Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

At last week’s Illinois State Board of Education meeting, Board members approved changes to rules dealing with who may perform medical reviews for the purposes of providing special education services. Earlier this year, stakeholders asked us to review these rules, once again, because compliance with the rules was proving to be a challenge for districts as they faced shrinking budgets, additional mandates from the state and an insufficient supply of certified school nurses.

We brought both sides together, administrators and nurses, and worked with them to put together a plan to ensure that students’ medical needs are considered fully in the individualized education program process, while also allowing districts the ability to meet those needs for all students in a way that takes into consideration the supply of CSN’s and the reality of our state financial situation.

The change approved by the Board delays implementation of the rules until July 1, 2016, and allows opportunities other than educator licensure (i.e., training, testing) be provided for currently employed staff to become qualified to conduct all components of the medical review, including making recommendations concerning educational accommodations, modifications and interventions. I believe this compromise makes sense and is in the best interest of students. It now goes to the legislative Joint Committee on Administrative Rules, where they may let the Board’s recommendations stand or suggest other changes.

I also want to make you aware that we will be seeking a supplemental appropriation during the fall veto session. While we did see a nearly $140 million increase in the FY 14 education budget, several specific line items were cut. We are working to restore funds for the writing portion of the grade 11 state assessment, District Consolidation Costs, Truant Alternative and Optional Education Program and the Regional Safe Schools program.

Finally, I wanted to make you aware that the Teachers’ Retirement System voted last week to lower the future employer retirement contribution rate that school districts must pay for all TRS covered employees whose salaries are funded by the federal government.

Under state law, TRS has the authority to set the contribution rate and in the past has tied the federal rate to the contribution rate paid by state government. However, since 2004, the state rate has increased considerably because of the growing unfunded liability carried by TRS. Currently, about 80 percent of the state’s contribution rate is dedicated to paying off the unfunded liability and only 20 percent is dedicated to paying for the current year’s pension costs.
The TRS Board’s decision takes effect during FY 15 and means the employer contribution rate school districts must pay for federally-funded employees in TRS will decrease from the FY 14 rate of 35.41 percent of each employee’s salary to approximately 7 percent of salary.

Thanks and have a great week.

Chris

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**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](http://www.isbe.net).*

- ISBE offices closed for Labor Day – Sept. 2
- Title I Directors Pre-Conference and Conference – Sept. 16-18 ([http://www.iatd.net/](http://www.iatd.net/))
- ISBE offices closed for Columbus Day – Oct. 14
- National School Lunch Week/National Take Your Parents to Lunch Day – Oct. 14-18
- Thomas Lay Burroughs Award for the State's Outstanding School Board President nomination deadline – Oct. 18 ([http://www.isbe.net/pdf/burroughs_award.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/pdf/burroughs_award.pdf))
- ISBE offices closed for Veterans Day – Nov. 11
- ISBE offices closed for Thanksgiving – Nov. 28-29
- ISBE offices closed for Christmas – Dec. 25
- ISBE offices closed for New Year’s Day – Jan. 1
- ISBE offices closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day – Jan. 20
- ISBE offices closed for Lincoln’s Birthday – Feb. 12
- ISBE offices closed for Presidents’ Day – Feb. 17
- 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

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New Illinois Learning Standards

**Registration Under Way for ISBE Model Math Curriculum K-12 Update Webinar**

The Illinois State Board of Education with hold the “Model Math Curriculum K-12 Update Webinar” webinar from 3-4 p.m. Aug. 29, 2013. Presenters include Jennie Winters, Diane Beedy and Roxanne Filson.

This webinar is an opportunity for Illinois educators to learn about the ISBE Model Mathematics Curriculum Resources that have been recently created or updated. Participants in this webinar will learn about:

- Newly developed scope-and-sequences and units for grades K-5.
- An updated scope-and-sequence and units for Math 1 based upon PARCC assessment timelines.
- New resources created for assessment and lessons for grades K-8 and High School Integrated Math 1, 2 and 3.

Registration is online at [https://www.gotomeeting.com/register/248093712](https://www.gotomeeting.com/register/248093712).

