This week, the Board will meet via video-conference in Springfield and Chicago on Wednesday. Board members will review the Annual Financial Profile of the state’s districts. The news is not good as the profiles show the impact of cuts and the continued proration of state aid to districts. More districts are ranked in the lowest Financial Profile category, and the state’s overall average score has dropped.

We will share the results of the Financial Profiles as we continue to meet with legislators to emphasize the need for increased investment in students. The House and Senate are setting their anticipated revenue levels for Fiscal Year 2015, and they are considerably lower than this year. We have been asked to testify at a hearing in Chicago on Friday about the impact of an additional $1 billion reduction in the K-12 budget. We will point directly to the Financial Profiles as evidence that more districts are struggling financially after years of proration. Senate Appropriations members will also soon schedule a meeting to discuss the impact of a similar reduction, and we will provide testimony on your behalf at that time as well.

Last week, President Obama unveiled his proposed budget for FY 15, which begins Oct. 1, 2014. While this is the initial step in the federal budget-making process and it will likely change considerably as Congress weighs in, the President’s proposed budget includes an increase of $1.3 billion, or 1.9 percent, over the current fiscal year.


The administration window for the Illinois 5Essentials survey will open next week on March 17. The survey will be available to all schools and districts who choose to administer it this year. Race to the Top districts and those who did not administer the survey last year are required to do so this year.

Materials to support administration have been sent directly to superintendents and principals via email and in hard copy. Additional resources, including an administration manual and a communication kit, are available online at https://illinois.5-essentials.org. The survey window will close April 25, and reports will be sent to principals and superintendents by the end of June. Results from this year’s survey will be posted on the State School Report Card in October.
We have recently completed a series of focus groups on the content of the survey as part of our continuous efforts to improve the survey and administration process. Results from the focus groups are posted on the Illinois 5Essentials website. We are also piloting improved survey security in five districts and conducting two research studies using statewide data and district interviews and focus groups.

Last week, we announced the state’s three winners of the Illinois Green School Award program. The program recognizes schools that save energy, reduce costs, protect student and staff health and wellness and offer environmental education. The three recipients are Woodland Primary School in Gages Lake, Oak Lawn-Hometown Middle School in Oak Lawn and Evanston Skokie School District 65 in Evanston.

The applications for these two schools and the district have been submitted to the U.S. Department of Education’s Green Ribbon School awards program. The department will announce winners in April. For more information about the Illinois Green Ribbon School program, including a list of previous and current state winners, visit [www.isbe.net/green_ribbon/](http://www.isbe.net/green_ribbon/).

Finally, congratulations to the Illinois Principals Association/Horace Mann 2014-2015 Principals of the Year:

- Elementary – Brandi Bruley, North Elementary School, Taylorville CUSD 3
- Middle School/Junior High – Don Farr, Monmouth-Roseville JH School, Monmouth-Roseville CUSD 238
- High School – Carol Burlinski, Buffalo Grove High School, Township HSD 214
- Assistant Principal – Sheryl Gray, Prairie Trail School, Gurnee School District 56

This is a great honor for you, your staff, students and school communities.

Congratulations!

Chris

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**Upcoming ISBE 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).*

- **ISAT Testing Window and Modified Regular Testing Window** – March 3-14, March 10-21
- **Illinois State Board of Education Meeting** – March 12-13
- **Illinois 5Essentials Survey** – To be conducted March 17 through April 25
- **Arts and Foreign Language Planning Assistance Grant Deadline** – April 14
- **PSAE Day 1 and Day 2 Initial Standard Time Testing Dates** – April 23-24
- **PSAE Day 1 Accommodations Testing Window** – April 23-May 7
- **PSAE Day 2 Accommodations Testing Window** – April 24-May 8
- **Truants’ Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP) FY 2015 RFP and Continuation Application Deadline** – April 28
Weekly Message – State Board of Education – March 10, 2014

