Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

On Friday we received word from the U.S. Department of Education (US Ed) that our waiver application for flexibility from certain aspects of the federal No Child Left Behind law was approved, effective as of the 2014-15 school year. We have worked toward this end for more than two years. I am glad to see we have finally received approval.

The wait for approval is significantly longer than what most people would have anticipated. The reason given for the delayed approval was our timeline for implementing new teacher evaluation systems, which is codified in state law. I believe maintaining our commitment to state law, rather than the promise of a federal waiver was the right thing to do. Rushing such timelines in other states has not been successful.

The approved waiver allows us flexibility to continue with the development and implementation of an Illinois strategy to better meet the needs of students, focusing on closing achievement gaps, supporting our most challenged districts, and preparing all students for college and career readiness. It also will provide districts with additional flexibility with the use of Title funds, because requirements for set asides for professional development, Choice and Supplemental Education Services are eliminated.

Illinois has moved forward and adopted many elements of the waiver, including the adoption of college and career-ready learning standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics in the summer of 2010 and the implementation of a growth metric earlier this year.

The approved waiver also calls for a new state and district accountability system. Illinois will now be able to use multiple measures to demonstrate progress rather than simply a test score. The Illinois accountability system calls for a renewed focus on closing achievement gaps, turning around the lowest-performing schools, building capacity for school improvement and enhancing transparency.

We will begin to fully implement this new system during the next school year. Additional information will be forthcoming.

Illinois becomes the 43rd state to receive approval for an NCLB waiver.

Finally, many of you have recently completed the final administration of the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and others are preparing to give the Prairie State Achievement Examination
(PSAE) to 11th graders for the final time this week. I know this is a busy season and I appreciate all you do to fulfill this federal requirement for annual student testing. The Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness College and Careers (PARCC) is an important part of our new accountability system and students in more than 600 districts participated in the first session to field test PARCC items. I very much appreciate your willingness to help with this important work.

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](http://www.isbe.net).

- **Illinois 5Essentials Survey** – Concludes April 25 ([http://www.isbe.net/5essentials/](http://www.isbe.net/5essentials/))
- **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 ([http://www.isbe.net/ses/pdf/application_instructions.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/ses/pdf/application_instructions.pdf))
- **Truants’ Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP) FY 2015 RFP and Continuation Application Deadline** – April 28
- **Optional Alternative Evaluation Dismissal Process Training Applications Due** – May 1 ([http://isbe.net/pera/html/oaed.htm](http://isbe.net/pera/html/oaed.htm))
- **2014 National Youth Science Camp Applications Due** – May 4 ([www.isbe.net/career/html/msp.htm#nysc](http://www.isbe.net/career/html/msp.htm#nysc))
- **ISBE No Child Left Behind Technical Assistance Workshop Registration Deadline** – May 5 ([www.isbe.net/grants/html/nclb-workshops.htm](http://www.isbe.net/grants/html/nclb-workshops.htm))
- **School Nutrition Employee Week** – May 5-9
- **National School Nurse Day** – May 7 ([http://www.nasn.org/AboutNASN/NationalSchoolNurseDay](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
- **ISBE offices closed for Memorial Day** – May 26
- **Part 33 (Programs for the Preparation of Superintendents in Illinois)** – Public comment period ends May 27
- **2014-2015 ISBE Student Advisory Council Application Deadline** – May 30
- **Part 50 (Evaluation of Certified Employees under Articles 24A and 34 of the School Code)** – Public comment period ends June 9
- **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.)

**Upcoming Events**

**ISBE and Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents to Present Conference**

The Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents and Illinois State Board of Education will present the
two-day summer conference “Lead … Focus … Connect: Every Student College and Career Ready” on June 17-18 at the Prairie Capital Convention Center in Springfield. Registration information will be coming soon. Please save the date.

The conference is designed to update and expand educators’ knowledge of current Illinois initiatives, provide classroom teachers with practical application focusing on key topics, and promote sharing of expertise and ideas among educators.

