Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

The spring legislative session is in the final scheduled month and lawmakers are focused on budget matters. Lawmakers are scheduled to be in session 20 days through May 31 and still have several significant issues to tackle.

This budget year is proving to be a very difficult one, with nothing sacred. There have been discussions about substantial cuts to state government, changes to pensions and cuts to Medicaid, the State’s program for providing health benefits to the poor. As it stands now, if there are not at least $2.7 billion in cuts to Medicaid, education could face cuts in excess of $700 million. These are difficult conversations to have, but necessary ones. This is a problem that has been ignored for far too long and it’s good that lawmakers are now discussing how to fix the system.

I know many of you and your staffs are concerned about proposals to change pensions. Keep in mind that, at this point, they are just that, proposals. We need people to make decisions based on facts and figures. The pension proposals that are being discussed now are in no way final, and in fact there may not even be a final pension agreement this legislative session. I encourage you, and your staff, to wait to make any life changing decisions until you have facts and figures, not mere proposals that may or may not happen.

I have heard from many of you concerned about possible costs associated with the upcoming teacher and principal evaluation trainings. We had originally budgeted for 8,100 training slots for this required training, however, in working with stakeholders we surveyed the field and the response for these slots was greater than originally budgeted. I know many of you were upset at the prospect of paying for any of your evaluators to participate in this initial round of training, and I want to assure you now that we will honor all reasonable requests for free slots.

Additional information about the teacher and principal evaluations will be coming to you via IWAS later this week.

Finally, I would like to recognize the 37 districts who are partnering with us on the federal Race to the Top (RTT) phase three program. These districts will serve as leaders by first implementing key initiatives aimed at improving school performance and student achievement across the state under the $42.8 million RTT grant awarded to Illinois and participating districts. Chief among the reforms is that these districts will accelerate the implementation of teacher evaluations that incorporate student growth. You can see the list of participating districts at http://www.isbe.net/racetothetop/PDF/phase3-partic-lea-alloc.pdf.

Have a great week!

Chris
Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- **Part 226 (Special Education)** – Public comment period ends May 7
- **Application deadline for the Exception to the 1.0 Percent Cap** – May 18
- **Part 25 (Certification), Part 100 (Requirements for Accounting, Budgeting, Financial Reporting, and Auditing), Part 350 (Secular Textbook Loan) and Part 451 (Private Business and Vocational Schools)** – Public comment period ends May 21
- **ISBE offices closed for Memorial Day** – May 28
- **Preschool For All 3-5 grant continuation application deadline** – June 5
- **RtI Professional Development Trainings, Overview, Normal** – June 7-8
- **Those Who Excel/Illinois Teacher of the Year nomination deadline** – June 8
- **RtI Professional Development Trainings, Math or Literacy, Normal** – June 14-15
- **RtI Professional Development Trainings, Overview, Chicago** – June 14-15
- **Prevention Initiative (0-3) grant continuation application deadline** – June 19
- **RtI Professional Development Trainings, Overview, Mount Vernon** – June 19-20
- **RtI Professional Development Trainings, Math or Literacy, Chicago** – June 20-21
- **RtI Professional Development Trainings, Math or Literacy, Mount Vernon** – June 26-27

(Register for RtI trainings at http://maconpiattroe.org/joomla15/index.php?option=com_eventbooking&view=category&Itemid=106)

- **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
- **The 2011-12 End of Year Report deadline** – Aug. 15
- **2011-12 Teacher Service Record reporting deadline** – Aug. 15
- **Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by General Assembly in Fall ‘12** – Aug. 17
- **2011-12 High School Students Taking Community College Courses data submission deadline** – Sept. 17

Data Analysis and Progress Reporting

**2011-12 End of Year Report Open in IWAS**

The 2011-12 End of Year Report is open in IWAS for school-level data submission. All public schools operated by a district or special education cooperative, as well as other state-funded schools and regional programs, need to submit the required data. The deadline to submit is August 15, 2012.

Questions about the IWAS system should be directed to the ISBE Help Desk at (217) 558-3600, and questions about the information to be entered for this data collection should be directed to Niann-Tsyr Chern in the Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division at (217) 782-3950.

