Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Last week the Board met in Normal for its annual strategic planning session and September Board meeting. Board members decided to postpone voting on the changes to rules that define special education and general education class size limits and classroom student composition (70/30). They felt they needed additional time to study the issue and meet with stakeholders. They will consider the rules at a later time.

As part of the strategic planning session, the Board spent considerable time discussing the state’s education funding system. In support of the Senate Education Funding Advisory Committee’s work to develop a new education funding formula, the Board asked Augenblick, Pallaich and Associates to develop a “white paper” as a starting point to provide background and context on our state’s system to fund education. Board members received a presentation on APA’s work and have requested some additional edits to the document before it’s final. Additionally, the Board is working to prepare a statement to accompany the white paper to provide guiding principles as we review any possible changes to our current formula.

During the fall veto session will be advancing two Board initiatives: licensure for professional development (i.e. improving the quality of professional development providers) and a supplemental funding request. During the spring session we will advance legislative proposals focused on the Multiple-Measures Index (i.e. creating multiple ways to define school success to match our waiver application), district intervention (i.e. establishing clear criteria for state intervention and reducing the overall number of districts requiring local board removal), charter school requirements (i.e. requiring charters to meet the same state special education requirements as public schools), data streamlining and eliminating obsolete and duplicative requirements in the school code.

Following last week’s meeting several Board members toured the Regional Alternative School in Bloomington. Funding for regional safe schools was cut by the General Assembly in the FY 14 budget and restoring the line item to FY 13 levels will be included in the supplemental request we make to the General Assembly during the fall veto session. We will also seek to restore funding in the supplemental request for school consolidations, the Truant’s Alternative and Optional Education Program and we are monitoring special education funds to ensure we don’t fall below our federally required “Maintenance-of-Effort.”

Finally, I want to remind principals to enter your building-specific information that will allow you to tell a more complete story about your school. This year, the New School Report Card will incorporate principal-submitted information about courses, programs, awards and activities. You may submit this customizable
information through the Illinois Interactive Report Card site and the deadline to submit is September 30. Additional information on how to submit your information follows in the newsletter.

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](http://www.isbe.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))
- FY14 Supplemental General State Aid Plan deadline – Oct 30
- 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](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

---

**Funding and Disbursements Division**

**Fiscal Year 2014 Supplemental General State Aid Plans Due Oct. 30**

Per Section 18-8.05(H)(3) of the School Code, school districts with an average daily attendance of more than 1,000 are required to submit a Supplemental General State Aid (SGSA) plan to the Illinois State Board of Education on or before Oct. 30 for the use of the funds resulting from the supplemental General State Aid for the improvement of instruction in which priority is given to meeting the education needs of disadvantaged children.

The SGSA plan for qualifying districts must be filed electronically via the ISBE IWAS System. The SGSA system is now open for fiscal year 2014. Critical information is pre-populated for each district. A brief narrative is required along with a budget breakdown of the SGSA funds. SGSA funds may be expended in various ways but must primarily benefit disadvantaged, low-income students that generate the district funding without supplanting other funds already in place.

If you have questions regarding the SGSA program, please contact Jim Mathes ([jmathes@isbe.net](mailto:jmathes@isbe.net)) in the Division of Funding and Disbursements at (217) 782-5256.

---

**The New School Report Card**

**Principals Asked to Enter Additional School Information by Monday, Sept. 30**

This year, the Illinois State Board of Education will be unveiling an improved design of the School Report Card. The new report card aims to be more informative
and accessible, providing a more complete set of school information and performance measures to a wider audience.

Since test scores do not tell a school’s complete story, the School Report Card will incorporate principal-submitted information about courses and programs so that leaders in your district can paint a more complete picture of their school climate and learning conditions on the School Report Card. Principals can log into the MyIIRC portal at the Illinois Interactive Report Card or visit http://iirc.niu.edu/MyIIRC/ to enter their school’s additional information. Principals who do not already have access to MyIIRC will need to register using a unique school access code provided by their district superintendent. Superintendents should have received an email from NIU with their schools’ access codes. They can request access codes for principals at any time by emailing vlorusso@niu.edu or calling (815) 753-0978. In order to ensure all information is reflected on the School Report Card, principals should complete their submission by Sept. 30.