- School Nutrition Employee Week – May 5-9
- National School Nurse Day – May 7 (http://www.nASN.org/AboutNASN/NationalSchoolNurseDay)
- PSAE Day 1 and Day 2 Makeup Standard Time Testing Dates – May 7-8
- Applications for the Exception to the 1.0 Percent Cap due – May 16
- ISBE offices closed for Memorial Day – May 26
- Student Health Data – Vision system report deadline – June 30
- Student Health Data – Dental system report deadline – June 30
- ISBE offices closed for Independence Day – July 4
- Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by General Assembly in Fall 2014 – Friday, August 15, 2014 (See http://www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/default.htm for public notice requirements for all waiver requests.)

Language and Early Child Development

Webinar Set and Feedback Sought on Draft Family Engagement Framework Guide

When schools and districts engage families with random activities, often times it fragments and marginalizes the effort so that less desirable outcomes are achieved. There is emerging evidence that shows when districts and schools develop systemic structures that strategically encourage meaningful family and community engagement as an integral part of school improvement efforts, there is significant impact on student learning and how schools function (Blank, Berg, & Melaville, 2006; Bryk, et.al, 2010, and Marschall, 2006). Research shows that family engagement should be systemic, integrated and sustained. In order to achieve this goal, family engagement must be: a core component of educational goals, embedded into existing structures and processes to meet these goals and operated with adequate resources to ensure that effective strategies can be implemented with fidelity and sustained (2010).

ISBE has developed a draft Family Engagement Framework Guide, posted at www.illinoisparents.org/downloads/2013_10_ISBEFE Guide.pdf, which can serve as a tool for schools and districts to better understand evidence-based practices to help strengthen and build systems to engage families in meaningful ways. Using a systemic approach to family engagement is one of the four core principles districts and schools can use to partner with families. The guide provides research reviews, standards and legislative requirements that are integrated with the Eight Essential Elements for Continuous School Improvement for all principles.

ISBE will host a webinar on March 27 from 10 to 11 a.m. that will help schools and districts strengthen and build a systemic approach to family engagement. Entitled “Developing a Family Engagement System,” the webinar will highlight school and district-level efforts. This webinar will be co-facilitated by ISBE, Academic Development Institute and Marsha Sisney, Parent and Community Empowerment Supervisor for Rockford School District 205. To register, go to www.illinoisparents.org. Space is limited.

ISBE is also asking for feedback on the draft guide from school and district personnel, parents, community organizations and other education partners. Once you have viewed the framework, please click on the survey link to provide your feedback at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Lm7RyloxRNNfcY7wnrs4muwXx8SAFvY27XmbpFH3z_g/viewform.

If you have questions about the framework, contact Reyna Hernandez, Assistant Superintendent, at rhernand@isbe.net.

- What: “Developing a Family Engagement System” Webinar
- When: March 27, 10-11 a.m.
- Register: www.illinoisparents.org

Special Education Services

Reminder: Exception to the 1 Percent Cap Applications Due on May 16

If more than 1 percent of a school district’s students in grades 3 through 8 and 11 are identified as significantly cognitively disabled, it is time to prepare the district’s application for an exception to the 1
percent cap. The 2013-2014 applications are due on May 16.

If the conditions for the exception are approved, then all “progressing” and “attaining” scores earned by students taking the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) will be counted as proficient in making determinations for school, district and state Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

K-8 districts are to apply after the ISAT testing is completed (March 14 for most districts). High school and K-12 districts are to apply after the PSAE makeup date has passed (May 8).


For more information, please contact Kelly Wojcik and Laura Quimby at (217) 782-5589 or kwojcik@isbe.net and lquimby@isbe.net.