Administrator and Teacher Salary and Benefits – School Year 2012 Report

Effective Jan. 1, 2012, Sections 10-20.47 and 34-18.38 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/10-20.47 and 5/34-18.38] were amended to require school districts to 1) report administrator and teacher salary and benefits to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) by Oct. 1, and 2) present the information at a school board meeting before posting on the website of the district:

“Each school board shall report to the State Board of Education, on or before October 1 of each year, the base salary and benefits of the district superintendent [or the general superintendent of schools or chief executive officer] and all administrators and teachers employed by the school district. For the purposes of this Section, “benefits” includes without limitation vacation days,
sick days, bonuses, annuities and retirement enhancements.

Prior to this annual reporting to the State Board of Education, the information must be presented at a regular school board meeting, subject to applicable notice requirements, and then posted on the Internet website of the school district, if any."

To comply with the law, school districts are required to submit to ISBE the following data for each individual employed as an administrator and/or teacher during school year 2012:

- **Name:** Legal last name, first name, and middle name
- **Position:** Main position, i.e., District Administrator, Other Administrator, or Teacher
- **Title:** Title for main position (optional)
- **Base Salary:** Dollar amount of base salary for all positions combined
- **FTE (Full-Time Equivalency):** FTE for all positions combined, counted in hundredths
- **Vacation Days:** Number of vacation days awarded this school year
- **Sick Days:** Number of sick days awarded this school year
- **Bonuses:** Dollar value of bonuses
- **Annuities:** Dollar value of employer-provided qualified and nonqualified annuities
- **Retirement Enhancements:** Dollar value of employer-provided retirement enhancements
- **Other Benefits:** Dollar value of other benefits provided by employer

The data must be submitted via the “Administrator and Teacher Salary and Benefits” system in IWAS. The system will be open for school year 2012 data entry starting Monday, Sept. 10, and the deadline to submit is Monday, Oct. 1 (11:59 p.m.). The salary and benefits data you report will include payments made for all duties performed as a school district employee during school year 2012, on all forms of compensation received by an individual.

Through Sept. 9, district administrators and other authorized users can access the system to visit a “Preparing for Submission” page. The page contains specific information about the data to be submitted and the required file upload process. ISBE strongly suggests downloading and using the currently provided Excel spreadsheet template that includes the proper headers and cell formatting required for your file to upload. You can use the Excel spreadsheet to gather and compile your data. After saving as a CSV file, you can upload to ISBE once the system opens for data entry on Sept. 10.

Questions can be directed to Mark Hobneck in the ISBE Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division at (217) 782-3950. Please note that this is a separate data collection from the Teacher Service Record (TSR), which has different data requirements and reporting timelines.

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### Common Core Standards

**Smarter Balanced and PARCC Issue Guidance for New Instructional Technology Purchases**

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced) and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) recently issued guidance designed to inform schools and districts as they make annual instructional technology purchases. The guidelines include hardware and operating system specifications covering the vast majority of commercially available computers and tablets.

The full guidelines are available online:

- **Smarter Balanced New Hardware Purchasing Guidelines,**
- **Technology Guidance for PARCC Assessments,**
  [http://www.parcconline.org/technology](http://www.parcconline.org/technology)

“The specifications released today will help all states match their technology purchases with their needs for instructional use as well as support the types of innovative tasks and items that will be used to make up the PARCC assessment,” stated Wes Bruce, Chair of the PARCC Technology Operational Working Group, in a news release distributed this week. To read more from the press release, go to [http://www.parcconline.org/instructional-technology-purchases-guidance](http://www.parcconline.org/instructional-technology-purchases-guidance).

Smarter Balanced and PARCC are developing next-generation assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards. The Illinois State Board of Education has adopted new Math and English Language Arts standards for K-12 education known as the New Illinois State Learning Standards Incorporating the Common Core. The goal is to better prepare Illinois students for success in college and the workforce in a competitive global economy.
Funding and Disbursement Services

Deadline for Final FY 12 State and Federal Grant Amendments and End Date Extensions

Many State and Federal grant projects are approaching a June 30 end date for obligating FY 2012 grant funds. Please be advised that per Policy Statements #2 and #3 on Page 6 of the State and Federal Grant Administration Policy and Fiscal Requirements and Procedures, http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/fiscal_procedure_handbook.pdf, all State and Federal project end date extension requests and final budget amendments must be received by the agency no later than 30 calendar days prior to the end date of the project.

Final amendments for State and Federal grants with a project end date of June 30, 2012, must be received by ISBE no later than May 31, 2012. For those grants with a project end date of Aug. 31, 2012, the last day amendments will be accepted is Aug. 1, 2012. However, budget increases for State funded grant projects must be received by June 30, even if the project end date has been extended. For grant applications in the electronic Grants Management System (eGMS), the deadline is also referenced on the Program Overview page under “Amendment Due Date.”