The new School Report Card will be an important tool to all districts, but is particularly important for Race to the Top districts. In the Race to the Top expectations, the new School Report Card is an important resource for fostering partnerships with municipal and civic leaders and community organizations, as well as building parent engagement. Of course, these goals are not limited to Race to the Top districts – any district seeking to engage with these communities will find the redesigned report card to be a valuable resource.

The Illinois State Board of Education encourages principals to take this new opportunity to highlight their school’s strengths and ensure the State Report Card tells their school’s whole story.

Title Grant Administration Division

Fiscal Year 2014 Allocations and Schoolwide Consolidation Flexibility

ISBE is introducing the option of consolidation of funds to increase the flexibility in use of these funds to support comprehensive reform work as described in the Title I, Part A schoolwide program plan. Schoolwide buildings will have the option to consolidate their Title I, Part A and Title II, Part A funds. Once these funds are consolidated, the traditional supplement not supplant test is replaced with a more flexible method of determining allowable expenditures, providing for a truly comprehensive reform strategy to be put in place within schoolwide building.

ISBE is announcing this new flexibility in conjunction with the release of Title I and II allocations so that districts need only amend their NCLB Consolidated Application once to avail themselves of both.

A joint live webinar will be held 10 a.m. to noon on Oct. 3 to allow you to ask questions on either the allocation release or the increased flexibility. To register, go to https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/622303817. Changes to the NCLB Consolidated Application will be made following the webinar.

Please review the one pager for more information which can be found on the ISBE website at http://www.isbe.net/grants/html/title1_schoolwide-programs.htm. An e-bulletin and the PowerPoint for the webinar will be posted in the coming days.

Assessment Division

National Career Readiness Certificate and WorkKeys Locating Information on IWAS

For the first time in spring 2013, ISBE provided the ACT WorkKeys Locating Information test. Students who earned an eligible score on this test and the two WorkKeys tests that are part of PSAE Day 2, are eligible to receive ACT’s National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC). ISBE is making these two-page certificates available in the Student Information System (SIS).

To access NCRC and WorkKeys Locating Information data in SIS:
1. Login to SIS via IWAS.
2. Click the “Reports” link on the SIS homepage.
3. Click the “Plus” sign next to “Assessments” to expand the selection.
4. Choose which report(s) you would like. Descriptions are below:
   a. To view a roster that includes all students with NCRC information, click on “Detail” for “National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) Level.”
   b. To view a summary of all students’ NCRC results, click on “Summary” for “National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) Level.”
   c. To access printable versions of students’ two-page NCRCs, click on “Detail” for “National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) Level.”
NCRC Matching: ACT uses five detailed matching criteria from the three WorkKeys tests (Applied Mathematics, Reading for Information and Locating Information) to produce NCRCs. Specifically, first name, last name, month of birth, day of birth and state ID. If any of these five criteria did not match exactly when answer documents were submitted for scoring, ACT was not able to make a match and award a certificate. If you believe that a student should have earned this NCRC, please contact ACT directly at (800) 967-5539, and they will be able to assist you. Students must earn a valid minimum level score of 3 on each test to be eligible for this NCRC. The use of certain accommodations prohibits WorkKeys scores from being NCRC eligible (e.g., Spanish video DVD use does not allow scores to be eligible for NCRC).

For more information about ACT’s NCRC, see http://www.act.org/certificate/about.html.

WorkKeys Locating Information File: If the answer document for Locating Information contained a Pre-ID label, score data are matched to the corresponding record in the Assessment Correction file. If student demographic data were gridded and different from what is stored in the Assessment Correction file, the gridded information is displayed in the last two columns so the differences are available.