System of Support & District Intervention System of Support Foundational Services for Continuous Improvement Planning

The Illinois State Board of Education has partnered with the Regional Offices of Education and Intermediate Service Centers across the state to deliver high quality, coordinated and consistent technical assistance, professional development and networking in four key initiative areas:

- Continuous Improvement Planning (CIP), using Rising Star on the Illinois Interactive Report Card
- The New Illinois Learning Standards incorporating the Common Core in English Language Arts
- The New Illinois Learning Standards incorporating the Common Core in Mathematics
- Balanced Assessment/Evaluation

In cooperation with the Illinois Center for School Improvement, the first of these initiatives will support Continuous Improvement Planning for districts and schools in state and/or federal status. Locally identified ROE/ISC Service Providers will offer: technical assistance through telephone and email inquiries addressing system navigation and planning requirements; professional development using ISBE-designed and approved resources; and networking opportunities for improvement planning and sharing between school and district teams. CIP Service Providers will contribute to the success of planners who are actively participating in Continuous Improvement Planning, in addition to those not yet engaged in the process.

Districts seeking more information about Continuous Improvement Planning/Rising Star should contact their local Regional Office of Education/Intermediate Service Center.

Nutrition and Wellness Programs

2014-2015 Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Grant Application Available

ISBE’s Nutrition and Wellness Programs Division has released the application for the 2014-2015 school year Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) grant. Completed applications are due to ISBE no later than March 21.

FFVP grant funds are used to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to children at no cost during the school day outside of the reimbursable meal(s) periods. Complete information about FFVP, including the grant application, is available online at www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/ffv_program.htm.

This program is different from the Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. The DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program allocates USDA Foods planned assistance level (pal) monies so that schools may acquire fresh fruits and vegetable to use during the service of reimbursable meals to students (breakfast and lunch). For more information about the DoD FFVP, visit www.isbe.net/nutrition/pdf/DoD_FreshFruitandVegProg.pdf.

In Illinois, to be selected as a school to participate in the FFVP, the school site must:

- Participate in the National School Lunch Program.
Be an elementary school (Schools with grades 8 and below).
Understand that USDA requires highest priority be given to schools with the highest percentage of low-income students. Due to the number of elementary schools in Illinois at or above the 50 percent criterion, it is unlikely that ISBE would select schools with less than 50 percent eligibility.
Submit the completed FFVP application, with the required signatures, no later than close of business on March 21. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

If you have questions regarding the FFVP, please email cnp@isbe.net or call (800) 545-7892.

School Breakfast Summit March 14 in Champaign to Promote Healthy Eating
The Illinois Hunger Coalition and Illinois No Kid Hungry are holding a School Breakfast Summit on March 14 at the Champaign Public Library, 200 W. Green St., in Champaign.
The summit is scheduled for 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Participants will find out how a healthy breakfast can dramatically improve a child’s overall well-being, health and academic future and learn ways to implement and fund a successful breakfast program.

To learn more about the summit and to register, please visit http://goo.gl/mwIUV2.

USDA Farm to School Grants Available To Improve Access to Local Foods
The USDA has announced the availability of three different Farm to School Grants as well as a separate funding track to support training and events.
The purpose of the Farm to School Grant Program is to help eligible entities implement farm to school programs that improve access to local foods in eligible schools. The USDA awards up to $5 million in competitive grants annually for training, supporting operations, planning, purchasing equipment, developing school gardens, developing partnerships and implementing farm to school programs.
Planning grants are available for schools just getting started on farm to school activities. Implementation grants are available for schools seeking to augment or expand existing efforts. Additionally, eligible non-profit entities, Indian tribal organizations, state and local agencies and agriculture producers or groups of producers may apply for support service grants in order to conduct trainings, create complementary curriculum or further develop supply chains, among other activities. Proposals are due on April 30.

New in FY 15, USDA funds will be made available to support meetings, trainings and events aimed at strengthening farm to school supply chains or providing technical assistance. The Training and Event funds range from $15,000 to $50,000. The USDA expects to distribute approximately $500,000 in additional funds to support at least one statewide or regional meeting in all seven FNS regions and at least one national conference. Letters of Intent are due on April 2.

