Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Last week, Governor Quinn proposed his Fiscal Year 2015 budget, which included two scenarios. The first proposed maintaining the current level of the state’s income tax, while the second considered what would happen if the temporary income tax is allowed to expire.

While the Governor’s proposal is nowhere near the level of the Board’s recommendation, which we know is an aggressive recommendation, this plan maintains the existing income tax level, and education funding does quite well. Under this proposal, General State Aid would be prorated at 90.6 percent, compared to just 89 percent for the current fiscal year. The Governor’s proposal calls for an increase of $291 million in FY 15, with additional increases over the following four years. While this amount is still significantly lower than what the Board proposed, it moves funding for schools in a positive direction, allowing districts to begin making up some of the ground lost through the past five years of significant reductions to the state’s contribution to the K-12 education budget.

There is still a very long way to go in the state’s budget-making process. However, it is a positive sign that lawmakers are ready to begin a serious dialogue on stopping cuts to education. Earlier this month, both Houses asked me to testify about the possibility of a $1 billion reduction to our education budget. I hope that you will continue to communicate the impact of such reductions with your local legislators. Where possible, use actual examples of how reductions have affected students and what additional cuts may mean to their education and our state’s economic future.

You may access side-by-side comparisons of the various FY 15 budget scenarios at www.isbe.net/budget/default.htm.

Later this week, I anticipate that members of the Senate’s Education Funding Advisory Committee (EFAC) will introduce legislation to make significant changes to the state’s education funding formula. The Board has been supportive of this group’s efforts, and we look forward to seeing their proposal, which is aimed at providing for more equitable funding distribution. Our current formula does not treat all students and taxpayers in an equitable manner.

We are now beginning our second week of the field test for the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) in English language arts or mathematics. Last week, about 15,000 Illinois students participated in this “test of the test.” As expected, there have been some issues, and
PARCC has responded with adjustments, such as additional call center staff and protocol. But, by and large, it seems to be moving along as expected. Media coverage of the test has generally been positive, and social media reaction has been quite active, including from students, parents and teachers, including some very positive feedback on Twitter.

Thank you for working with us on this opportunity to shape the new assessment. Your participation is vital to the success of this new assessment, and participating in this field test provides students and staff with valuable experiences as they take this assessment next year.

Thanks and have a great week!

Chris

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.

- Illinois 5Essentials Survey – To be conducted March 17 through April 25
- 2014 Summer Food Service Program Webinar – April 3
- Illinois Association of Title I Directors Spring Conference – April 9
- Deadline to Apply for “RNs in Special Education” Course – April 10
- FY 2015 21st CCLC Program Grant Reader Application Materials Due – April 11
- Arts and Foreign Language Planning Assistance Grant Deadline – April 14
- Request for Applications for the HealthierUS School Challenge Curricula Reimbursement Program Due – April 15 (www.isbe.net/funding_opps/htmls/rfp.htm)
- Deadline to Complete IEP Facilitation System Pilot Project Survey – April 18 (www.surveymonkey.com/s/8KZ7DSMFAcILITATIONINTERESTSURVEY)
- Every Kid Healthy Week – April 21-25
- 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
- Deadline to Apply to be an SES Provider for the 2014-2015 School Year – April 24 (www.isbe.net/SES/pdf/application_instructions.pdf)
- 2014 Statewide Suicide Prevention Conference – April 25 (http://ipha.com/Public/Events/EventDetails.aspx?eventId=314)
- Illinois School Wellness Conference – April 30 (http://isbe.net/pera/html/oqed.htm)
- Optional Alternative Evaluation Dismissal Process Training Applications Due – May 1 (http://isbe.net/pera/html/oqed.htm)
- 2014 National Youth Science Camp Applications Due – May 4 (www.isbe.net/career/html/msp.htm#nysc)
- 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
Part 25 (Educator Licensure) – Public comment period ends May 12
Applications for the Exception to the 1.0 Percent Cap Due – May 16
Part 33 (Programs for the Preparation of Superintendents in Illinois) – Public comment period ends May 26
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.)