For more information about ACT’s WorkKeys Locating Information test, see http://www.act.org/workkeys/assess/locate/.

If you require technical assistance, after reviewing the online help, please contact our Call Center at (217) 558-3600 during our business hours: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Nutrition and Wellness Programs Division

Upcoming Trainings Announced on the New Administrative Review Process

The Administrative Review is an assessment conducted by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) of the School Food Authority’s (SFA) administration of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP) and other school nutrition programs. The objectives of the Administrative Review are to determine whether the SFA meets program requirements, provide technical assistance, secure any needed corrective action, and assess fiscal action, if applicable.

ISBE must conduct Administrative Reviews of all SFAs participating in the NSLP and/or SBP at least once during each three-year review cycle period. The first three-year review cycle begins SY2013-2014. A list of tentative SFAs that will be reviewed during SY2013-2014 as well as resource materials related to the Administrative Review are available online.

Beginning with SY2013-2014, the format of the Administrative Review will be updated. While the overall topics will remain similar from prior reviews, in some instances the manner in which the topic is reviewed will change and some new topics may be added. In order to provide our SFAs an overview of the new Administrative Review, including all USDA checklists and resources, ISBE Nutrition and Wellness Programs Division staff will host in-person, as well as a webinar, training on this topic.

The in-person trainings will take place as outlined below with registration beginning at 8 a.m., and the workshop from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Watch for registration information on the Nutrition and Wellness Programs web page: http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/default.htm.

- Oct. 22 – Carbondale
- Oct. 23 – Collinsville
- Oct. 25 – Bloomington
- Oct. 29 – Springfield
- Oct. 30 – Rockford
- Oct. 31 – St. Charles

In addition, we will host a webinar on this topic at 2 p.m. on Nov. 19 as one of our Training Tuesday Webinars. 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 have any questions, please contact our division staff at (800) 545-7892 or cnp@isbe.net.

**Federal and State Monitoring Division**

**NCLB Monitoring Instrument and NCLB Title I Comparability**

The FY14 NCLB Monitoring Instrument is available for completion and submission in the IWAS system. The due date is Nov. 30.

All districts receiving NCLB funding are required to submit the document every year. As before, the previous year’s information will be imported to the document and the district should ensure its accuracy before submitting. Each “Comment/Proof Indicator” should contain a list of documents, activities or an explanation that supports your answers.

There is a sample list of proof indicators on ISBE’s Federal and State Monitoring Division web page at [http://www.isbe.net/ea/htm/proof_indicators.doc](http://www.isbe.net/ea/htm/proof_indicators.doc).

The NCLB Title I Comparability analysis will load your previous year’s data as it relates to teacher’s names and positions if you used the “pupil/staff” ratio in your comparison. This application is also located on the IWAS system, districts that are “exempt” may simply select the “Exempt” radio button and then “Submit.” Their submittal requirements will have been met when the superintendent submits it. New tools have been added for districts that are using the Pupil/Staff ratio. They can now select and edit each FTE individually without deleting the whole line of information. Districts may move FTEs from one building to another, change assignments, names, and FTE amounts. After selecting the “View All FTEs” function, sorting the names alphabetically will allow districts to see where each employee is showing up in the district should they be used in multiple schools or have multiple assignments in one school. Viewing all FTEs at one time will help prevent assigning FTE totals in excess of 1.0 for each employee.

Districts will have to account for all of their buildings through exclusions or in a comparison with other schools of similar student enrollment and grade spans. The written procedures and board approved equivalency policies and salary schedules for districts will need to be added in their appropriate window. The data can be from a word processor or accounting software such as Word or Excel. These windows will not recognize a pdf file or pictures. Current student enrollment for each building will need to be supplied for any of the comparison ratios you select to use.