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IATD

**Annual Title I Directors Conference Set for Next Month in Springfield**

The Illinois Association of Title I Directors (IATD) in cooperation with the Illinois State Board of Education will be hosting the annual Title I Directors Conference on Sept. 17-18, 2013.
New to the conference this year is a pre-conference session for new Title I directors. This pre-conference session on the afternoon of Monday, Sept. 16, will provide new directors an overview of the legislation and important aspects to administering a successful program, as well as provide support with the NCLB Consolidated Grant application process.

To view the draft agenda and to register for the conference, please go to the IATD website at http://www.iatd.net/. The deadline for hotel room reservations at the Crown Plaza Springfield is Aug. 26.

Student Opportunities

ISBE Accepting Nominations for U.S. Presidential Scholar Program

The Illinois State Board of Education is seeking candidates for the U.S. Presidential Scholar Program. This program honors outstanding high school students based on their excellent scholarship and promise of future success. ISBE is encouraging principals to nominate students who might not otherwise be nominated through the current SAT/ACT or arts recognition process.

All high school seniors graduating between January and June 2014 who are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents, who attend public, parochial or independent schools, as well as those who are home-schooled, are eligible. The 2014 U.S. Presidential Scholars will be selected by the Commission on Presidential Scholars and will receive the Presidential Scholars Medallion and an expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., in June.

When submitting a student for consideration, the nomination letter should address the following questions:

1. What about the student makes him or her stand out as having outstanding scholarship?

2. What special challenges or hurdles has this student overcome while still achieving high academic success?

Please submit nominations to ISBE, Public Information, 100 N. First St., Springfield, IL 62777. Nominations must be received by Nov. 1, 2013.

For additional information about the program, visit www.ed.gov/psp.

Applications Sought for U.S. Senate Youth Program and Hearst Scholarship

Information for the U.S. Senate Youth Program and Hearst Scholarship is available online at http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/hearst.htm. High schools will receive a mailing from the state superintendent concerning the program and scholarship in mid August.

The first phase of this program brings two students from each state to Washington, D.C., March 8-15, 2014, to participate in the U.S. Senate Youth Program. Delegates will be immersed in Washington activities throughout their week-long stay. The William Randolph Hearst Foundation will pay all expenses for the week, including transportation, hotel and meals.

The second phase awards both recipients a college scholarship of $5,000. The Hearst Foundation requires that to obtain scholarship funds, a student must, within two years after high school graduation, enroll at an accredited U. S. college or university. The student is encouraged to include courses in government or related subjects to his or her undergraduate program.

In addition to the application in the August packet, applications can be obtained on the ISBE website at http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/42-60-hearst.pdf. A hard copy must be received by the Illinois State Board of Education no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 4, 2013.

More information on this program can be obtained at http://www.hearstfdn.org/ussyp/, or contact Sally Veach, ISBE principal education consultant, at (217) 782-5589 or sveach@isbe.net.

College and Career Readiness

Illinois Students Bring Home Awards From National Occupational Skills Contest

Students from Illinois high schools and college technical education program brought home 11 medals from the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference held earlier this summer in Kansas City, Mo. High school division winners include:

- Marshall Farthing, Stephen McKracken and Nicholas Messina of Fox Valley Career Center in Maple Park, gold medallion, Community Service
• Brendan Mittman of Oswego (Ill.) High School, Silver Medallion, Cabinetmaking.

• William Wolff of Lake County Schools Technology Campus in Grayslake, silver medallion, Job Skills Demonstration A

• Britney Ford of Bloomington (Ill.) Area Career Center, bronze medallion, cosmetology

The SkillsUSA Work Force Ready System recognizes students for excellence in occupational training; it assesses and documents the entry-level technical proficiency and cumulative experiences of candidates.

For more information, visit www.skillsusa.org. To view the complete list of medalists, go to http://www.skillsusa-register.org/rpts/EventMedalists.aspx and select Illinois.

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**Thomas Lay Burroughs Award**

**ISBE Seeks Nominations for Award Honoring State’s Outstanding School Board President**

The Illinois State Board of Education invites you to nominate your local board president for the Thomas Lay Burroughs Award for the State’s Outstanding School Board President.

This award was created in 1991 in memory of the late ISBE chairman and is presented each November at the IASB/IASA/IASBO conference in Chicago. This year the conference will be held Nov. 23-24, and the award will be presented Sunday morning on Nov. 24.