General Counsel
Optional Alternative Evaluative Dismissal Process Training Now Available

Senate Bill 7 established a new section of the School Code, Section 24-16.5 that creates the Optional Alternative Evaluative Dismissal (OAED) process. The OAED process may be utilized on or after a school district’s Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) Implementation Date and is designed to further streamline the hearing procedure for the dismissal of tenured teachers related to performance.

This dismissal process may be used only after a “teacher has failed to complete a remediation plan with a rating equal to or better than a proficient rating . . . [and] the unsatisfactory performance rating evaluation that preceded remediation resulted from a PERA evaluation.” [105 ILCS 5/24-16.5].

The statute prescribes that only “PERA-trained board members” may participate in the vote on whether to retain or dismiss a teacher when the district uses the OAED process.

Board members seeking to be PERA-trained for the purposes of the OAED process must complete training offered by an entity approved by ISBE. Note that only board members in districts that will be using the OAED process must be PERA-trained.

Entities interested in providing PERA training to board members for the OAED process must apply by May 1.

Application materials and additional information may be found at http://isbe.net/pera/html/oaed.htm.

Questions can be directed to Deputy General Counsel Eric Grodsky at egrodsky@isbe.net or (312) 814-2223.

Public School Recognition Assignments Now Posted on State Board Website

As part of ensuring operational compliance with statute and rules, ISBE assigns a recognition status to each district and public school. Please note that due to a recent modification to 23 Illinois Administrative Code 1.20 (b), paper certificates of recognition will no longer be issued to districts and schools. Rather, all recognition assignments are now posted on ISBE’s Public School Recognition Division website at http://isbe.net/recognition/html/recog_status.htm.

Districts and/or schools assigned less than “Fully Recognized” status will continue to be notified via hardcopy letter of recognition reductions and the applicable regional superintendent of schools will be copied on all such notifications.

Please be aware the recognition status of a district or school may be amended at any time with the presentation of additional information or verification that deficiencies have been remedied.

Should you have questions or concerns, contact Jeff Aranowski at jaranows@isbe.net or (312) 814-2223.
**Rules and Waivers**

**Invitation to Comment on Rules**

Due to a delay in publication of proposed Part 33 in the Illinois Register, public comment on this rulemaking will be accepted through May 27, 2014. The proposal has been posted on the agency’s Web site at [www.isbe.net/rules](http://www.isbe.net/rules); choose “Proposed Rules and Amendments.” Please submit any comments or suggestions to rules@isbe.net.

**Part 33 (Programs for the Preparation of Superintendents in Illinois):** Establishes criteria for the approval of programs to prepare superintendents, including admission standards, minimum curriculum, internship components, and required assessments and rubric.

*Public comment period ends May 27, 2014.*

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**College and Career Readiness**

**Grant Readers Sought for FY 2015 21st CCLC Program Grant Competition**

ISBE’s College and Career Readiness Division seeks additional grant readers for the Fiscal Year 2015 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) Program grant competition.

Preferred grant readers must have after-school experience and knowledge in after-school programming and/or community-based programming that serves school-aged students, grant experience, previous grant reading experience, 21st CCLC experience and knowledge, program management and experience with schools and districts.

Readers must be available to read the Request for Proposals (RFP) and participate in a training webinar. Readers will read and score their assigned applications, which will be sent to them through a web-based system. Access to a computer with internet capability will be necessary, and an honorarium will be provided.

Once selected, readers will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement, an unobligated contract and complete a conflict of interest questionnaire. A timeline associated with this endeavor will be released at a later date.

To be considered, applicants should send a letter of interest and resume or curriculum vitae by April 11 to:

* Tiffany Taylor  
  Principal Consultant  
  Illinois State Board of Education  
  College and Career Readiness Division  
  100 N. First St.  
  Springfield, IL 62777-0001

Materials may also be submitted via email at [21stcclc@isbe.net](mailto:21stcclc@isbe.net).