June 2012 Regular Transportation Payment Recalculated

The State Board of Education took action in March 2012 to transfer $18,167,200 that was unobligated from other state mandated categorical programs into the Regular Pupil Transportation program. As a result of that transfer, the fourth quarter payments for Regular Pupil Transportation have been recalculated and increased proration to 77.75 percent. The fourth quarter payment for transportation will be vouchered on or before June 20, 2012, per statute.

Questions, can be directed to Jamie Johnson at jjohnson@isbe.net or (217) 782-5256.

Employer’s TRS Contribution on Federally-Funded Salary for Summer Activities

TRS requires earnings for summer work to be reported on an accrual basis. Earnings for work performed in June 2012 must be reported on the 2011-12 TRS Annual Report, even if the member isn’t paid for the June work until July or August. The 2011-12 TRS and THIS contribution rates apply to accrued earnings for work performed in June, regardless of when the June earnings are paid to the teacher.

Earnings for work performed in July and August 2012 must be reported on the 2012-13 TRS Annual Report. The 2012-13 TRS and THIS contribution rates apply to accrued earnings for work performed in July and August, regardless of when the July and August earnings are paid to the teacher.

Based on several questions from the field regarding what federal TRS rate to use for SUMMER salaries, the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) has instructed LEAs to use the new (revised) employer TRS contribution on federally-funded salaries that are providing services AFTER the new fiscal year (July 1, 2012). Below are three scenarios and what federal TRS rate to use in each scenario.

1) For federally-funded staff/teachers that have completed their assignments BY 6/30/12 - but being paid in July, August, September, 2012 = the OLD RATE applies (24.91%)
2) For federally-funded staff/teachers ACTUALLY providing services in July, August, September - and being paid in July, August, September, 2012 = the NEW RATE applies (*28.05%)
3) FY13 federal grant staff = the NEW RATE applies (*28.05%)

*This rate is preliminary and is listed for planning purposes only.

Further questions can be directed to the Teachers Retirement System at (888) 877-0890.

Nutrition

First Choice Procurement Training Scheduled for June 5-7 in Springfield

The Nutrition Programs Division of the Illinois State Board of Education is happy to announce a training opportunity related to general food service procurement planned for June 2012. Trainers with the National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) will offer the 2 1/2 day First Choice Procurement Training on June 5-7, 2012, in Springfield. Space is limited. Register at http://webprod1.isbe.net/cnscalendar/asp/eventlist.asp.

will be used for this training. The second edition updates procurement information and integrates food safety information to assist purchaser in establishing procedures to assure receipt of a safe product. Procurement requirements will be explained, including steps in purchasing, regulations, marketplace environment, product movement, bid units, specifications, brand approval, obtaining prices, monitoring cost, product testing, receiving and storage and purchasing cooperatives.

Contact the Nutrition Programs Division at (217) 782-2491 or (800) 545-7892 for questions or additional assistance.

**Innovation and Improvement**

‘Transforming Educator Evaluations in Illinois’ Webinar to Be Held on May 9


Presented by Vicki Phillips, interim director of the Educator and School Development Division and hosted by the Division of Innovation and Improvement, this webinar will explain the Performance and Evaluation Reform Act as it pertains specifically to Cohort 1, 2 and 3 – SIG 1003(g) School Improvement Grant recipients.

During this webinar, grantees will understand the legislative requirements for developing and implementing teacher and principal evaluation systems, which align with the SIG 1003(g) guidelines for systems that are rigorous, transparent, and equitable and take into account student growth as a significant factor and other factors such as multiple observation-based assessments of practice. Cohort 1 and 2 schools will find this webinar particularly important since they must pilot this instrument for all teachers and administrators as a condition of funding during the FY 2013 school year and implement during the following year. Cohort 3 schools must develop the system during FY 2013, pilot it with all teachers and administrators during FY 2014, and fully implement during FY 2015.

District and building administration, faculty and lead partners are invited to attend. Here are the details:

- **Title:** Transforming Educator Evaluations in Illinois
- **Date:** Wednesday, May 9, 2012

- **Time:** 3:15-4:15 p.m. CDT
- **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

**Assessment**

**ISBE-Funded EXPLORE/PLAN Program**

For school districts participating in the ISBE-funded EXPLORE and PLAN program, the answer documents to be scored must be received at ACT by May 14, 2012. Any test answer documents received after May 14, 2012, will not be billed to this account. Additionally, it is required that Pre-ID labels must be affixed to the answer documents.