Nominations should be submitted as indicated below by close of business on Friday, Oct. 18, 2013. You may e-mail your nomination to Katherine Galloway at kgallowa@isbe.net.

Please indicate in the subject line of the email: Burroughs Nomination. If you have any questions call Katherine Galloway or Marsha Moffett at (217) 557-6626. For nomination information and format please go to http://www.isbe.net/pdf/burroughs_award.pdf.

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**Special Education Services**

**ISBE Seeking Volunteers for Illinois LRE Data Cohort 4**

The Illinois State Board of Education’s Special Education Services Division is looking for districts whose administrators are interested in participating in a unique data analysis partnership with the agency. The Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Data Cohort was conceived to provide districts with hands-on collaborative assistance in examining and understanding their placement data in order to enhance placement options for students with disabilities. Selected districts will work with ISBE technical assistance mentors on modules that guide the process and will be supported through conference calls, webinars, seminars and on-site technical assistance to gather, analyze and improve placement data. Participating districts will assemble an administrative level team to participate in the cohort over the span of approximately one year. Details and specific dates for LRE Data Cohort 4 can be found at http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/lre-data-cohort.htm.

To volunteer and be considered for the cohort, please complete the form located at http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/lre-dc-commit-form.pdf by Oct. 1, 2013. If there are any questions about the LRE Data Cohort, please contact Laura Quimby at (217) 782-5589 or lquimby@isbe.net.

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**Illinois Virtual School**

**IVS Announces New Credit Recovery Option for Schools**

IVS is the Illinois State Board of Education’s statewide virtual school. The IVS program is administered through the Peoria County Regional Office of Education, a member of the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools (IARSS).

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW:** The Credit Recovery Solution includes prescriptive pretests to identify what a student has learned previously and areas of deficiency for each unit of content. An individual learning plan is automatically generated based on pretest results below 80 percent. This will direct each student to the specific material that has yet to be mastered. A final course assessment covering all content is used to determine overall mastery of the course. A student must achieve a minimum mastery level of 70 percent on the final assessment to be considered passing.

Each course has an Illinois certified instructor acting as the course manager responsible for grading identified key assessments and completing the student when course mastery is reached or the course end date is reached. Ongoing support for the student will be determined by the local school.
The new solution will be available October 2013.

The cost is $70 per semester credit recovery course with 10 weeks to complete.

**COURSES:** English I and II, American Literature, British Literature, Algebra I and II, Geometry, Biology, Chemistry, U.S. History and World History.

For more information, contact IVS at (309) 676-1000, ext. 1052 or email the IVS director of operations at bclosen@ilvirtual.org.

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**Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development**

**Instructional Excellence in Early Childhood Classrooms Conference Held Last Month**


As a part of implementation of the next phase of Illinois’ Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) State Plan, the conference caused participants to think more deeply about what it takes to move the needle on a program so that it becomes not just a good program but a great program, reaching the highest outcomes for young children. The focus was on all programs that serve preschool-aged children and families — child care, state funded Preschool for All, and Head Start.

Themes that emerged from the presentations and small group conversations included a need for embedded professional development, professional learning communities, coaching and protected planning time for teachers to reflect and intentionally use data. Using information and feedback from conference participants, the OECD will work over the coming months with the Illinois State Board of Education and other public and private partners to define what is meant by “instructional excellence” in early childhood for our state and determine how to maximize current resources while also supporting areas needing assistance. The OECD expects to build sustainable capacity for quality by creating supports for instructional leaders and coaches across our state.

For more information on ISBE’s work to support instructional excellence in early childhood, please contact the Division of Early Childhood Education, (217)524-4835.

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**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/ihec](http://www.uic.edu/nursing/ihec). Contact Patti McDonough at pattimcd@uic.edu or (312) 413-2978 for additional information.


**Educator Awards**

Student Opportunities

- The Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth is sponsoring a new competition for aspiring scientists ages 13-18. For more information about the CTY Cogito Research Awards, which will provide funds and mentors to up to 10 students, visit https://cogito.cty.jhu.edu/?p=39168.

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 for details. The deadline is Sept. 1.

Weekly News Clips


Employment Opportunities

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