Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

The fall veto session began last week and lawmakers are scheduled to return Tuesday and finish by Thursday. We will monitor proceedings for any new action, though some of the hottest topics, such as pension reform, will not likely see any attention until the new General Assembly convenes in early January.

Last week, the U.S. Department of Education released preliminary state-by-state graduation rates using the new federal calculation regulations and I’m pleased to report that Illinois’ graduation rate, at 84 percent, ranks among the top 10 in the nation. The department’s regulations, as you know, require states and local districts to report graduation rates using a uniform, four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate to provide a more accurate measure of high school graduation and allow important comparisons of rates across states and school districts.

A regular high school diploma is the first step toward college and career success in the 21st Century global economy. While we’d all like to see our rates improve, this new data offers a realistic snapshot of our schools’ and students’ progress toward meeting this benchmark. The data can be viewed on the U.S. Department of Education’s website at http://www2.ed.gov/documents/press-releases/state-2010-11-graduation-rate-data.pdf.

In other good news, I’d like to commend Dr. Jane L. Beyer Westerhold, Superintendent of Des Plaines Community Consolidated School District 62, who has recently been selected the 2013 Superintendent of the Year by the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA). Dr. Westerhold presides over a diverse district of nearly 5,000 students attending eight elementary schools, two middle schools and one year-round school of choice for grades K through 8. Since she became superintendent in 2005, Dr. Westerhold has overseen a district that has reduced by half the achievement gap between low-income and non-low income students, implemented a new teacher evaluation program ahead of the state-mandated schedule, has maintained the highest of ISBE’s financial ratings and completed its “Master Plan” that included a $109 million school facilities upgrade and opening of a new Early Learning Center. Congratulations to Dr. Westerhold and her entire district community.

Have a great week!

Chris

Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

Please note this is not a complete list of dates and deadlines. For questions, call the Illinois State Board of Education at (866) 262-6663 or (217) 782-432 or visit the agency’s official website at http://www.isbe.net.

- School District /Joint Agreement Annual Statement of Affairs (ASA) form deadline – Dec. 15

- Certificate of Tax Levy (ISBE Form 50-02) must be certified and submitted to the county clerk by Dec. 25. (http://www.isbe.net/sfms/afr/cil.htm).
- ISBE offices closed for Christmas Day – Dec. 25
- Part 30 (Programs for the Preparation of Principals in Illinois), deadline for public comment – Dec. 31 (http://www.isbe.net/rules)
- ISBE offices closed for New Year’s Day – Jan. 1
- Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by General Assembly in Spring ’13 – Jan. 18
- ISBE offices closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day – Jan. 21
- 2012-13 Teacher Salary Study data form deadline – Feb. 1
- Noncertified Staff Salary Study survey deadline – Feb. 1
- ISBE offices closed for Lincoln’s Birthday – Feb. 12
- ISBE offices closed for Presidents’ Day – Feb. 18
- Student Health Data – Vision system report deadline – July 1
- Regional Safe Schools End of Year Data reporting deadline – July 31 (User guide for the IWAS reporting system, http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/rssp_iwas_user_guide.pdf)
- Truants’ Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP) reporting deadline – July 31 (User guide for the IWAS reporting system, ftp://help.isbe.net/webapps/taoep/pdf/TAOEP.pdf)

U.S. Department of Education

Deadline Approaching for Annual Green Ribbon Schools Award Program

Applications are due Dec. 17 for the U.S. Department of Education’s Green Ribbon Schools program. The program recognizes schools taking a comprehensive approach to greening. A comprehensive approach incorporates environmental learning with improving environment and health impacts.

Participating schools will be scored on their high achievement in the following three pillars:

- Reduce environmental impact and costs; and
- Improve the health and wellness of students and staff; and
- Provide effective environmental and sustainability education, incorporating STEM, civic skills and green career pathways.

Schools demonstrating exemplary achievement in all three pillars will receive the highest rankings.

Applications are available at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/green_ribbon. Please note: If you close the application without completing it you will not be able to go back and finish. For your convenience we suggest you use the materials at this link: http://web-dev.isbe.state.il.us/green_ribbon/ as your draft copy so you can return to it and continue working on it.

For more information, visit http://www2.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools/index.html.