ISBE speakers will present key topics regarding agency policy, regulation and mandates. Featured speakers are expected to include:

- Susie Morrison, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Education Officer
- Amy Jo Clemens, Assistant Superintendent for Innovation and Improvement.
- Dr. Mary O’Brien, Assistant Superintendent for Teacher and Leader Effectiveness.
- Dr. Jason Helfer, Assistant Superintendent for Technology Collaboration, Tech Apps, Writing IEP Goals, Licensure, Teacher and Principal Evaluation, Rtl and PBIS, ELL, and Continuous Improvement.

Breakout sessions will showcase practical application of key topics, including ELA Writing, Math Strategies, NGSS, Balanced Assessment, Equip Rubric, PARCC: Evidence Tables, PARCC Accommodations, Technology Collaboration, Tech Apps, Writing IEP Goals, Licensure, Teacher and Principal Evaluation, Rtl and PBIS, ELL, and Continuous Improvement.

All teachers and administrators are encouraged to attend. A limited block of rooms are being held at the Hilton and Abraham Lincoln hotels in Springfield.

**Funding and Disbursements**

**2012-13 Driver Education Cost Report**

Per Public Act 97-1025 effective January 1, 2013, the State Board of Education is required to provide an annual report of the per capita Driver Education cost. The 2012-13 report has been compiled and can be accessed at http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/driver-ed-cost-rpt-12-13.pdf. The report utilizes expenditure and revenue data submitted by school districts via their audited Annual Financial Report (AFR) ending June 30 as well as the number of students provided Driver Education in the same year. District Annual Financial Reports for FY 2013 can be accessed at http://www.isbe.net/sfms/html/financial_archive.htm.

Questions can be directed to Lisa Willhoit lwillhoit@isbe.net in the Division of Funding and Disbursement Services at 217-782-5256.

**Federal Interest Income**

**– Quarterly Reminder**

The Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34-Education, Part 80 Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, Subpart C-Post Award Requirements, Section 80.21 Payment, requires grantees and subgrantees to promptly, but at least quarterly, remit interest earned on advances to the appropriate federal agency. The grantee or subgrantee may keep actual interest amounts up to $100 per year gained on Federal deposits per bank account, if applicable, for administrative purposes. Grant recipients have discretion to set up account(s) that are non-interest bearing to avoid returning interest.

To ensure compliance with federal administrative requirements, local education agency fiscal officials should develop internal controls and a sound methodology to calculate and return, at least quarterly, interest earned in excess of $100 on federal program funds. Interest calculation methodologies must be based on actual, not estimated, interest earnings on federal funds. Further details as to how federal interest should be calculated and remitted can be found on Pages 10-12 of the State and Federal Grant Administration Policy and Fiscal Requirements and Procedures, which is online at http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/fiscal_procedure_handbk.pdf.
Interest should be returned using the following guidelines:

- Checks for interest earned should be made payable to the Illinois State Board of Education.
- Checks should not include the return of unexpended disbursements from the Illinois State Board of Education. Even though unexpended disbursements and interest payments are made payable to the Illinois State Board of Education, separate checks should be issued for both.
- Checks should be accompanied by a statement identifying the program and the program year from which the interest was earned.

All checks must be mailed to: Illinois State Board of Education, Funding and Disbursements Services Division (E-320), 100 N. First St., Springfield, IL 62777-0001.

**Employer’s TRS Contribution on Federally-Funded Salary for Summer Activities**

The Teachers Retirement System (TRS) requires earnings for summer work to be reported on an accrual basis. Earnings for work performed in June 2014 must be reported on the 2013-14 TRS Annual Report, even if the member is not paid for the June work until July or August. The 2013-14 TRS and THIS contribution rates apply to accrued earnings for work performed in June, regardless of when the June earnings are paid to the teacher.

Earnings for work performed in July and August 2014 must be reported on the 2014-15 TRS Annual Report. The 2014-15 TRS and THIS contribution rates apply to accrued earnings for work performed in July and August, regardless of when the July and August earnings are paid to the teacher.

