The Board approved a new map for consolidation of the Regional Offices of Education at its meeting Friday. The Board action was required because legislation signed last summer required the reduction from 44 to 35 Regional Offices.

Prior to June 30, 2013, there were two ways to consolidate the regions:

1. Through the petitioning of agreement between the applicable Regional Boards of School Trustees; or
2. By concurrence of the county boards in the applicable regions.

Unfortunately, local consolidations to reduce the number to 35 did not occur by the June 30 deadline and so the consolidation responsibility fell to the State Board. The legislation states that, if locally determined consolidations result in more than 35 regions of populations greater than 61,000 or more inhabitants, the State Board had to direct further consolidations beginning with the region of lowest population, until 35 regions are achieved.

The map approved by the Board complies with the law.

This has been a difficult task for all involved, however, I know we all have the best interest of students at heart even when we may not agree upon the best route forward. I hope that in the coming months we are able to work together to heal what divisions may have been created by this process and collectively strive to provide the best education to all students.

Thursday is Thanksgiving. I hope you are able to spend it with family and friends. Even when we face difficult obstacles professionally, we have much for which we should give thanks.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Chris

**Upcoming Dates and Deadlines**

Please note this is not a complete list of events, meetings 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).

- School Energy Efficiency Grant and School Maintenance Project Grant application deadline – [http://www.isbe.net/sbss/default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/sbss/default.htm) Nov. 27
• ISBE offices closed for Thanksgiving – Nov. 28-29
• FY14 NCLB Monitoring Instrument available for completion and submission in IWAS – Due by Nov. 30
• FY14 NCLB Title I Comparability document deadline (Available in IWAS) – Nov. 30
• NSLP Verification Summary Report deadline – Dec. 16 (http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/forms_sbn.htm)
• Part 22 (Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators), Part 23 (Standards for the School Service Personnel Certificate), Part 28 (Standards for Certification in Special Education) and Part 29 (Standards for Administrative Certification) – Public comment period ends Dec. 23
• 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
• Student Health Data – Vision system report deadline – June 30

**Funding and Disbursements Division**

**FY 13 and FY 14 IDEA Sp Ed Room and Board Claims Proration**

The 2012-13 Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Sp Ed Room and Board final payment will be issued in December. As a reminder, the deadline to transmit outstanding monthly claims for the 2012-13 cycle (Sept. 1, 2012, to Aug. 31, 2013) to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is Monday, Dec. 2, 2013. Historically, monthly claims are reimbursed at 90 percent during the year. Once all claims for the cycle have been transmitted, a final payment and proration is calculated. Traditionally, sufficient IDEA funds have been available to pay all claims at 100 percent. Please be advised that the 2012-13 statewide claims at 100 percent are projected at approximately $41.8 million. There are insufficient IDEA funds available this year to finalize claims at 100 percent. A proration slightly higher than 90 percent is projected. The 2012-13 final payment and proration will be communicated in December.

The 2013-14 IDEA Sp Ed Room and Board claim cycle has begun. The FY 14 State set aside amount for Room and Board is $29.5 million. The statewide claim growth over the past two years is approximately 20 percent. This is due to a steady growth of residential student placements, which has averaged 10 percent over the past few years accompanied by a rise of residential per diem rates of 4 percent. If the statewide claim growth is realized for the 2013-14 cycle, claims are projected to be $50 million with an estimated final proration just under 60 percent. This projection does not permit ISBE to reimburse monthly claims at the 90 percent level as in the past. Therefore, all 2013-14 monthly claims will be reimbursed at 50 percent during the year. The 2013-2014 final payment and proration will be calculated at this time next year.

Due to the insufficiency of IDEA funds for the Room and Board program, Special Education Excess Cost claims authorized under Section 14-7.02b, which utilize unexpended IDEA Room and Board funds, will not be reimbursed for the foreseeable future.

If you have questions regarding this issue, please contact Marj Beck (mbeck@isbe.net) in ISBE’s Funding and Disbursements Division at (217) 782-5256.