Center on Innovation and Improvement

Rising Star School Continuous Improvement Plan Migration to the IIRC

The Illinois State Board of Education is pleased to announce that the migration of Continuous Improvement School Plans, housed in Rising Star on the Center on Innovation and Improvement (CII) at the Academic Development Institute (ADI), to the Illinois Interactive Report Card (IIRC) (http://iirc.niu.edu), hosted by Northern Illinois University, is on schedule to be completed the week of Dec. 17-23, 2012. During this timeframe, the IIRC system will be closed to Illinois users (district and school) who will not be able to access RS district or school level platforms. CII will also suspend all Illinois user capacity to enter data, so that the migration of the Illinois School Plans can occur. Once the migration of School Plans from CII to IIRC is started on the morning of Dec. 17, Illinois users will no longer have access to the CII school level dashboard. Only the Illinois schools that are currently using RS on CII for continuous improvement planning will have their School Plans migrated to the IIRC. Beginning on Dec. 24, all Illinois continuous improvement planning will be conducted using Rising Star on the IIRC, the State of Illinois’ official system of record.
In order to facilitate the migration for CII users, ISBE will host a series of four live webinars to highlight the most significant shifts in system functionality that new users will notice in RS on IIRC. Time during the webinars will also be provided to answer questions and to discuss the migration of data from CII to IIRC. Participation in these webinars is not mandatory for principals in order to access the RS on IIRC systems. Principals, School Process Managers, School Assigned Capacity Builders, and School Improvement Team Members who do not currently have a MyIIRC account will receive an individualized temporary password via email, so that they can immediately access the RS on IIRC system as soon as it is opened. District and School teams are encouraged to participate in one of the webinars, which are scheduled for Dec. 5-6. To register for one of the informational webinars sponsored by the Midwest Comprehensive Center identified below, go to http://registration.airprojects.org/ISBEWebinar/.

- **Wednesday, Dec. 5:** Session I, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- **Wednesday, Dec. 5:** Session II, 1-3 p.m.
- **Thursday, Dec. 6:** Session III, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- **Thursday, Dec. 6:** Session IV, 1-3 p.m.

For Rising Star planning questions, contact your Statewide System of Support Coordinator or Coach. For Rising Star on IIRC system access questions, contact Melissa Perez at the IIRC Help Desk at (815) 753-9629. For questions regarding the migration, contact Robin M. Lisboa in the ISBE System of Support and District Intervention Division at (312) 814-2220. For more detailed information regarding the migration, see the memorandum located at http://www.isbe.net/grants/pdf/rising-star-iirc110212.pdf.

### Governmental Relations

#### Election Filing Deadline Change to Allow Districts Options on Christmas Eve, NYE

For the last several months, ISBE along with other education and local government stakeholders have been working to change election law that currently requires local governments to remain open to accept election petitions on Dec. 24. PA 97-1134, which passed during the first week of the fall veto session, changed the election filing deadline to Dec. 26 and will effectuate an objection petition filing deadline of Jan. 3, 2013 (Five business days after the petition filing date).

This change will allow districts to remain closed or close early on Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve if they choose to do so. Here is a link to the public act: [http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/97/PDF/097-1134.pdf](http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/97/PDF/097-1134.pdf).

### Nutrition and Wellness Programs

#### Funding Opportunity Available to Take the HealthierUS School Challenge

The Division of Nutrition and Wellness Programs is pleased to announce a 2012 Team Nutrition and Training funding opportunity for schools to take the HealthierUS School Challenge. Fifty minigrants of $940 will be awarded to eligible schools to help them prepare to meet the HealthierUS School Challenge criteria in fiscal year 2014.


**Elk Grove School Wins Fuel Up to Play 60 Contest and Appears in National Commercial**

One of Fuel Up to Play 60’s goals is to leverage powerful partnerships to help drive mass awareness around the program and reach both youth and adult audiences. They recently partnered with Microsoft’s Xbox 360 Kinect and the NFL to sponsor the Casting Call Challenge, where students and educators were asked to share how Fuel Up to Play 60 is making a healthy difference in their school, including dairy. From taste tests to mileage clubs, weekly community health and fitness nights and more, Fuel Up to Play 60 officials were impressed with the fun and creative ways the program is being integrated into schools across the country.

After a review of more than 600 success stories, Ridge Family Center for Learning in Elk Grove was named the grand-prize winner and was featured on an Xbox 360 Kinect promotional spot in November. It was also scheduled to be shown again on Sunday, Dec. 2, on national TV during the 12 p.m. CST game on Fox TV. It was set to be featured in the last commercial break during the two-minute warning prior to halftime, bringing the total estimated viewership to more than 40 million people.
Illinois 5Essentials Survey

Webinars Scheduled on Upcoming Survey of Learning Conditions

As you may know, in February through March 2013, all schools in Illinois will implement the Illinois 5Essentials Survey, a survey that provides an opportunity for teachers, students and parents to weigh in on important elements of a school’s climate and learning conditions. This survey was designed to help inform school improvement planning efforts and to provide a more robust picture of a school’s performance beyond test scores. To help prepare for the Illinois 5Essentials Survey: Organizing Schools for Improvement, UChicago Impact, on behalf of the Illinois State Board of Education, is facilitating a three-part webinar series. The Illinois 5Essentials webinars will be administered during each stage of the survey process and will cover the following topics:

Webinar I (Through December 2012)
- Introduce the Illinois 5Essentials Survey
- Overview of the survey’s groundbreaking research
- Guided tour of the survey

Webinar II (January-March 2013)
- Description of the survey administration process
- Best practices to encourage maximum school participation

Webinar III (April-May 2013)
- Detailed explanation of the Illinois 5Essentials Survey results
- Comprehensive guide of next steps for school improvement

See below for upcoming Webinar I sessions. For more information and to register, go to https://illinois.5-essentials.org/2012/.
- Tuesday, Dec. 4, 10-10:45 a.m.
- Thursday, Dec. 6, 1-1:45 p.m.
- Monday, Dec. 10, 10-10:45 a.m.
- Wednesday, Dec. 12, 1-1:45 p.m.

Data Analysis and Accountability

SY 2013 Fall Enrollment Data

Districts that have not done so already should check their data in the Student Information System (SIS) Fall Enrollment Counts report and make any necessary corrections in SIS. (To access the report, log into SIS and click on reports, then select State Reporting.) If your data were correct on Oct. 19, 2012, you may ignore this message.

If corrections are necessary, please immediately contact the ISBE Help Desk at (217) 558-3600 and ask to speak with IBM SIS staff. They will provide direction on what you must do to ensure that your corrections are included in the final SY 2013 Fall Enrollment data. For this to occur, you must speak with them no later than Dec. 6.

College and Career Readiness

Illinois Mathematics and Science Partnerships Workshop or Institute Program FY 2013 RFP

The Illinois State Board of Education has released an RFP for a partnership comprised of a high-need LEA, IHE faculty from the departments of science, technology, engineering, and/or mathematics and other professionals from businesses, industries, not-for-profit organizations, and/or for-profit organizations with demonstrated interest in improving the quality of science teachers. The partnership may also include membership from Regional Offices of Education (ROEs) and Intermediate Service Centers (ISCs) and IHE Schools of Education. The partnership will design and implement professional learning programs that effectuate sustainable improvement in science education, specifically focused on grade 6 through grade 12.

IMSP WIP 5 will employ the vision for teaching and learning science described in the Framework for K-12 Science Education: Practices, Crosscutting Concepts and Core Ideas (Framework) as a focus for improvement in grades 6 - 12 science instruction. In a report released by the National Research Council (NRC), a new vision for K-12 science education is described. This vision identifies key scientific ideas and practices all students should learn by the end of high school. The Framework served as the foundation for development of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The Framework document is available at the following link:

The RFP is available at the following site:


For more information, contact Gil Downey at gdowney@isbe.net or (217) 782-4620.
Rules and Waivers

Changes for Public Notice Requirements and for Contracting Out Driver’s Education

Public Act 97-1025, effective January 1, makes the following changes to the waiver process (105 ILCS 5/2-3.25g):

Legal notices required for waiver applications on all subjects

1. Beginning January 1, 2013, school districts and other eligible applicants applying to the General Assembly or the State Board for any type of waiver or modification must post the following information on its website at least 14 days prior to the date of the public hearing held to take testimony regarding the waiver:
   • Date, time and place of the hearing; and
   • General subject matter of the hearing.

2. The posting of such information on the applicant’s official website is in addition to the requirement to publish a notice of the public hearing in a newspaper of general circulation at least seven days prior to the hearing.

3. In addition to 1 and 2, above, districts and other applicants applying to increase the fee charged for driver’s education (105 ILCS 5/27-24.2) must also publish the proposed amount of the fee as part of the website notice and the notice of public hearing placed in a local newspaper.

4. All other public notice requirements that apply to the waiver process remain in effect (written notice of public hearing provided at least seven days in advance to applicant’s exclusive collective bargaining agent; advance written notice of public hearing provided to State legislators representing the territory of the applicant).

Additional requirements for districts seeking to contract out portions of driver’s education (23 Ill. Adm. Code 252.20(e))

1. Beginning January 1, 2013, a district or other entity seeking a waiver of Part 252 of the State Board’s rules for contracting out of one or both portions of driver’s education must include the following information with its application:
   • Evidence that the commercial driving school (CDS) to be used by the district holds a license issued by the Secretary of State under Article IV of Chapter 6 of the Illinois Vehicle Code; and
   • Evidence that each instructor employed by the CDS to provide instruction to students served by the school district holds a valid teaching certificate, or educator license, as applicable, issued under the requirements of the School Code and the corresponding rules of the State Board of Education. Such evidence must include: the name of the instructor; the instructor’s personal identification number; birth date; and driver’s license number.

