Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Last week ACT released data on the graduating class of 2013 that showed Illinois students rank second with a composite score of 20.6 out of the nine states that test all of their graduates, only behind Utah (20.7). The national average was 20.9, but in most other states only those students that are college-bound take the test.

There were several changes to this year’s ACT state reports. This year ACT included for the first time scores from students who were allowed extended time on the ACT. This inclusion resulted in an additional 15,481 student scores included in Illinois’ average. If we compare last year’s scores to this year and exclude those students added in this year, Illinois actually beats the national average for the first time since we became a universal ACT state with a 21.1, compared to a 21 for the national average. That 21.1 is also the highest composite score since we went to universal testing.

In terms of college readiness, Illinois has improved from 22 percent of students meeting all four subject area benchmarks in 2009 to 25 percent in 2013. This year ACT made changes to the science and reading benchmarks, lowering science by a point and increasing reading by a point. English and math benchmarks remained the same.

The Regional Offices of Education are scheduled to be consolidated to 35 total offices on July 1, 2015. While the Regional Superintendent’s Association did complete a map, regional board decisions to match the map did not occur by the June 30, 2013, deadline. As such, the Illinois State Board of Education is required to become involved in the process. The legislation dictates that ISBE cannot order additional consolidations until Jan. 1, 2014, which poses several problems with relation to local elections. We have been in contact with the State Board of Elections, however, and they agree with our interpretation of the law.

Many of you have asked if we intend to honor Regional Board decisions. Certainly we will make every effort to honor those agreements toward the end goal of 35 regions.

Sample draft items have been released for the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) in English language arts and Mathematics. The sample items will give you an idea of how PARCC is developing the assessments to measure content and skills mastery aligned to the Common Core. You may access the sample items at [http://www.parcconline.org/samples/item-task-prototypes](http://www.parcconline.org/samples/item-task-prototypes). Additional items will be available in October as the consortium continues to work on this new assessment system.

I also wanted to let you know about a couple of key appointments to agency senior staff. Amy Jo Clemens has been named Assistant Superintendent for Innovation and Improvement. She replaces Monique Chism.
Amy Jo brings many years of experience as an Illinois educator and has served as the Regional Superintendent of Lee-Ogle Counties for the past eight years. Dr. Jason Helfer has accepted the position of Assistant Superintendent for Teacher and Leader Effectiveness, recently vacated when Linda Tomlinson retired in May. Jason is currently employed as the Department Chair for Educational Studies at Knox College in Galesburg. He is an Illinois certified teacher with 19 years of K-12 and higher education experience in Illinois and Texas and has served on several ISBE committees including the Licensure Board.

Finally, this week marks the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington and the historic, “I Have a Dream,” speech by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. I know that you are incredibly busy as the new year begins, but if time allows please consider taking sometime to discuss this momentous event in our nation’s history. The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum has some materials that I encourage you to review: http://civilrights.jfklibrary.org/Media-Assets/The-March-on-Washington-for-Jobs-and-Freedom.aspx.

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) 782-4321 or visit the agency’s official website at 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/)
- U.S. Senate Youth Program and Hearst Scholarship application deadline – Oct. 4 (http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/42-60-hearst.pdf)
- 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)
- 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
- Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by General Assembly in Spring 2014 – Friday, January 17, 2014 (See http://www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/default.htm for new public notice requirements for all waiver requests.)
- 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

Upcoming Webinar

Register for ‘Introduction to the Growth Model: Understanding the Value Table’

ISBE will the present the webinar “Introduction to the Growth Model: Understanding the Value Table” on Sept. 5. Space is limited. Reserve a webinar seat now at https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/383358425.

During this webinar, participants will receive an overview of the value table to measure growth for schools and districts. The process for selecting the model, the construction of the value table and the value table itself will be presented. Additionally, example school and districts growth metric will be presented.
• **Title:** Introduction to the Growth Model: Understanding the Value Table

• **Date:** Thursday, Sept. 5, 2013

• **Time:** 1:30-2:30 p.m. CDT

• **System Requirements:** Windows 7, Vista, XP or 2003 Server required for PC-based attendees. Mac OS X 10.6 or newer required for Macintosh-based attendees. For mobile attendees, iPhone, iPad, Android phone or Android tablet is required.