Districts will have to account for all of their buildings through exclusions or in a comparison with other schools of similar student enrollment and grade spans. The written procedures and board approved equivalency policies and salary schedules for districts will need to be added in their appropriate window. The data can be from a word processor or accounting software such as Word or Excel. These windows will not recognize a pdf file or pictures. Current student enrollment for each building will need to be supplied for any of the comparison ratios you select to use. It is also required to enter percentages of low income for all schools in the comparison, both Title I and non-Title I schools.

All districts receiving Title I funds must complete the document. Failure to comply will result in program funds being frozen and a recovery of expenditures of Title I funds in buildings where they are determined to be non-comparable.

If you have questions concerning the Title I Comparability or the Monitoring Instrument, contact Paul Williams, Federal and State Monitoring, at (217) 782-7970 or pwilliam@isbe.net.

**Illinois Virtual School**

**New Online Course Series Correlating to the Illinois 5Essentials Survey Announced**

A new online course series correlating to the Illinois 5Essentials Survey will open Sept. 30, 2013. This opportunity is made available through an Intel grant and partnership between Illinois Virtual School (IVS), Learning Technology Centers (LTCs) and ISBE Learning Support Specialists. Enrollment is free, although if course expectations are not completed, participants will be responsible for the course fee of $150.

Register today to secure your enrollment as one of the pilot participants in one of these relevant and interactive courses worth 20 CPDUs each:

- Designing Blended Learning
- Project-Based Approaches
- Thinking Critically with Data
- Assessment of 21st Century Skills
- Collaboration in the Classroom
- Educational Leadership in the 21st Century Classroom
We will be asking for course participation and feedback throughout this pilot and appreciate your comments as well as completion of course activities.

Registration is limited to the first 20 participants per course. To obtain enrollment directions, please email Danielle Brush Lewis at dlewis@ilvirtual.org.

Special Education Services Division

Districts Sought to Participate in 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 via email at lquimby@isbe.net.

ISBE-Funded Learning Ally Memberships Available for FY14

The Illinois State Board of Education has provided funding for schools to access Learning Ally services for their students with print disabilities. Schools that enroll in the grant will get student access to Learning Ally’s library of more than 80,000 human-voice recorded titles and unlimited free playback software. In addition, participation provides schools with:

- Unlimited audiobooks for all qualifying learners, including select VOICEtext titles with synchronized audio/text capabilities.
- Access to unlimited download and install of book playback software for PC/Mac computers.
- Access to the free Learning Ally Audio App now for iOS and Android devices.
- Access to Teacher Ally – Learning Ally’s student management and progress monitoring tool.

All FY14 ISBE-funded membership spots will be filled on a first come, first serve basis. Please visit www.learningally.org/illinois for more information or fill out the FY14 ISBE Grant Enrollment Form. To see if your school or schools in your district may already be enrolled, visit https://www.learningally.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/FY14-ISBE-Renewal-List.pdf.

Questions? Please contact Lindsey Novak at (847) 494-0887 or lnovak@learningally.org.

‘Mapping Media to the Common Core’ Presentation Scheduled for Oct. 29-30


Fryer aims to inspire you to become a better multimedia communicator and a pioneer with digital media in this presentation. Learn how to “expand the map” of assessment options in your classroom to include student products like narrated slide shows, enhanced eBooks including recorded audio, five photo stories with images, and more. Learn practical ways to overcome the anxiety and fear which often accompanies technology integration proposals by creating personal media products.

BYOD (bring your own device) to create a project with Fryer that you can apply to your classroom, school or district. For details and registration information, go to http://bit.ly/YCgdeO.

Illinois Emergency Management Agency

Schools Encouraged to Participate in Annual Earthquake Awareness Drill

The Illinois Emergency Management Agency is encouraging participation in the Great Central U.S. ShakeOut at 10:17 a.m. on Oct. 17. The goal of this “Drop, Cover and Hold On” drill is to draw attention to
the earthquake hazard that exists in Illinois, across the country and around the world.