To assist eligible entities, the USDA will host a series of webinars related to the application process:
• March 11, noon – Planning Grants
• March 12, noon – Implementation Grants
• March 13, noon – Support Service Grants
• March 14, noon – Training and Event Funding Track

For additional information, visit the USDA website at www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/fy-2015-farm-school-grant-program-funds-available.

Annual School Wellness Conference Scheduled for April 30 in Champaign
ISBE and Illinois Action for Healthy Kids are hosting the seventh annual Illinois School Wellness Conference, titled “Every Kid Healthy,” on April 30 in Champaign.
Conference sessions will highlight successful school health and wellness-related outreach in schools, innovative projects that improve the overall health of the school community and emerging issues affecting school health and wellness. Featured tracks include: School Nutrition, School Breakfast, Physical Activity, Coordinated School Health and Early Childhood.
The conference is intended for school administrators, educators, physical education teachers, school food
personnel, school nurses, school health/wellness team members, board members and other leaders of health organizations, students, childcare providers and community advocates.


- **What:** Illinois School Wellness Conference
- **When:** April 30, 8:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- **Where:** Hilton Garden Inn, 1501 S. Neil St., in Champaign

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**School Health Issues**

**Health Alert: Second Case of Measles Under Investigation in McDonough County**

The Illinois Department of Public Health, along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and local health departments, is investigating a second case of measles in McDonough County. The most recent case is an adult who attended a junior high volleyball game in Bushnell on Feb. 25. This second case was exposed to a previously reported child international visitor with measles in McDonough County. This latest instance brings the total to two cases in Illinois related to this situation. The investigation is still ongoing, and all suspect cases and exposures are continually being evaluated.

Additionally, state health authorities have been made aware of two laboratory-confirmed and several probable mumps cases in a Morgan County community. Mumps, an acute vaccine-preventable viral illness transmitted by respiratory droplets and saliva, has an incubation period of 16-18 days. A statewide notification has been sent since the cases are widespread across the Morgan County community, and a common exposure has not been identified.

Schools are reminded that they are required by IDPH rule to maintain an up-to-date list of all students who are not protected against any disease for which a vaccine is required for school attendance, including those with waivers based on religious beliefs or medical conditions. If someone has measles-like symptoms, follow isolation guidelines to prevent further spread and contact your local health department or IDPH as soon as possible.

Measles symptoms include fever and rash, history of international travel in the past three weeks or contact with international visitors and history of exposure to a confirmed case.

**2014 Statewide Suicide Prevention Conference Set for April 25 in Springfield**

Registration is open for the 2014 Statewide Suicide Prevention Conference, entitled “Preventing Suicide Among Youth and Young Adults: Everyone has a Role,” on April 25 in Springfield.

The conference theme acknowledges that preventing suicide involves collaborative efforts by the entire community, with a special focus on youth and young adults between 10 to 24 years of age. Featured speakers include: Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck, director of the Illinois Department of Public Health; Dr. John Draper, director of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline; and Dr. Peter Gutierrez of the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs.

State law requires that school personnel working with students in middle and high school grades must receive training on suicide (105 ILCS 5/10-22.39):

*In-service training programs.*

(a) To conduct in-service training programs for teachers.

(b) In addition to other topics at in-service training programs, school guidance counselors, teachers, school social workers, and other school personnel who work with pupils in grades 7 through 12 shall be trained to identify the warning signs of mental illness and suicidal behavior in adolescents and teens and shall be taught appropriate intervention and referral techniques.

The event is sponsored by the Illinois Department of Public Health in conjunction with the Illinois Public Health Association, the University of Illinois Springfield Counseling Center and the Illinois Suicide Prevention Alliance.

• **What:** 2014 Statewide Suicide Prevention Conference
• **When:** April 25, 8 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.
• **Where:** University of Illinois Springfield, 2200 Ernest Hemingway Drive, in Springfield.