If you have questions, please contact Tiffany Taylor at (217) 524-4832.

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**2014 National Youth Science Camp Applications Now Available Online**

Applications to attend the 2014 National Youth Science Camp (NYSC) are now available online at [www.isbe.net/career/html/msp.htm#nysc](http://www.isbe.net/career/html/msp.htm#nysc).

Two graduating high school students will be selected to represent Illinois at the all-expenses-paid honors program, which will be held from June 27 through July 20. Applications must be sent via email to Tara Bell at tbell@isbe.net by May 4.

For more information about the NYSC, visit [www.nysf.com/w/](http://www.nysf.com/w/). For questions about the application process, please contact Ms. Bell at (217) 524-4832 or tbell@isbe.net.

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**Preparation and Evaluation**

**Free Teacher Observation and Evaluation Tools Available for School Districts**

Schools and districts that are looking for a free and easy-to-use platform to support the observation and evaluation process may want to consider BloomBoard.

BloomBoard is currently working with several Illinois school districts to pilot observation and evaluation tools and a personalized professional development platform. The company works with more than 600 school districts nationwide to support an online-based evaluation process.
BloomBoard uses the data from evaluations to help administrators provide individualized professional development recommendations to teachers to help them achieve their learning goals. To learn more, please email illinois@bloomboard.com or visit http://info.bloomboard.com/illinois.

Nutrition and Wellness Programs

2014 Summer Food Service Program Webinar Scheduled for April 3

The 2014 Summer Food Service Program webinar series, entitled “Keeping Schools Involved in Summer Meals,” is scheduled for April 3 from 1 to 2 p.m.

School authorities, teachers, community organizations and parents interested in getting involved in summer feeding are encouraged to participate. The webinar will present examples of schools that have made the Summer Food Service Program successful. Guest speakers will discuss what it takes for schools to run the summer feeding program in their communities, provide ideas on leveraging partnerships and illustrate innovative ways to feed children during summer when school is out.

To join the audio:

- Call the toll-free number (from your telephone, audio is not available over the computer): (800) 988-0278
- When prompted, enter the participant pass code: 5870095#
- Please plan to connect five to 15 minutes early to ensure you are connected on time.

To join the webinar:

- Click on (or copy and paste) this link: usdafns.invisionmeeting.com/join/bwvxjry.
- Enter your name and email address and then click “submit.”
- Check the box to “Always use Manual Join,” then click on “Join Session” – the session will then be downloaded. Open the download and you will be connected to the meeting.

If you have questions or require assistance, contact technical support at (888) 203-7900, ext. 3, or email support@invisionmeeting.com.

Team Nutrition Training Subgrants Available for CACFP Multi-Site Sponsors

The Request for Proposals for the Illinois Child Care Wellness – Team Nutrition Training Subgrant is available on ISBE’s Funding Opportunities webpage at www.isbe.net/funding_opps/htmls/rfp.htm.

Funding for 15 subgrants of $6,700, up to a total of $26,700, will be awarded for training and implementation of programs that create or maintain healthier child care environments.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) multi-site sponsors of facilities at which 90 percent or more of the enrolled children are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, determined by CACFP claim data, are eligible to apply. Eligible CACFP facilities include At-Risk Afterschool Meals, Head Start, Even Start and pre-kindergarten programs.

An online, four-segment Subgrant Workshop, designed to inform and prepare institutions for applying, is posted under “What’s New?” on the ISBE Nutrition and Wellness Programs website at www.isbe.net/nutrition. Viewing all four segments is required for anyone intending to apply for the subgrant who did not attend an in-person Subgrant Workshop.

The deadline to apply is April 30. If you have questions, please contact Robin Desai at rdesai@isbe.net.

HealthierUS School Challenge Curricula Reimbursement Funds Now Available

The Request for Applications (RFA) for the HealthierUS School Challenge Curricula (HUSSC) Reimbursement Program is now available.