Last February, more than 2.9 million people across the region participated in ShakeOut. More than 592,600 of those participants were Illinoisans.

Some of the worst earthquakes in the U.S. occurred during the winter of 1811-1812 when earthquakes shook the Mississippi River Valley along the New Madrid Seismic Zone.

To participate in the ShakeOut log on to the ShakeOut website, [http://www.shakeout.org/centralus/](http://www.shakeout.org/centralus/), where you can register for the drill and obtain details and reference materials. If an organization cannot participate on Oct. 17, another day may be selected to conduct a “Drop, Cover and Hold On” drill. If another day is selected, the organization should still register on the ShakeOut website.

Additional earthquake preparedness and mitigation information is available on the following websites: [http://www.ready.illinois.gov](http://www.ready.illinois.gov) and [http://www.cusec.org](http://www.cusec.org). For questions, contact Kate Mackz at IEMA at (217) 785-9925 or kate.mackz@illinois.gov.

**Illinois Student Assistance Commission**

**Free Services Available from ISAC for Students, Schools and Staff**

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), the state’s college access and financial aid agency, is alerting school leaders to services available at no cost to students, staff or schools.

- **What’s Next Illinois**: ISAC’s online career exploration and college planning website, including free ACT test prep and resources for counselors ([https://secure.whatsnextillinois.org/](https://secure.whatsnextillinois.org/)).

- **Electronic Transcript Exchange**: A FERPA-compliant process enabling high schools to send transcripts electronically to over 250 colleges at no cost to the student or high school.

- **FAFSA Completion Initiative**: A means for high schools to identify which of their students have completed the FAFSA in pursuit of financial aid for college. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the key application for students to access federal, state and institutional financial aid programs.

- **College Application Month**: An American Council on Education campaign to increase the number of first-generation and low-income students pursuing a postsecondary credential. October 2013 has been designated College Application Month in Illinois to encourage students who typically apply to college late in the process, or who don’t apply at all, to apply in a timely manner. To register your high school for an Illinois College Application Month 2013 event and review the Application Month Tool Kit, visit [www.collegechangeseverything.org/appmonth/](http://www.collegechangeseverything.org/appmonth/).

- **ISACorps**: Recent college graduates who assist high school and younger students with career exploration, college selection, test preparation, scholarship searches, application completion and the financial aid process. They can provide presentations and workshops on a variety of topics.

- **Professional Development Opportunities**: Trainings for high school counselors and other college access practitioners cover a broad scope of financial aid and college-related topics, and they are eligible for Continuing Professional Development Units (CPDU) as authorized by the Illinois State Board of Education and Professional Counselor/Clinical Counselor Continuing Education (CE) credit as authorized by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation.

Learn more about these services at [www.isac.org](http://www.isac.org) or by contacting Abel Montoya, ISAC Director of Outreach Operations, at (800) 899-4722, ext. 3101, or abel.montoya@isac.illinois.gov.

**Illinois Governor’s Office**

**New Website and Exhibit Help Celebrate Latino Heritage Month**


The website also outlines the “Changing Face of Illinois Latinos,” offers a sketch of each Latino group’s history in Illinois, details the governor’s trade missions to Mexico and Brazil, and explains the many services provided by the Governor’s Office of New Americans.
Gov. Quinn will also host an exhibit, “Saluting Latino Inventors, Scientists and Innovators,” in the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago from Monday, Oct. 7, through Friday, Oct. 11. The free display profiles a dozen Latinos who made a difference, such as the inventor of the ballpoint pen and a doctor who has devoted his life to eradicating leprosy.