**Nutrition and Wellness Programs Division**

**National School Lunch Program Online Verification Summary Report Available**

Annually, all sponsors operating the National School Lunch and/or School Breakfast Program must verify the eligibility of students that receive free or reduced price meal benefits based on the use of a Household Eligibility Application. Once the verification process is completed, NSLP sponsors must report the results of verification to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

The new online Verification Summary Report (VSR) is now available. The deadline to submit the results of the verification process to ISBE is Monday, Dec. 16.
Submission of incomplete or incorrect information or failure to submit the VSR may result in NSLP sponsors having claim payments being withheld.

Directions related to the verification process and the completion of the online VSR are available at [http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/forms_sbn.htm](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/forms_sbn.htm). A recorded webinar explaining the new online VSR is at [http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/workshops.htm](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/workshops.htm), under the National School Lunch Program Archived Webinars heading.

The ISBE Nutrition and Wellness Programs Division can be reached at cnp@isbe.net or by calling (800) 545-7892.

**Presentation Proposals Sought for Annual Illinois School Wellness Conference**

The Illinois State Board of Education and Action for Healthy Kids invite individuals with expertise in school health and wellness to submit session ideas for presentation during the seventh annual Illinois School Wellness Conference, which is scheduled for April 30, 2014, at the Hilton Garden Inn, 1501 S. Neil St., in Champaign.

ISBE and Action for Healthy Kids are specifically interested in presentations that highlight successful school health and wellness-related outreach in schools, innovative projects that improve the overall health of the school community, and emerging issues impacting school health and wellness. Presentations will be selected based on the need for the topic as it relates to school health and wellness and the speaker’s knowledge and expertise on the subject.

For more information, including an application, visit [http://www.a4hk.org/filelib/Call_for_Proposals_7th_Annual_IL_School_Wellness_Conference.doc](http://www.a4hk.org/filelib/Call_for_Proposals_7th_Annual_IL_School_Wellness_Conference.doc), or contact Heidi Knoblock at hknoblock@actionforhealthykids.org. Please call (312) 878-2712 if you have questions.

**ISTAC**

**Update on the Illinois Statewide Technical Assistance Collaborative**

The primary purpose of the ISTAC is to improve educational outcomes for all children in Illinois, including those with significant challenges and disabilities. This is accomplished through a coordinated statewide effort within a regionalized delivery system of training and technical assistance. ISTAC promotes a prevention-based systems change approach, which includes data-based decision-making and research-based instructional practices. The five Training and Technical Assistance Focus Areas under the ISTAC umbrella are:

- Behavior
- Educational Environment (Least Restrictive)
- Family and Community Engagement
- Special Populations (Autism, Behavioral Health, etc.)
- Transition

**ISTAC Statewide Collaboration:** The ISTAC and other existing ISBE initiatives/partners (Statewide System of Support (SSoS), The Illinois Center for School Improvement (IL-CSI), Illinois Association of Regional State Superintendents (IARSS), the Illinois Response to Intervention (I-RtI) Network, etc.) maintain a collaborative relationship. This collaborative relationship provides a statewide foundation for training content, technical assistance and instructional coaching to build the capacity of schools to promote social, emotional, behavioral, physical and academic success of all students. Such collaboration facilitates the sharing of resources and expertise across initiatives, thereby increasing the statewide reach of all projects. This relationship also leverages resources, reduces duplication of services and increases cost effectiveness while providing high quality and consistent professional development on a regional basis.

ISBE envisions one fully coordinated and comprehensive system of professional development, instructional coaching and other practical support to the LEAs. To that end, continuing during the 2013-14 school year, IL-CSI will lead and coordinate a statewide system of support to LEAs while ISTAC and SSOs are partnering to integrate and transition their work to effectively address each initiative’s purpose and funding requirements. Data-based decisions will be made regarding how ISTAC’s services will be utilized most efficiently and with the highest impact to support all students, especially those with disabilities. The use of federal funds for this work is limited to the applicable allowable use of funds as outlined in federal regulations. For additional information, see the Joint Memorandum from ISBE’s Centers for Specialized Instruction and Wellness and Innovation and Improvement posted at [http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/Default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/Default.htm). On-going updates regarding this statewide collaboration will be provided in ISBE’s Weekly Message.
**Family Engagement**

**Upcoming Webinar Series Features Free Research-Based Resources for Schools**

ISBE will be hosting a series of webinars throughout this school year focusing on how schools and districts integrate parents into the school improvement process. Please join us for our first webinar on Dec. 12, 2013, from 1:15-2:15 p.m. CST, as we discuss web-based family engagement resources and the Illinoisparents.org website. Space is limited. Reserve your webinar slot now at [https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/627000096](https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/627000096).