Fifty Team Nutrition schools – 25 high schools, 15 middle schools (6-8 or 7-8) and 10 K-8 and/or K-12 schools – statewide will receive up to $650 to purchase approved nutrition, physical education and wellness
curricula or educational software that will assist the schools in meeting the nutrition education/physical education and physical activity criteria in the HUSSC initiative.

The reimbursement program RFA is posted at www.isbe.net/funding_opps/htmls/rfp.htm. The due date is April 15.

If you have questions regarding this grant, contact Joan Love at jlove@isbe.net or (217) 782-2491.

**Schools Encouraged to Participate in Every Kid Healthy Week April 21-25**

Action for Healthy Kids is observing Every Kid Healthy Week from April 21-25 to show kids the ease and importance of eating well and being active every day. The goal is to get students to incorporate healthy behaviors into their daily lives.

More than 500 schools across the United States are holding special events throughout April to highlight sound nutrition, regular physical activity and health-promoting school programs as solutions to the nation’s childhood obesity epidemic.

Every Kid Healthy Week is Action for Healthy Kids’ annual, signature observance designed to celebrate its schools’ wellness achievements. Every Kid Healthy Week was recently added to the National Calendar of Health Observances after being sponsored for Congressional recognition by U.S. Rep. Danny Davis.

Any school can celebrate Every Kid Healthy Week by putting in place wellness initiatives, such as hosting a taste test of healthy food, holding a Family Fitness Night, celebrating with a healthy and active party, incorporating classroom fitness breaks, holding a health fair, introducing recreational field days or renovating a school playground.

More information is available online at www.actionforhealthykids.org/storage/documents/team_s/admin_docs/EKH_Week_handout.pdf.

**Webinar Set, Feedback Sought on Proposed School Wellness Policy Rule**


This proposed rule would ensure that local educational agencies establish and implement local school wellness policies that meet minimum standards designed to support a school environment that promotes sound nutrition and student health, reduces childhood obesity and provides transparency to the public on school wellness policy content and implementation.

Staff with the Nutrition and Wellness Programs Division will present an overview of this proposed rule during the Tuesday Trainings webinar on April 15 from 2 to 3 p.m.

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service recently developed a School Wellness Policy website at www.fns.usda.gov///school-meals/local-school-wellness-policy. The proposed rule, how to comment, a White House and USDA press release and school nutrition environment and wellness resources are located there.

- **What:** Tuesday Trainings webinar on the proposed “Local School Wellness Policy Implementation Under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010” rule
- **When:** April 15, 2 to 3 p.m.
- **Register:** www1.gotomeeting.com/register/672001681

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**Title Grant Administration**

**Parent Survey for Supplemental Educational Services Evaluation Now Available Online**

The Center for Research in Educational Policy (CREP) at The University of Memphis conducts an annual evaluation for ISBE’s Supplemental Educational Services (SES).

SES is a component of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as reauthorized by the No Child Left
Behind Act, which provides extra academic assistance for students from low-income families attending Title I schools.

CREP’s evaluation assists ISBE in monitoring the effectiveness of providers approved to offer SES in the state. The primary components of the evaluation are: SES student achievement outcomes, SES student attendance and the perceptions of parents with children attending SES.

Parental feedback plays a critical role in evaluating SES providers. Increasing the level of input from parents, through increasing the survey response rate, will ensure the evaluation contains accurate, reliable information.

For the 2013-2014 evaluation, the SES Illinois Parent Survey will now be available online.

In April, districts with SES-eligible schools will receive information about the survey to share with parents of SES students. The information will contain a unique district/school link to the online survey and additional instructions. Parents may access the survey through a computer, tablet or a smartphone, and the survey is available in English and in Spanish.

All district superintendents with SES-eligible schools will receive an email from CREP requesting confirmation of SES-eligible schools and a SES contact person for the district.

For questions or additional information regarding the parent survey, please contact Beth Murphy, research assistant at CREP in Memphis, at kmurphy3@memphis.edu or (866) 670-6147.