---

**Assessment**

**Sign Up for Listserv to Receive Up-to-Date Information About Illinois State Testing**

To subscribe to the Student Assessment listserv, send a blank email to assessment@isbe.net with the word “SUBSCRIBE” in the subject line. The listserv will provide members with the most up-to-date information regarding Illinois state testing. For more information, visit [http://www.isbe.state.il.us/assessment/htmls/listserv.htm](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/assessment/htmls/listserv.htm).

---

**Illinois Interactive Report Card**

**Rising Star Continuous Improvement Plan Service Upgrade Begins on Aug. 29**

ISBE is pleased to announce the new Rising Star Single School District Continuous Improvement Plan is being made available for single school districts effective Sept. 3, 2013. The plan integrates the Rising Star District and School Continuous Improvement platforms into one planning tool. The tool will be available on the Illinois Interactive Report Card (IIRC) ([http://iirc.niu.edu](http://iirc.niu.edu)), along with the other continuous improvement planning tools.

**Please note:** In order to complete the launch of the single school district plan, the Rising Star System will be closed for a service upgrade beginning 5 p.m. Aug. 29. Service will resume no later than 8 a.m. on Sept. 3.

During this service upgrade, the IIRC system will be closed to all Rising Star users (district and school). Rising Star planners are therefore encouraged to print copies of any documents or materials they anticipate needing during this brief timeframe.

Beginning on Sept. 3, all Single School District continuous improvement planning will be conducted using the new, integrated Single School District Rising Star plan. At that time, any information previously entered by single school districts into the separate district and school improvement plans will be combined automatically into the new Single School District Plan. No additional data entry will be required.

In order to facilitate this system enhancement, ISBE will host two live webinar opportunities to highlight the most significant shifts in system functionality for Single School District users. During the webinars, time will be provided to answer questions and to discuss the integration of data from District and School Plans. While participation in these webinars is not mandatory in order to access the newly integrated Single School District continuous improvement plan, Single School District teams are encouraged to participate in one of the webinars, which are scheduled for Sept. 11.

Please use one of the corresponding links below to register for one of these informational webinars hosted by the Illinois Principals Association.

**Session I:** 9:30-11:30 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 11, [https://www4.gotomeeting.com/register/620676535](https://www4.gotomeeting.com/register/620676535)

**Session II:** 1-3 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 11, [https://www4.gotomeeting.com/register/818982279](https://www4.gotomeeting.com/register/818982279)

For Rising Star on IIRC system access questions, contact Melissa Perez at the IIRC Help Desk at (815) 753-9629 or melissamperez@niu.edu. For Rising Star on IIRC continuous improvement planning process questions, please contact Lisa Murray in the System of Support and District Intervention Division at lmurray@isbe.net.

---

**Nutrition and Wellness Programs**

**ISBE Plans Sept. 6 Webinar on New USDA Interim Final Rule**

On June 28, 2013, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued an interim final rule entitled “Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School as Required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.”

The competitive foods portion of the rule takes effect on July 1, 2014, the start of school year 2014-2015, as required by Section 208 (Sec. 208) of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

Staff with ISBE’s Nutrition and Wellness Programs Division will provide an overview webinar on this topic 10-11:30 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 6. Register at https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/423694593. If you are unable to attend the webinar at this time, it will be recorded and available on our website approximately one week after the live webinar date. If you need to reach our staff, please call (800) 545-7892 or email cnp@isbe.net.

**Illinois Virtual School**

**IVS Offers Six World Languages in its FY 2014 Course Catalog**

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).

Offering a wide variety of foreign language options for students can be difficult, especially for rural districts. If you district is struggling to find teachers for current offerings like Spanish, consider offering foreign language online courses through IVS. The cost is $250 per semester course. IVS provides a highly qualified, Illinois licensed teacher to facilitate the course; standard-aligned content and instruction delivered through a Learning Management System; and immediate access to student progress through the IVS student information system.

IVS teachers establish and maintain a connection with students. This begins with a welcome email or phone call before the course begins and continues with personalized feedback and course assistance as needed. Teachers also work with schools and parents/guardians to support students.

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE COURSES OFFERED THROUGH IVS:**
- Arabic I and II (Semester 1 and 2)
- French I, II, III and IV (Semester 1 and 2)
- German I, II, III and IV (Semester 1 and 2)
- Latin I and II (Semester 1 and 2)
- Mandarin Chinese I and II (Semester 1 and 2)
- Spanish I, II, III and IV (Semester 1 and 2)

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

**New Illinois Learning Standards**

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

The Illinois State Board of Education will 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.