**No Child Left Behind**

**ISBE Announces NCLB Technical Assistance Workshops**

ISBE staff from the Innovation and Improvement and External Assurance divisions invites you to attend a one-day NCLB technical assistance workshop being offered in Lombard, Rock Falls, Carbondale, Springfield and Urbana this summer. Workshop topics include the NCLB Consolidated Application (including changes due to the waiver, if applicable), External Assurance reviews, allowable use of funds and grant management and schoolwide programs. There is no fee to attend, and lunch will be provided.

Completion of the annual NCLB Consolidated Application can prove to be complicated and challenging. Specific topics will include, among others, how to report Title I set asides, calculate equitable private school allocations, enter correct fiscal function and object codes, write expenditure descriptions and itemizations, write appropriate goals and activities, provide appropriate consultation with private school officials, and determine allowable costs for targeted assistance programs and schoolwide programs. In addition, common findings from the External Assurance Division will be discussed. All approved schoolwide buildings are required to have a plan in place that covers 10 components. This plan has to be approved by the local board and evaluated annually. More details about schoolwide plans will be addressed in this workshop. There will be time for questions and answers at the end of each session.
For more information about these workshops, including instructions for registering, please visit http://www.isbe.net/grants/pdf/nclb_workshops.pdf. Registration deadline is June 1, 2012.

Response to Intervention

Illinois Response to Intervention Network Seeking External RtI Coaches

As has been shared in previous issues of the Weekly Message, the Illinois Response to Intervention (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.

In order to increase sustainability of RtI practices, a core component of the I-RtI Network is training and supporting a cadre of external coaches across the state who will, in turn, train and support district teams, internal school coaches, and school teams in their implementation of RtI. To that end, the Network is pleased to announce an opportunity for qualified individuals employed by public school districts, Regional Offices of Education (ROEs), Intermediate Service Centers (ISCs) or special education cooperatives to be trained and supported as external coaches under the Network.

For further details about this opportunity, including I-RtI Network supports to be provided and the potential benefits to and expectations of participating external coaches and their employers, please see the Request for Applications at http://www.isbe.net/RtI_plan/default.htm. ISBE believes districts, ROEs, ISCs and special education cooperatives will find the Network training and supports these individuals would receive to be an invaluable asset in strengthening and sustaining RtI implementation at the local level.

Applications are due May 30, 2012. Questions about the RFA for external coaches should be directed to the I-RtI Network Area Wide Instructional Leader for the geographic area in which the applicant’s employer is located (see Page 1 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.

Special Education

Districts Sought to Participate in Illinois LRE Data Cohort

The Special Education and Support Services division of the Illinois State Board of Education is seeking school districts to participate in an exciting opportunity to evaluate and improve the placement of students with disabilities in their appropriate learning environments.

An LRE Data Cohort is being formed to provide districts with hands-on assistance in using their data to analyze and improve placement options for students with disabilities. Districts will take part in activities that will assist them in the following actions: (1) identifying relevant data to address problems/concerns with student placements, (2) conducting data analysis to determine placement patterns, (3) utilizing data to hypothesize about the root cause for placements that are not in alignment with state goals, (4) planning for improvement, and (5) evaluating progress toward measurable goals.

There will be two LRE Data Cohorts during the 2012-13 school year. As part of this opportunity, selected districts will be asked to assemble a local team to participate in this process. The team should not exceed six members and must include an administrator, a data analyst, and representatives from both the special education and general education domains.

Districts participating in the LRE Data Cohort are required to attend three meetings over the course of a year. Districts who are participating in the Fall Cohort will meet in September and November 2012 and in September 2013. Districts who are participating in the Spring Cohort will meet in January and February 2013 and in January 2014. Specific dates and locations will be announced when the roster of participating LEAs is complete.

ISBE will additionally assign staff consultants to support participating districts’ work through conference calls, webinars, and on-site technical assistance. Through participation in this project, districts will be able to develop a data analysis plan using their own local data on educational environment factors in order to identify the root cause impacting low performance on the educational environment measure as delineated in Indicator 5A. As a part of our State Performance Plan, our goal for Indicator 5A (percent of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21 served inside the regular class 80 percent or more of the day) for the 2012-13 school year is 52 percent, and we
believe that this partnership with districts will greatly improve our chances of attaining this statewide goal. Districts whose educational environment data is lower than the Measurable and Rigorous Target by five percentage points or more will not be eligible to participate.