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**College and Career Readiness**

**FY 2014 Arts and Foreign Language Planning Assistance Grant Available**

The Illinois Arts Council Agency and ISBE are pleased to announce that funding is available for public school districts in Fiscal Year 2014 with the Arts and Foreign Language Planning Assistance Grant.

The Illinois Arts Council Agency has released the Request for Proposals (RFP), and full guidelines and materials can be found on [www.arts.illinois.gov/AFL](http://www.arts.illinois.gov/AFL). The purpose of this RFP is to solicit proposals from eligible applicants that seek resources to develop district-based plans for initiating, strengthening or expanding instruction in the arts or foreign language. Proposals are due Monday, April 14.

An online, interactive informational forum about the RFP, designed to provide technical assistance and answer questions about the process, is scheduled for Tuesday, March 18, at 1 p.m. Registration information is posted at [www.arts.illinois.gov/AFL](http://www.arts.illinois.gov/AFL).

For more information, contact Jerome Grand at jerome.grand@illinois.gov or (312) 814-6766 or visit [www.arts.illinois.gov/AFL](http://www.arts.illinois.gov/AFL).

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**School Safety**

**IEMA School Security Grant Provides $25 Million for Safety Enhancements**

The Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) urges public elementary and secondary school districts to submit their applications for a portion of $25 million in grants to be awarded under the Illinois School Security Grant Program. The deadline for submittal is March 14.

The grant program focuses on measures that will enhance security for students and staff at elementary and secondary schools, such as installing reinforced doors, shatter-resistant glass and physical locks for the primary public entrance at schools. Schools that have achieved this baseline capability will be able to implement other security measures.

Only one application per public school district will be accepted, and the district superintendent is the authorized applicant for the school district. Grant awards will be announced this spring.

**Those Who Excel**

**Nomination Packets Available for 2014-2015 Those Who Excel/Teacher of the Year**

Nomination packets for the 2014-2015 Those Who Excel/Illinois Teacher of the Year program are now available.

The program includes seven nomination categories: classroom teacher, school administrator/principal, student support personnel, educational service personnel, school board member/community volunteer, team and early career educator. Districts may nominate one candidate per category, except in Chicago Public School District 299, where multiple nominations are permitted.


Please visit [http://www.isbe.net/those_who_excel.htm](http://www.isbe.net/those_who_excel.htm) to print the application or contact ISBE’s Public Information Division at (217) 782-4648 to have a copy mailed to you.

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**In Brief**

**Grant Opportunities**

- Action for Healthy Kids has announced the availability of **School Grants for Healthy Kids** in the range of $500 to $5,000 nationwide. Nearly 1,000 grants will be awarded. The grants are designed to help schools create or expand School Breakfast Programs, pilot Universal Breakfast Programs and enhance their physical activity programs. The deadline is May 2, and a one-hour introductory webinar is scheduled for March 20 at 2 p.m. To register for the webinar and access the application, visit [www.actionforhealthykids.org/resources/school-grants](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/resources/school-grants).

- **Healthy Kids, Healthy Families grants** are available for nonprofit organizations that offer sustainable, measurable programs to reach children and their families in nutrition education, physical activity, disease prevention and management or supporting safe environments. The three-year initiative is designed to improve the health and wellness of at least one million children through community investments by Health Care Service Corporation and its Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans in Illinois and three other states. To learn more, go to [http://hcsc.com/grants.html](http://hcsc.com/grants.html). The Illinois grant deadline is March 21.

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**Classroom Opportunities**

- **Earth Day in the Parks** event registration remains open at the following state parks: Fort Massac State Park in Metropolis, Mermet Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area in Belknap and Pere Marquette State Park in Grafton. An additional class will also be accepted at Argyle Lake State Park in Colchester, Beall Woods State Park in Mt. Carmel and Cache River Wetlands Center in Cypress. The registration form and additional information are available at [http://dnr.state.il.us/education/CLASSRM/EDITP instru.htm](http://dnr.state.il.us/education/CLASSRM/EDITP instru.htm). Applications are accepted on a first come, first served basis.