2. The requirements stated above do not apply to districts that contract out services for adaptive driver education under the provisions of 23 Ill. Adm. Code 252.20(f).

NOTE: Additional requirements for districts with approved waivers to contract out portions of driver’s education

1. Beginning January 1, 2013, districts with approved waivers to contract out either portion of driver’s education shall post a copy of the final contract between the district and commercial driving school (CDS) on the district’s website. Birth dates and driver’s license numbers for all CDS instructors included in the contract must be redacted from any public materials.

2. Information on any changes in CDS personnel providing instruction to district students under the district’s contract must be reported by the district to the State Board of Education within 15 calendar days after an instructor leaves the program or after a new instructor is hired. This notification shall include: the name of the instructor; the instructor’s personal identification number; birth date; and driver’s license number.

3. If the district has no website, then the district shall make the contract available upon request.

4. A record of all materials relative to the application for the waiver, and the contract, must be maintained by the school district and made available to parents and guardians upon request. Personally identifying information on CDS instructors must be redacted (see #1 above).
Questions on these changes to the waiver law may be addressed to waivers@isbe.net or call Winnie Tuthill at (217) 782-5270.


Office of the Governor

Gov. Quinn Launches Internet Campaign on Pension Crisis

The Office of the Governor recently launched a website aimed at educating the general public and organizations about the pension crisis. The new site, http://thisismyillinois.com, presents such resources on how the pension funding shortage came about and includes links to related Facebook, Twitter and YouTube sites.

The website also features videos by Salman Khan on pension obligations, including one specifically on Illinois. Khan is the founder of The Khan Academy, a not-for-profit organization that provides a website with a free collection of video tutorials on a wide variety of educational topics.


Grade School Students Can Participate in Holiday Cards to Troops Project

Gov. Pat Quinn is inviting elementary school students across Illinois to spread cheer to injured service members serving overseas this season by making holiday cards. The governor will hand deliver these cards to the troops at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany prior to Christmas.

Cards may be mailed to: The Office of Governor Pat Quinn, Attn: Holiday Cards to Troops Program, James R. Thompson Center, 100 W. Randolph St., Suite 16-100, Chicago, IL 60601.

General guidelines:

- Grade school students only
- Cards should be no bigger than a regular 8.5x11 piece of paper. Cards must be handmade or computer generated.
- Cards only – we are unable to accept items other than holiday cards
- Please have cards neatly stacked and bundled with rubber bands
- Include one index card on top with your school’s name and mailing address
- Holiday cards of all types are welcome (i.e. Christmas, Chanukah or Kwanzaa)

Cards can be sent to the Governor’s Office in Chicago and must be received no later than Friday, Dec. 7. For more information about the Holiday Cards to Troops project, please visit the Holiday Cards to Troops website at http://www2.illinois.gov/gov/Pages/HolidayCards.aspx or email gov.cards4troops@illinois.gov.

In Brief

Student Opportunities

- The National History Bee is an individual academic competition for elementary and middle school students. Registration ends Dec. 23. Find out more information at http://www.historybee.com.
- Nominations are being sought for the Union League Club of Chicago’s Democracy in Action Award for juniors and seniors who have demonstrated exemplary civic leadership. For more information, email publicaffairs@ulcc.org. Deadline is Jan. 11.
- High school and college students can enter the sixth annual Create-A-Greeting-Card Scholarship Contest. The deadline for entries is Jan. 16. For details, visit http://www.GalleryCollection.com.
- Illinois Partners for Clean Air have launched the Shoot for the Skies PSA Video Contest for Chicago area high school students. Students are asked to create a public service announcement about Chicago area air quality and actions to improve it. For more information, go to www.cleantheair.org. The deadline for entries is March 15.

Educator Opportunities

- The Illinois School Library Media Association/Library Book Selection Service Fund is offering a new grant related to the new Common Core
Standards for school librarians who are members of ISLMA. For more information and to apply visit http://lbssfund.org. The deadline is Dec. 15.

- The Illinois section of the American Association of Physics Teachers is seeking nominations for the annual Outstanding High School Physics Teachers Award. The deadline for nominations from administrators and fellow teachers is Dec. 31. For more information, visit http://isaapt.org.

School Opportunities

- The selection process for the 2013 Operation Teen Safe Driving program is now completed. For a complete list of participating schools, please visit www.teensafedrivingillinois.org.

Weekly News Clips

- The Illinois State Board of Education has posted highlights from recent education news clips at http://www.isbe.net/news/2012/newsclips/121203.htm.

Employment Opportunities

- An External Vacancy List for ISBE is available at http://www.isbe.net/hr/Default.htm.