During the webinar, participants will get a first-hand perspective of how to navigate the Family Engagement Tool and the Illinoisparents.org website. ISBE has been working diligently to provide school districts and schools resources to assist with family engagement, including the recent release of the Family Engagement Framework ([http://www.illinoisparents.org/Default.aspx](http://www.illinoisparents.org/Default.aspx)). The framework can be used in partnership with the web-based Family Engagement Tool (FET), which guides a school team (including parents) in assessing and tracking every aspect of its family engagement programs and practices. The tool allows schools and districts to develop an improvement plan based on indicators of effective practice. FET provides access to a rich library of researched-based family engagement materials. The materials are aligned with the assessment and include hundreds of planning tools, family engagement curricula, and professional development programs. Much of the material designed for families are available in English and Spanish.

The IllinoisParents.org website will also be explored during the webinar. The website connects Illinois families to resources. It also provides information and tools for schools and districts. The Organizations & Events section links families and those who work with families to information, local programs, services, events and community agencies. The website offers a School Community Journal, which is a peer-reviewed journal that includes research and field reports related to the school as a community of teachers, students, parents and staff. The website also features a hot line link to submit “Ask a Question” to family engagement experts or provides the opportunity for anyone to call a hot line toll-free at (877) 275-3227.

For more information about the family engagement tool and the Illinoisparents.org site, call (618) 874-8150 or log onto [http://www.isbe.net/grants/html/parent_adi.htm](http://www.isbe.net/grants/html/parent_adi.htm).

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**Common Core State Standards**

**Northern Illinois PARCC Education Leader Cadre Offers Workshop on Dec. 9**

The Northern Illinois Regional PARCC Education Leader Cadre will host a workshop on Dec. 9 at Northern Illinois University. The workshop focuses on the implementation of the Common Core State Standards through the lens of school and district practitioners.

Break-out sessions will target the English Language Arts and Math Shifts, as well as the role of leadership. Facilitators provide background, implications for practice based on their own experiences, and hands-on examples. The workshop will also provide current information regarding the PARCC assessment.

Registration is open and will be limited. Please visit the link below to register for the event. Questions regarding the content of the day should be directed to Fred Schlessinger, member of the Northern Illinois Education Leader Cadre at [fnschlessinger@aol.com](mailto:fnschlessinger@aol.com).

The Illinois Educator Leader Cadre (ELC) is a network of educators who assist the state board staff in building awareness and understanding of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the PARCC assessments. This group of professionals was chosen through an application process as part of the services offered by the PARCC consortium. Over the last two years members have received additional training on the CCSS and PARCC. The ELC members are working together by regions to build understanding through newsletters, workshops and presentations.


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**School Business Services**

**Deadline Reminder for Maintenance Grant and School Energy Efficiency Applications**

This is the final reminder notice that both the School Energy Efficiency and the School Maintenance Grant Applications are still open for submission. However, the IWAS application process for both grants will close at midnight on Wednesday, Nov. 27, 2013. After that time, no applications will be accepted from the district/LEAs level.
As previously stated for this round of the Maintenance Grant, there is $50 million available to be awarded, allowing over 800 districts to receive a grant. In addition, the governor has released $20,000,000 for the Energy Efficiency Grant. ISBE strongly encourages you to participate in both grant programs.