- The Illinois Department of Natural Resources has added new lessons based on the **Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)** to its website at [http://dnr.state.il.us/education/standards.htm](http://dnr.state.il.us/education/standards.htm). Visit often as lessons will be added as they are completed. Recently added lesson topics include: mammals for grades K-3, fossils for grades 3-4 and middle school and trees for grade 1. The site also has lessons correlated to the newly revised Illinois Early Learning Standards.

- A new **Project Squirrel mobile phone app** is now available to help students become involved in citizen science activities that can be incorporated into lessons to support the NGSS. The app is free and available in Apple and Android versions. Go to iTunes or the Google Play Store to download the app. Lessons to support squirrel observations will be posted at [http://dnr.state.il.us/education/standards.htm](http://dnr.state.il.us/education/standards.htm). More information about Project Squirrel is available at [www.projectsquirrel.org](http://www.projectsquirrel.org).

- The National WWII Museum has launched a new **Digital Collections website** at [http://ww2online.org](http://ww2online.org) to tell the story of the American experience during World War II. The resource contains 150 oral history interviews and several thousand archival photographs that may be used in lesson plans.
In the News

- South Elgin High School nurse Julia Olsta recently received The Journal of School Nursing/SAGE First Publication Award by a School Nurse for her publication entitled “Bringing Breakfast to Our Students: A Program to Increase School Breakfast Participation.” Olsta will be presented with the award at the National Association of School Nurses’ annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas, in June. To read more, go to http://www.u-46.org/npps/story.cfm?nppage=1275.

Professional Development

- Registration is now open for the new ENTICE (Environment and Nature Training Institute for Conservation Education) workshop schedule for July 1, 2014, through June 30, 2015. The workshops offer training on Illinois-specific topics and supply tools to implement topics into curriculum immediately. Continuing Professional Development Units are available at all ENTICE workshops. Register at the following link: https://www.enticeworkshops.com.

- 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. Visit http://dnr.state.il.us/education/podcasts.htm or search for them through the iTunes Store and on YouTube (search for “IDNREducation”).

Educator Opportunities

- The Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color (COSEBOC) is hosting its eighth annual Gathering of Leaders in Jackson, Miss., April 23-25. This year’s theme is “Onward and Upward! Advancing the Affirmative Development of Boys and Young Men of Color.” The event also includes the free opportunity to participate in the White House Initiative Town Hall on Educational Excellence for African-Americans on April 25-26. For more information and to register, visit http://coseboc.org/annual-gathering.

Student Opportunities

- The Healthy Lunchtime Challenge invites children ages 8-12 and their parent(s) or guardian(s) to create an original lunch recipe that is healthy, affordable and tasty. Participants have the chance for an invite to a Kids’ “State Dinner” at the White House, where a selection of the winning recipes will be served. Recipes must be submitted by April 5. For more information, visit www.recipechallenge.epicurious.com.

- The National WWII Museum seeks submissions for its National 2014 High School Essay Contest and 2014 Middle School Essay Contest. To coincide with the 70th anniversary of D-Day, this year’s contests ask students to think about a time in their lives when they had to make important plans for success in spite of uncertainty. Submissions are due March 28. Full contest guidelines and rules are available at http://www.nationalww2museum.org/learn/education/for-students/essay-contests/.

Resources

- April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. Since 1983, millions have participated in this campaign aimed at raising awareness of child abuse and neglect and to promote specific ways to join the prevention effort. For more information, download the 2014 Child Abuse Prevention Month Community Packet at http://media.wix.com/ugd/eabf46_6790ee4f36a643c49c07af6c0d024fb7.pdf.

- IDNR’s Resources Trunks are available statewide and represent 10 topics. The trunks supplement many lessons and provide hands-on resources to enliven teaching. Visit http://dnr.state.il.us/education/CLASSRM/teach.htm for links to all of the resources trunk websites and lending site contact information.

Employment Opportunities

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