g) Needs Assessment webinar is scheduled for March 22. Space is limited. Reserve your webinar seat now at https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/516995320.

Districts that plan to submit an application for the FY 2013 School Improvement Grant funded under Section 1003(g) are invited to participate in the Pre-Application Needs Assessment webinar. The Needs Assessment is the first step in the application process for the grant. The Needs Assessment is designed to help pinpoint the areas in which a district needs to focus and prioritize its resources in order to significantly improve student achievement. As part of the needs assessment, applicants will analyze school achievement data, identify programmatic gaps, examine policies, programs and practices, and elicit stakeholder input and support. District and school leadership teams who are competing for the SIG1003(g) grant should participate in this webinar. Here are the details:

**Title:** Developing the SIG 1003(g) Needs Assessment
**Date:** Thursday, March 22, 2012
**Time:** 10-11:30 a.m.
**System Requirements:** Windows 7, Vista, XP or 2003 Server required for PC-based attendees. Mac OS X 10.5 or newer required for Macintosh-based attendees.

Important Announcement Made Regarding Fiscal Year 2012 Final Title I Allocations

Revised final grant awards for Title I were received across the nation earlier this year. As a state, our entire allocation decreased $931,123. ISBE has calculated revised final FY 2012 allocations for all districts. To negate the impact to districts, ISBE has used reallocation funds to balance each district allocation to their original allocation, which we provided last fall. This has eliminated the need for every district to amend down their currently approved application. So no amendments will be needed for districts for these revised FY12 allocations.

If you want to calculate your own projected allocations for FY 2013, based on these preliminary allocations, please use the following link: http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/nclb_revised_final_alloc_12.pdf. These revised final allocations will be used for calculating excess carryover into FY 13. Please contact Funding and Disbursements with questions or concerns at (217) 782-5256.

Parent Survey for Supplemental Educational Services Eligible Schools

The Center for Research in Educational Policy (CREP) at the University of Memphis conducts an annual evaluation on behalf of ISBE of Supplemental Educational Services (SES). As many of you are aware, SES is a component of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act, which provides extra academic assistance for students from
low-income families attending designated Title I schools (those in their second year of school improvement, in corrective action, or in restructuring status).

The evaluation conducted by CREP assists ISBE in monitoring the effectiveness of providers approved to offer SES in the state of Illinois. The primary components of the evaluation are: SES student achievement outcomes, SES student attendance and the perceptions of parents with children attending SES. Parental feedback plays a critical role in the evaluation of SES providers. Increasing the level of input from parents, through increasing the survey response rate, will ensure the evaluation contains accurate and reliable information.

Later this month, schools that are designated SES-eligible will begin receiving boxes containing parent surveys in English and in Spanish and instructions for returning surveys. Please share this information with your schools and emphasize the importance of the survey distribution and return in an effort to increase the rate of survey submissions.

For questions or additional information regarding the parent survey, contact Beth Murphy of the Center for Research in Educational Policy at the University of Memphis at kmurphy3@memphis.edu or (866) 670-6147. For general SES questions, contact Gary Greene at (312) 814-3989 or ggreene@isbe.net.

Rules and Waivers

Invitation to Comment on Rules

Several proposed rulemakings recently reviewed by the Illinois State Board of Education are available for public comment. The proposals have been posted on the agency’s Web site at http://www.isbe.net/rules; choose “Proposed Rules and Amendments.” Please submit any comments or suggestions to rules@isbe.net.

Part 226 (Special Education): Responds to several recently enacted public acts (P.A. 97-123, effective July 14, 2011; P.A. 97-227, effective January 1, 2012; and P.A. 97-284, effective August 9, 2011) and eliminates provisions that are obsolete in Sections 226.800(g)(2) and (h)(2) that address requirements for State-approved director of special education, assistant directors, and special education supervisors. Deadline for Public comment: May 7, 2012.

New Part 475 (Contested Cases and Other Formal Hearings): Replaces existing Part 475, which is proposed for repeal, to respond to P.A. 96-431, effective August 8, 2009, and to reorganize the Part to better align to the sequence of steps inherent in the hearing process and separate into two subparts the processes for hearings held before the State Educator Preparation and Licensure Board and those held before the State Superintendent. Deadline for Public comment: April 23, 2012.

Part 485 (Appeal Proceedings before the State Teacher Certification Board): Replaces Part 485 pursuant to P.A. 96-431, which removed the authority previously held by the regional superintendent to initiate a hearing and suspend certificates for up to one year and of the State Superintendent to suspend certificates for up to five years, making appeals before the State Teacher Certification Board unnecessary. Deadline for Public comment: April 23, 2012.

Illinois Network of Charter Schools

Board Member Speed Networking
Event Scheduled for April 11

The Illinois Network of Charter Schools will hold an event titled “Board Member Speed Networking” from 5:30 to 8 p.m. on April 11 in Chicago.

The event is an opportunity for charter schools to meet board member candidates and for potential board members to connect with recruiting schools in a “speed-matching” format. It will be held in the lower level of Elephant and Castle, 111 W. Adams St.

The event is free and includes refreshments. Register at http://boardmatching.eventbrite.com.

Educator Opportunities

Program Provides Overseas Training Opportunity for Educators to Teach Chinese

The Cultural Division of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Chicago is seeking applications for a program to provide development training for American educators to teach Chinese language.

This group program will last two weeks and be held this mid-summer (proposed July 16 to July 26, 2012) in Taiwan, where participating teachers will receive methodological and theoretical advanced instruction for K-12 and college level Mandarin Chinese pedagogy, respectively. Professional development includes
curriculum and oral training, Chinese teaching pedagogy, classroom visits, cultural introductions and a conference promoting Chinese language learning.

The Taiwan Ministry of Education will sponsor tuition, accommodation, textbooks, food and transportation in Taiwan. Teachers are responsible for their own airfare. Interested teachers can send their completed application form before April 14 to Cultural Division, Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Chicago, 180 N. Stetson Ave., Suite 5803, Chicago, IL 60601

For more information, visit http://www.edutw.org or contact John Lin at (312) 616-0805.

Student Opportunities

Smithsonian Offers Shout Environmental Exploration Program

For those interested in learning more about the environment, the Shout environmental exploration program offers live webinars and online content, including a digital badging program. Shout is a joint project of the Smithsonian, Microsoft’s Partners in Learning and TakingITGlobal.

The next webinar in the series, scheduled for March 26-27, will include live sessions from the Smithsonian’s field research center in Panama, where scientists are studying tropical ecology. Other sessions will explore water-related inventions, the importance of water in cultures around the world, and representations of water in American art. Archived sessions can be accessed at www smithsonianconference org/shout/schedule.

Register for one or more of the 50-minute sessions at http://www.smithsonianconference.org/shout/program-2012/.

The digital-badging program is for participants who want to demonstrate their understanding of environmental issues and their contributions to finding solutions. More information about badging can be found at www.smithsonianconference.org/shout/badges.

In the News

Weekly News Clips

ISBE has posted highlights from last week’s education news clips at http://www.isbe.net/news/2012/newsclips/120319.htm.