Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Severe heat gripped much of the Midwest, including Illinois last week. It was a reminder of the need to pay special attention to the weather and the effect it has on us and those in our communities.

Many of our schools serve as host to summer camps and community events throughout the summer. Please take a few moments to touch base with coaches, camp directors and event organizers to make sure they are taking the necessary precautions to keep our kids safe. During times of extreme heat we need to ensure that everyone increases their fluid intake and watch for signs of heat-related stress. Symptoms of heat related illnesses may include headaches, skin that is hot to the touch, increased body temperature, loss of consciousness, seizures and irregular heartbeats.

Taking just a few extra minutes to speak and plan with staff, volunteers and others to deal with the heat can help to prevent a tragedy. Additional information and resources are available at http://www2.illinois.gov/keepcool/Pages/default.aspx.

Many of you have been going over your district and school-level results of the initial 5Essentials survey. This is the first time we have provided a statewide climate survey, as required by state law, and understandably there are questions and concerns. We’re monitoring all questions and concerns and will ensure these are carefully considered and resolved wherever possible prior to public release of the data.

I am pleased that 93 percent of Illinois districts participated with 87 percent receiving enough responses to receive at least one report. I believe this is an impressive mark for the first-time survey, and I am confident that we will see an increase in participation rates going forward. For those districts that participated in the survey, the report card will note the district and school level participation rates, for those districts that did not participate they will receive a zero on the Report Card for 5Essentials participation.

If a district suspects misuse, they can report it to us through the 5Essentials help desk by calling (866) 440-1874 or emailing 5essentials@uchicago.edu and we will investigate. If there are legitimate unresolved concerns about validity, we can suppress the scores. However, that does not mean we will suppress scores simply because a district doesn’t like the results. State law, passed in 2011, requires that we administer the learning conditions and climate survey and report results.

Finally, tomorrow we will be making the ECS system available for educators to apply, renew, register and view credential information as we work on improvements to the new ELIS system. Districts may also view educator credentials for verification purposes. Any changes made to the ECS system will be reflected in the ELIS system once it is restarted. You may access ECS tomorrow at http://www.isbe.net/ELIS/default.htm.

Thanks,

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) 782-4321 or visit the agency’s official website at http://www.isbe.net.

- 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)
- Enhance Physical Education Task Force Meeting – Aug. 2 (For more information, go to http://www.isbe.net/EPE/html/EPETF.htm.)
- Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by General Assembly in Fall 2013 – Aug. 16 (see http://www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/default.htm for new public notice requirements for all waiver requests)
- National School Lunch Week/National Take Your Parents to Lunch Day – Oct. 14-18
- National School Breakfast Week – March 3-7
- School Nutrition Employee Week – May 5-9
- Applications for the Exception to the 1.0 Percent Cap due – May 16

Illinois Center for School Improvement

Former Carlinville Principal Dick Spohr Named the Interim Director of Center

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and American Institutes for Research (AIR) are pleased to introduce Dick Spohr as interim director of the Illinois Center for School Improvement (CSI).

Spohr will draw from his local, state and national leadership experience to ensure Illinois CSI is ready for the 2013–14 school year as ISBE and AIR continue the nationwide search for a permanent director.

Spohr began his career in 1967, teaching science and mathematics at Unity High School in Mendon, Ill. From 1979 until his retirement in 2001, Spohr was principal of Carlinville High School. In 1997, Spohr was named Illinois Secondary Principal of the Year by MetLife and the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Two years later, the U.S. Department of Education named Carlinville a Blue Ribbon School.

Spohr has held leadership positions with numerous organizations, including the Illinois Reading Council, Illinois Principals Association, North Central Association, and the ISBE/IPA New Principal Mentoring Program. He also has served on the Illinois Workforce Investment Board and ISBE’s Performance Evaluation Advisory Council.

Spohr and his wife, Ruth, reside near Atwater, about 40 miles south of Springfield. They have two daughters and five grandchildren.

School Business Services

Reminder: QZAB Program for Calendar Years 2012 and 2013 Authorization (Second Round)

The Qualified Zone Academy Bond Program (QZAB) will be opened up for a second round of applications to allocate the remaining balance. The first round allocations totaled $10,190,572, leaving $4,702,428 available for the 2012 allocation and the full $14,893,000 for 2013 allocation.

The QZAB program has been extended for two more years as a result of the passage of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (P.L. 112-240). The implementing regulations provide that Illinois’ share of these allocations is $14,893 million (for calendar year 2012) and $14,893 million (for calendar year 2013), for a total of $29,786 million.

The application process is open June 24 through July 26, 2013. For additional information please go to http://www.isbe.state.il.us/construction/html/qzab.htm.

Notice of School Safety Drill Act Modification

Please be advised that PA 098-0048, effective July 1, 2013, modified the School Safety Drill Act to require that the Law Enforcement Drill (that is required to be conducted each year at each school building that houses
children), must now be conducted specifically to address a school shooting incident.

The new language requires the on-site participation of the local law enforcement agency at a mutually agreeable date between the school administrator and the appropriate local law enforcement agency. If a mutually agreeable date cannot be reached, then the school shall still hold the drill to address a school shooting incident, without the participation from the local law enforcement agency.

The School Safety Drill Act requires schools to perform a minimum of three school evacuation drills and at least one of these three drills requires the participation of the appropriate local fire department/district. In addition, the school is required to conduct one bus evacuation drill, one severe weather and shelter in place drill, and one law enforcement drill, which now must be conducted specifically to address a school shooting incident. The record and results of all six required drills should be provided to the school’s Annual Review Team prior to or during the required Annual Review.