To volunteer and be considered for the Cohort, contact Erin Saxton at (217) 782-5589 or esaxton@isbe.net or contact Krista Hinton at (312) 814-5560 or khinton@isbe.net by May 18, 2012.

2010-11 District Special Education Profiles Available for District Administrative Review

In a continuing effort to disseminate data to local education agencies and to the public, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) will again post District Special Education Profiles on its website. District Special Education Profiles allow the reader to access all special education performance information in one location. The reader has the ability to view a district's progress toward improving results on critical performance indicators in the areas of student performance, educational environment and school completion.

For the next two weeks school district superintendents can preview their profile using their ISBE Web Application Security (IWAS) District Admin user login name at https://sec1.isbe.net/iwas/. The District Special Education Profiles system can be found under the category of Reporting on the IWAS “System Listing” page. The 2010-11 Profiles will be open to the public after the initial district superintendent review period and will be found via the ISBE Special Education Profiles site (http://webprod1.isbe.net/LEAProfile/Searchcriteria1.aspx) after May 11, 2012.

Questions regarding the District Special Education Profiles can be directed to Scott Beever or Gwen Williams at (217) 782-5589.

U.S. Department of Education

Secretary Writes Letter on Meeting the Needs of Military-Connected School Children

To help mark the Month of the Military Child, U.S. Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan issued a letter on Tuesday, April 24, to remind educators of the challenges children in military families face.

“One of the key issues facing military families is the frequent transitioning from one installation to the next. Each of these moves impacts the military-connected child – from kindergarten through high school and even college,” Duncan states in the letter, which provides resources for districts.

The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (http://www.mic3.net), which has been adopted by many states, was developed by the Council of State Governments, education experts and the Department of Defense to address common problems that affect military-connected children as a result of frequent moves and deployments.

For military-connected children with disabilities, a useful resource is the National Parent Training and Information Center–Specialized Training of Military Parents (STOMP) (www.stompproject.org).

To read Secretary Duncan’s letter in its entirety, go to http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/secletter/120424.html.

Rules and Waivers

Notice of Completed Rulemaking

Please be advised that a set of amendments recently adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education is now in effect. These rules have been posted on the agency’s Web site at www.isbe.net/rules. Please choose “Rules Currently in Effect” and scroll to Part number.

Part 30 (Programs for the Preparation of Principals in Illinois): Amends two sections of these rules addressing the deadline for principals obtaining a general administrative endorsement, and the revised Standards for Professional Learning published by Learning Forward. Affected Sections: 30.20, 30.45 Effective Date: April 23, 2012

Classroom Opportunities

Reservation Request Forms Available for Field Trips to the Capital City

Teachers planning a visit to Springfield in the 2012-13 school year can submit requests to the Springfield Illinois Convention and Visitors Bureau. Go to http://www.visitspringfieldillinois.com, click on “Group Travel Planners,” then “Youth/School Groups,” and finally “Reservation Request Form.”
Email the completed form to alison.warren@springfield.il.us or mail it to SCVB-Group Tours, 109 N. Seventh St., Springfield, IL 62701.

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**Student Opportunities**

**St. Louis Cardinals Teaming Up With Others to Host Teen Driver Safety Night**

The St. Louis Cardinals, Illinois State Police (ISP), Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Illinois Office of the Secretary of State (SOS), Ford Motor Co. and Allstate are teaming up to host Teen Driver Safety Night on Wednesday, July 25, 2012, when the Cardinals host the Los Angeles Dodgers. This special group night will emphasize teen driver safety initiatives and allow high school students, administrators, faculty and their families to purchase tickets for a discounted price.

For more information and to purchase tickets, go to http://www.cardinals.com/teendriversafety. Contact Dave Copi, ISP Operational Services Command, at david_copi@isp.state.il.us with any questions.

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**In the News**

**Assistant Principal in Palatine Receives National Recognition**

Tanya Guild, the assistant principal of New Connections Academy in Palatine, was recently named Educator of the Year by the National Association of Private Special Education Centers (NAPSEC). Tanya is being recognized for her excellent skills in every aspect of program development. She began her career as a regular education teacher then became an aide at New Connections Academy, South Campus. After earning her certificate in special education, she helped develop new programs and became a lead teacher. Tanya is currently the assistant principal.

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**Weekly News Clips**

ISBE has posted highlights from last week’s education news clips at http://www.isbe.net/news/2012/newsclips/120507.htm.

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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.