In Brief

Professional Development

• 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 Institute of Medicine Food and Nutrition Board and the President’s Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition will present a webinar – “Understanding and Implementing Recommendations from the IOM Report Educating the Student Body: Taking Physical Activity and Physical Education to School” – on Sept. 26. For more information, visit http://bit.ly/152v06l.
• The National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform, in conjunction with the Association of Middle-Grade Schools, will present a day-long national conversation on student engagement and motivation on Oct. 10 in Countryside, Ill., near Chicago. For more information, visit http://www.middlegradesforum.org.
• The Illinois Association of School Nurses’ annual conference is set for Oct. 25-26 at the Northfield Inn and Conference Center in Springfield. This year’s conference is titled “Offering HOPE – Health, Opportunity, Prevention, Education – Through School Nursing.” For more information, visit www.iasn.org.

• The 25th annual National Dropout Prevention Network Conference is set for Nov. 3-6 in Atlanta. Conference partners include the National Dropout Prevention Network and the Georgia Department of Education. For more information, visit http://www.dropoutprevention.org/conferences/25th-annual-national-dropout-prevention-network-conference.

Educator Awards

• Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago is accepting nominations for the Barbara O’Donnell Award for Illinois Law-Related Education High School Teacher of the Year and the Edward J. Lewis II Award for Illinois Law-Related Education Elementary Teacher of the Year. The deadline is Oct. 4. Visit http://www.crfc.org/professional-development/teacher-year-awards.

School Opportunities

• Join the Pearson Foundation and Jumpstart on Oct. 3 for the annual Read for the Record. Each year, readers everywhere join together on one day to read a single book to break the world record and to show their support for early childhood literacy. For more information, including a Read for the Record toolkit, visit http://www.wegivebooks.org/readfortherecord.
• The National Center for Urban School Transformation is seeking applications from the nation’s best urban schools for the annual National Excellence in Urban Education Award. The criteria and the award application are available online at http://www.ncust.org. The deadline to apply is Nov. 15.

Student Opportunities

• The Midwest Student Exchange Program is a tuition reduction program that helps students attend participating out-of-state college and universities. Visit http://msep.mhec.org for more information.
• 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.
• The Cyber Aces Foundation invites students to register for the Illinois Cyber Aces State Championship. The free statewide competition aims to discover and develop the state’s top cyber talent. To learn more, visit www.cyberaces.org.
• Applications for the 2014 **Prudential Spirit of Community Awards** for middle level and high school youth volunteers are available online at [http://spirit.prudential.com](http://spirit.prudential.com). The application deadline is Nov. 5. The awards are sponsored by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

• Registration is under way for the annual **First Freedom Student Competition**, a national essay and video contest for high school students, which asks students to examine the history and current-day relevance of religious freedom. The deadline to register is Nov. 18. For more information, visit [www.firstfreedom.org](http://www.firstfreedom.org).


• The **Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation** is the nation’s oldest and largest provider of need-based scholarships to military children, with particular attention given to those whose parent has been killed or wounded in combat, or who have demonstrated financial need. Learn more at [http://www.mcsf.org](http://www.mcsf.org/).

• The **Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum** and its foundation are planning a variety of events this fall for the 150th anniversary of the Gettysburg Address, including an essay contest ([http://www.alplm.org/272.aspx](http://www.alplm.org/272.aspx)), a workshop, a webcast and more. For more information, visit [http://www.illinois.gov/alpm/GettysburgAddress150/Documents/GettysburgAddressinvitation.pdf](http://www.illinois.gov/alpm/GettysburgAddress150/Documents/GettysburgAddressinvitation.pdf).

• High school and college students can enter the seventh annual **Create-A-Greeting-Card Scholarship** sponsored by The Gallery Collection. The deadline for submissions is Jan. 15. For more information, go to [http://www.gallerycollection.com/greeting-cards-scholarship.htm](http://www.gallerycollection.com/greeting-cards-scholarship.htm).

**Weekly News Clips**

• The Illinois State Board of Education has posted highlights from recent **education news clips** at [http://www.isbe.net/news/2013/newsclips/130923.htm](http://www.isbe.net/news/2013/newsclips/130923.htm).

**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).