To view the School Safety Drill Act, the Joint Rules of the State Fire Marshal and Illinois State Board of Education, the recommended minimum compliance documents, and a School Safety Plan template, visit the ISBE website at http://www.isbe.net/safety/guide.htm.

If you have any questions regarding the School Safety Drill Act, please contact Dan Johnson or Susan Weitekamp in the School Business Services Division at (217) 785-8779 or dajohnso@isbe.net or sweiteka@isbe.net.

System of Support and District Intervention

**Introductory Rising Star on IIRC Webinar Available for Local School Board Members**

As Illinois districts and schools continue to adopt the Rising Star on the Illinois Interactive Report Card (IIRC) system for improvement planning and for other key initiatives such as Title I district and school wide planning, school board members may wish to learn about the continuous improvement process and how to navigate the myiirc tool.

Therefore, an introductory Rising Star on IIRC webinar for Local School Board members, jointly developed by the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB), will be hosted by and available for viewing beginning July 1, 2013, at the Illinois Principals Association (IPA); http://www.brainshark.com/IllinoisPrincipalsAssoc/rs_board. ISBE highly recommends that school board members view this recorded webinar to gain a basic understanding of the Rising Star process and tool, which will assist local boards in approving both improvement and Title I plans for districts and schools.

Rising Star on myiirc will grant board members “read-only” access to those district and school plans. The school board president and members will NOT have access to any other Rising Star components or myiirc student data.

Please note that NOT ALL Illinois districts and schools are using Rising Star on IIRC for its improvement planning or Title I district and schoolwide plan needs, thus, the Illinois State Board of Education and the IASB advises board presidents to check with their local superintendents to determine if Rising Star on IIRC supports that district’s and/or school(s) improvement and/or Title I district plans.

**2013 Student-Level ISAT and IAA Results Now Posted to IIRC**

Individual student results for the 2013 Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) are now posted for all Illinois districts and schools on MyIIRC. The secure IIRC web portal gives school educators access to a variety of test results reports showing student scores, performance levels, subscores and growth progress, along with search, sort and compare features.

The results are posted by grade level and reflect the new ISAT cut scores introduced by the Illinois State Board of Education for 2012-2013. School and district educators can view the results by logging into MyIIRC from any IIRC page.

Administrators who have not set up a MyIIRC account should contact Valerie Lorusso at (815) 753-0978 or vlorusso@niu.edu. If you have registered but have forgotten your access, use the username or password retrieval tool located on the MyIIRC login page.

**Note:** Three-year comparisons of school and district level adjusted ISAT cut scores will be posted to MyIIRC shortly.
Nutrition and Wellness Programs

Back 2 School In-Person Workshops Planned in July and August Across the State

ISBE’s Nutrition and Wellness Programs Division, in partnership with the Illinois School Nutrition Association and the National Food Service Management Institute, will host Back 2 School Workshops at six locations in late July and early August. There is no registration fee for these workshops. Registration begins at 8 a.m. for morning sessions, and 11:45 a.m. for afternoon sessions.

Each location will host three tracks in the morning and repeat each track in the afternoon. Attendees can register for one morning workshop and/or one afternoon workshop at any of the following dates and locations. The morning sessions will be held 8:30-11:45 a.m. and the afternoon sessions are 12:15-3:30 p.m. The sessions are:

- **Track 1**: National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program Menu Planning
- **Track 2**: NSLP Administrative Topics, including certification, verification, local wellness policy, meal pricing including paid lunch equity (PLE), allowable uses of the nonprofit school food service account, procurement, and civil rights.
- **Track 3**: NFSMI – Practical Skills for Preparing Quality Meals

Dates and locations are July 30 in Lisle, July 31 in Alsip, Aug. 1 in Peoria, Aug. 6 in Champaign, Aug. 7 in Fairview Heights and Aug. 8 in Carbondale. Registration at [http://webprod1.isbe.net/cnscalendar/asp/eventlist.asp](http://webprod1.isbe.net/cnscalendar/asp/eventlist.asp).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our staff at (800) 545-7892 or via email at cnp@isbe.net.

In Brief

Professional Development

- **“Writing IEP Goals: A Workshop for School Nurses**” will be offered by the University of Illinois at Chicago from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sept. 14. Cost is $95, which includes class materials, credit of four CNE and four CPDU, and lunch. To register, visit [www.uic.edu/nursing/iheci](http://www.uic.edu/nursing/iheci). Contact Patti McDonough at pattimcd@uic.edu or (312) 413-2978 for additional information.

- Registration is under way for the **Illinois RtI Network**’s second annual statewide conference, “Integrating Initiatives and Advancing Implementation.” The conference is scheduled for Sept. 23-24 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield. For more information, visit [http://bit.ly/1dzMQ0y](http://bit.ly/1dzMQ0y).


Grant Opportunities

- Apply for a field trip grant offered by the Winnick Family Foundation to visit the **Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum**. The grants are for grades 4-12 in public and private schools and help defray costs of transportation and provide free admission. Visit [http://www.illinois.gov/alplm/museum/Learning/Documents/Winnick%20Grant%20Application.pdf](http://www.illinois.gov/alplm/museum/Learning/Documents/Winnick%20Grant%20Application.pdf) for details. The deadline is Sept. 1.

In the News

- Rockford Public Schools **District 205 school nurse Linda Kimel** was named the 2013 Outstanding School Nurse for Students With Special Needs during the National Association of School Nurses annual conference, which was held June 26-30 in Orlando, Fla. Kimel was presented with a plaque during a ceremony at a meeting of the Special Needs School Nurses Special Interest Group.

Weekly News Clips


Employment Opportunities

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