**Energy Efficiency Grant Program:** The Energy Efficiency Grant Program is a dollar for dollar state matching grant program providing up to $250,000 for energy efficiency projects in schools. The grant can be used for insulation, windows, doors, energy controls, lighting, energy recovery, energy conservation, alternative energy systems and other projects designed to reduce energy consumption. All school districts, charter schools, vocational and special education centers, or public university laboratory schools are eligible. For detailed information go to [http://www.isbe.net/sbss/ee_grants.htm](http://www.isbe.net/sbss/ee_grants.htm) or contact Debbie Hemberger with the School Business Services Division at (217) 785-8779.

**School Maintenance Project Grants:** The School Maintenance Project Grant Program is a dollar for dollar state matching grant program providing up to $50,000 for the maintenance or upkeep of buildings or structures for educational purposes. Funding from the School Maintenance Project Grant Program can go toward an array of improvement activities. All school districts, cooperative high schools and Type 40 area vocational centers are eligible. For detailed information go to [http://www.isbe.net/sbss/smp_grants.htm](http://www.isbe.net/sbss/smp_grants.htm) or contact Kimberly Beachy with the School Business Services Division at (217) 785-8779.

### Illinois Department of Public Health

#### Integrated Pest Management Regulations Reminder Issued to Schools, Day Cares

To protect children in day care centers and schools from pests such as cockroaches, spiders and rodents, as well as from unnecessary applications of pesticides, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is reminding schools and day care centers they could be fined if they do not comply with the state’s Integrated Pest Management (IPM) regulations. State law requires public schools and licensed day care centers to file an IPM form with the department to document how they plan to implement IPM. IPM uses a variety of non-chemical methods as well as pesticides, when needed, to reduce pest infestations and to minimize children’s exposure to pesticides.

More than 200 day care centers and schools have failed to comply with the most basic of the state’s IPM regulations and may face fines for the first time. IDPH has been working to ensure schools and day care centers comply by sending mass mailings, holding seminars and working with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, which licenses Illinois day cares.

More information about Integrated Pest Management and the IPM regulations can be found online at [http://www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/ipm/index.htm](http://www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/ipm/index.htm). The Illinois Department of Public Health issued a news release on IPM with additional information on Nov. 15: [http://www.idph.state.il.us/public/press13/11.15.13_Day_Care_Centers_and_Schools_Could_Face_Fines.htm](http://www.idph.state.il.us/public/press13/11.15.13_Day_Care_Centers_and_Schools_Could_Face_Fines.htm).

### In Brief

#### Professional Development

- The Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago is recruiting Illinois high school teachers to participate in the 2014 **Illinois Youth Summit**, which is scheduled for May 2 at the Dirksen Federal Building in Chicago. For more information, visit [http://www.crfc.org/youthsummit2014](http://www.crfc.org/youthsummit2014).
- The **Illinois Department of Natural Resources Division of Education**’s video podcasts can help educators preview and plan lessons as well as provide teaching tools and tips for completing grant applications. More podcasts have been added recently. Visit [http://dnr.state.il.us/education/podcasts.htm](http://dnr.state.il.us/education/podcasts.htm) or search for them through the iTunes Store and on YouTube (search for “IDNREducation”).

#### Student Opportunities

- The Illinois Conservation Foundation offers the **Conservation Achievement Scholarship** to high school seniors who have demonstrated effective, voluntary, long-term dedication to the preservation, protection, enhancement and/or promotion of our natural resources. Three scholarships will be awarded for the 2013-14 school year. For details, visit [http://www.ilcf.org/index.php/programs/scholarships](http://www.ilcf.org/index.php/programs/scholarships).

#### Special Event

- The **Jump$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy**, along with Allstate, will host a free special event on Dec. 3 to celebrate the career of journalist,
author and education advocate Terry Savage. Jump$tart offers scholarship and grant opportunities for educators, students and public schools. For more information, visit http://www.jumpstart.org/states-illinois.html.

In the News

- Congratulations to the FFA Chapter from Pontiac Township High School, which recently received the National Model of Excellence Award at 86th National FFA Convention & Expo in Louisville, Ky. The annual award is presented to the top overall chapter in the country. Read more at http://bit.ly/1eNQV2t.

Employment Opportunities

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