Illinois Association of Title I Directors Spring Conference Scheduled for April 9

The Illinois Association of Title I Directors will be hosting its annual spring conference at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield on April 9 from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Topics will include assessment, fiscal updates and preparing a successful amendment to No Child Left Behind applications.

To see the full agenda, visit www.iatd.net/in-the-news/iatdapril92014meetingagenda.

- **What:** Illinois Association of Title I Directors Spring Conference
- **When:** April 9, 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- **Where:** Crowne Plaza Springfield, 3000 S. Dirksen Parkway, in Springfield
- **Register:**
  - www.regonline.com/register/checkin.aspx?MethodId=0&eventsessionId=40eedd47c744852aa5613611a928e31&eventID=1361305.

Special Education Services

Special Education Medical Review Training Available for Registered Nurses

ISBE is holding a course for registered nurses who do not hold an educator license endorsed for school nursing to become competent in special education services. The web-delivered course, “RNs in Special Education,” will open on April 16 and run for six weeks through May 27.

This instructor-facilitated, guided study is designed to meet the training requirements of Rule 226.160, Special Education Medical Review (www.isbe.net/rules/archive/default.htm), which allows opportunities other than education licensure (i.e., training, testing) be provided for currently employed staff to become qualified to conduct all components of a student’s Medical Review. Portions of the rule take effect on July 1, 2016.

This course does not confer certification or Professional Educator License endorsed for school nursing or any rights and privileges of certified staff. The rule change allows time for more nurses to obtain ISBE licensure/endorsement in school nursing while assuring the competence of currently employed registered nurses to conduct the student evaluation component of Medical Review and assist in planning, implementing and evaluating the Individualized Education Program that a student’s special education team may create, as required by ISBE rule.

RNs who successfully complete this course will be able to continue to provide such evaluation and services in special education through the course of their employment in any Illinois public school as long as RN
licensure and professional development requirements are met.

The free course will be repeated throughout the year as long as there is sufficient demand. Each six-week group of students will work with an assigned facilitator (instructor) and be required to complete assignments and participate via online communication. The course is not a webinar; however, as in most online courses, no classroom time or specific class hours are required.

Registered nurses who are interested in this course must meet the following requirements and send documents to Jessica Gerdes at jgerdes@isbe.net by April 10:

- Cover letter of application with name, contact information, nursing degree held (diploma, associate, bachelor’s, master’s) and statement that the RN is not nor has previously held ISBE Professional Educator License endorsement in school nursing (formerly called certification)
- Copy of current RN licensure
- Proof of current employment in an Illinois public school or co-op (contract, pay stub with salary obliterated, etc.)
- Letter from school supervisor indicating the RN is providing or is expected to provide medical/health evaluation for students being evaluated or re-evaluated for special education services

Space is limited for this first session of this course. If available slots are not sufficient to meet the need, preference in the first session will be given to RNs who also hold a bachelor’s degree in nursing or health-related field. Additional questions may be directed to Ms. Gerdes at (312) 814-8252 or jgerdes@isbe.net.

**Screening, Assessment and Support Services Available for Youth in Crisis**

The Screening, Assessment and Support Services (SASS) program provides intensive mental health services for children and youth who may need hospitalization for mental health care. When a child poses a risk to himself or others and any time you or others think a child is having a mental health crisis, the Crisis and Referral Entry Services (CARES) telephone response line may be contacted.

Please take note and remind your schools that it may be neither appropriate nor legal for schools to tell parents that they need to have their child screened before he or she will be allowed to return to school.

For more information regarding the appropriate use of SASS and the CARES line, go to www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=64971.

**Illinois Amistad Commission**

**2014 DuSable Museum and Illinois Amistad Commission Spring Institute on April 17-19**

All Illinois public school K-12 instructors are invited to attend the 2014 DuSable Museum of African American History and Illinois Amistad Commission Spring Institute at Western Illinois University on April 17-19.

The Spring Institute will deploy a variety of media, scholarly presentations, pedagogical workshops and the recently-developed Illinois Amistad curricula to prepare instructors on how to implement an interdisciplinary and integrated approach to teaching about the African and African American experience.