**Illinois Association of Title I Directors**

**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.

School Health Issues

Free Epinephrine Auto-Injectors Available to Qualifying Schools

The Illinois Emergency Epinephrine Act, PA 97-0361, allows schools to stock a supply of epinephrine auto-injectors, authorizes schools to enter into an agreement with a physician to provide the school with a prescription to obtain the auto-injectors, and gives school nurses (RN) the power to administer the epinephrine to any student whom the registered nurse believes is having an anaphylactic reaction.

Mylan Pharmaceuticals has agreed to provide free epinephrine auto-injectors (Epi-Pen) again this school year to all schools that have a standing order for this emergency drug. The program requirements are: 1) school must have a doctor’s order for the use of this drug and 2) a representative of the school or district must sign the order form. The instructions and order forms can be accessed at www.epipen4schools.com.

The Illinois Attorney General's office and other agencies and associations last year produced the “Physician’s Toolkit,” which among other objectives, can assist a physician in writing the school prescription. The toolkit also answers physician questions on liability. Visit http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/children/Physicians_epinephrineToolkit.pdf.

Reminder: Modifications to HIPAA Rule Regarding Immunization Information

This is a reminder about the modifications to the HIPAA rule that occurred in January 2013 that enables healthcare providers who are HIPAA covered entities to share immunization information to schools with verbal/email

Nursing Resource Consortium to Address Sickle Cell Disease

September is National Sickle Cell Disease Awareness Month. In Illinois, every year, about 100 infants are diagnosed with a form of sickle cell disease, and about one of every 375 African-American children is affected by sickle cell disease, making it one of the most prevalent genetic diseases in the U.S.

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services invites all personnel working with students who have sickle cell disease or trait to learn more about the medical, educational and social/emotional management of the disease by attending the sixth annual Nursing Resource Consortium to be held at three sites on Sept. 11. Speakers include a physician from the University of Illinois, an ISBE consultant for school health, and sickle cell disease clinical specialists.

Videoconference locations: Chicago, James R. Thompson Center, 100 W. Randolph, Atrium Room 2nd floor #2-025; Rockford, 4607 Colt Road; Springfield, Department of Natural Resources, 2 SE. Rock River 14 (1 Natural Resource Way Gate 7, accessible via Taintor Road at State Fair Grounds).

RSVP to alejandro.x.franc@illinois.gov by Sept. 9. Continuing education units are available. The program begins at 9 a.m. and concludes at 3 p.m. No charge. Bring your own lunch (or purchase during break) for a working lunch.

Thomas Lay Burroughs Award

Nominations Sought for Award Honoring 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 kgallow@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.

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.

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.

Office of Early Childhood Development

Instructional Excellence in Early Childhood Classrooms Conference Held Last Month

The Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD) hosted the Instructional Excellence in Early Childhood Classrooms Conference on July 11. The conference included more than 100 early childhood researchers, practitioners and policy-makers across different programs in Illinois and featured eight research presentations on instructional excellence followed by participant small group discussions. For a document on “Instructional Excellence in Early Childhood Classrooms Feedback” from the conference, visit http://www2.illinois.gov/gov/OECD/Documents/What%27s%20New/ECE%20Conference%20Report.pdf.

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.

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. 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.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will present the webinar “Managing Asthma in Schools” from 1-2 p.m. CDT on Tuesday, Sept. 24. For more information and to register, go to https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/506376682.
- The 15th annual Conference on Illinois History is set for Sept. 26-27 in Springfield. The conference, which is sponsored by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation, includes


**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](https://cogito.cty.jhu.edu/?p=39168).

- Registration is under way for the annual [First Freedom Student Competition](http://www.alplm.org/education/newsclips/130826.htm). 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.alplm.org/education/newsclips/130826.htm](http://www.alplm.org/education/newsclips/130826.htm) for details. The deadline is Sept. 1.

**Grant Opportunities**

- Apply for a field trip grant offered by the Winnick Family Foundation to visit the [Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum](http://www.alplm.org/education/newsclips/130826.htm). 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.alplm.org/education/newsclips/130826.htm](http://www.alplm.org/education/newsclips/130826.htm) for more information.

**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).