The Institute will examine the following topics: Enslavement and Trade, The Historic and Contemporary Vestiges of Enslavement, The Deep Roots of Africans on American Society, African Americans and Social Entrepreneurship, The Legacy and Pioneering Spirit of Jean Baptiste Pointe DuSable and Illinois and the Underground Railroad. The event will also include keynote presentations by Dr. Carol Adams and award-winning historian, Dr. Cheryl LaRoache.

The Institute is free, but space is limited. More information is available at
In Brief

Professional Development

- Loyola University Health System Pediatric Community Outreach is hosting a program for school district health personnel entitled “The World in Which They Live: Children of the 21st Century” on May 7 from 3:30 to 8 p.m. at Loyola University Medical Center, 2160 S. First Ave., in Maywood. Topics include diabetes, concussions, exposure to trauma and bullying. For more information and to register, contact Susan Finn at sfinn@lumc.edu. If attending, please note any food restrictions.
- Pathways Resource Center at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has released a free guide to help educators build and improve rigorous study programs in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields. The guide is available online at pathways.illinois.edu/?page_id=372. The resource center has also released a guide that provides school districts the framework to help students achieve their college and career goals through Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs). The ILPs guide is at pathways.illinois.edu/?page_id=928.

Educator Opportunities

- The Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts (AISWCD) is accepting applications for the 2014 Conservation Teacher of the Year program to recognize the outstanding conservation education efforts of the state’s teachers in two age categories: grades K-8 and 9-12. The award package includes two meal tickets to the AISWCD Summer Conference, where the award will be presented, a recognition plaque and a $250 Illinois Biodiversity Field Trip Grant opportunity from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Entry instructions are available at www.aiswcd.org/programs/awards/.
- 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.

Classroom Opportunities

- Registration remains open for Earth Day in the Parks events from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources at Fort Massac State Park in Metropolis and Mermet Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area in Belknap. An additional class would also be accepted at Argyle Lake State Park in Colchester and Cache River Wetlands Center in Cypress. Access the registration form and more information about the events at dnr.state.il.us/education/CLASSRM/EDITInstruc.htm. Applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.
- The ninth annual Endangered Species Day will take place May 16 to help teachers and students learn about the importance of protecting threatened and endangered plant and animal species. Visit www.endangeredspeciesday.org to register your classroom activity and access materials provided in the Endangered Species Day Toolkit. The website also features a Teacher Resource Center/Teacher Forum.

Student Opportunities

- The Knowledge Project seeks submissions for its 20th Children’s Creative Writing Campaign, which is open to pre-kindergarten through grade 8 students. This year’s suggested writing topic asks young authors to use their imagination to describe a new online game or comic, interactive story or useful app. Submissions must be original, imaginative and legible and should be mailed to Children’s Creative Writing Campaign Inc., 111 John St., Suite 1070, New York, NY, 10038. The deadline is April 11. For more information, contact Meg Hunnewell at (212) 346-9933 or mhunnewell@theknowledgeproject.com.
- Latino Art Beat has partnered with the 10th Annual HollyShorts Film Festival in Hollywood to offer the Youth Film Competition 2014.
Students under 21 years old who attend a high school or college in Illinois are eligible to compete. Films must be original, with an original score and 15-minute or less running time. The winner will receive a $10,000 renewable scholarship (up to $40,000) to attend the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and be flown to Los Angeles for the film festival’s opening night in August. The regular deadline is April 11 ($25 entry fee), and the late deadline is May 23 ($35 entry fee). For more information, contact Latino Art Beat at (773) 291-6901 or latinoartbeat@hotmail.com or HollyShorts Film Festival at (818) 760-9897 or admin@hollyshorts.com.

- 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/.

Resources
- The latest set in the Illinois' Natural Resources Trading Cards series is now available. Due to limited supplies, the cards will be offered to Illinois school teachers first. Send your request on school letterhead to IDNR Education, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702.

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