Based on several questions from the field regarding what federal TRS rate to use for SUMMER salaries, the Teachers Retirement System (trs.illinois.gov) has instructed LEAs to use the new (revised) employer TRS contribution on federally-funded salaries that are providing services AFTER the new fiscal year (July 1, 2014). Below are three scenarios and what federal TRS rate to use in each scenario:

1. For federally-funded staff/teachers that have completed their assignments by **June 30, 2014**, but being paid in July, August and September 2014: The CURRENT RATE (FY14) applies (35.41 percent).
2. For federally-funded staff/teachers ACTUALLY providing services in July, August and September 2014 and being paid in July, August and September, 2014: The NEW RATE (FY15) applies (7.44 percent).
3. FY15 federal grant staff: The NEW RATE applies (7.44 percent).

Further questions can be directed to the Teachers Retirement System at (888) 877-0890.

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**Title Grant Administration**

**FY 2015 No Child Left Behind Technical Assistance Workshops Scheduled**

ISBE Title Grants and Federal and State Monitoring division staff invites you to attend a one-day No Child Left Behind (NCLB) technical assistance workshop that will be offered throughout the state this summer.

This interactive workshop will focus on what’s new in the Fiscal Year 2015 NCLB Consolidated Application, audits, school-wide and Title I Districts’ plans in Rising Star and related flexibility, allowable use of funds/proper grants management and Choice and SES issues. A pre-session will be held early, especially for new directors, which will focus on the application in its entirety. The agenda allows for time at the end of the day to meet one-on-one with your principal consultant.

Discussions will include the U.S. Department of Education’s recent approval of our waiver application for flexibility from certain aspects of the No Child Left Behind law.

There is no fee to attend, and lunch will be provided. Space is limited, so early registration is encouraged.

For more information about these workshops, including instructions for registering, please visit [www.isbe.net/grants/html/nclb-workshops.htm](http://www.isbe.net/grants/html/nclb-workshops.htm).

Participants are asked to sign up for only one session. The deadline to register is Monday, May 5.
**Rules and Waivers**

**Notice of Completed Rulemaking**

Please be advised that four sets of amendments recently adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education are now in effect. Changes have been posted at http://www.isbe.net/rules/archive/default.htm. Please choose “Rules Currently in Effect” and scroll to Parts 227, 232, 240 and 265.

**Part 227 (Gifted Education):** Makes technical changes to conform to the new licensure system that took effect July 1, 2013.

**Affected Section:** 227.25

**Effective Date:** April 1, 2014

**Part 232 (Summer Bridges Program):** Makes technical changes to conform to the new licensure system that took effect July 1, 2013.

**Affected Section:** 232.60

**Effective Date:** April 1, 2014

**Part 240 (Alternative Learning Opportunities Program):** Makes technical changes to conform to the new licensure system that took effect July 1, 2013; additional changes are being made in response to P.A. 97-495, effective January 1, 2012, regarding the enrollment in these programs of students who have been suspended or expelled.

**Affected Sections:** 240.20, 240.30, 240.50, 240.60 and 240.100

**Effective Date:** April 1, 2014

**Part 265 (Grants for Arts Education and Foreign Language Education):** Makes technical changes to conform to the new licensure system that took effect July 1, 2013.

**Affected Sections:** 265.10 and 265.220

**Effective Date:** April 1, 2014

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**Invitation to Comment on Rules**

A set of proposed amendments recently reviewed by the Illinois State Board of Education is available for public comment. The proposal has been posted on the agency’s Web site at www.isbe.net/rules; choose “Proposed Rules and Amendments.” Please submit any comments or suggestions to rules@isbe.net.

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**Part 50 (Evaluation of Certified Employees under Articles 24A and 34 of the School Code):** Adjusts the method to be used to determine the school districts whose performance ranks in the lowest 20 percent of districts statewide for purposes of implementing performance evaluation systems starting September 1, 2015; aligns terminology used in the Part to the educator licensure system that took effect July 1, 2013.

**Public comment period ends June 9, 2014.**

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**Innovation and Improvement**

**Statewide System of Support Foundational Services Offer Professional Development**

ISBE has partnered with the Regional Offices of Education and Intermediate Service Centers across the state to deliver high quality, coordinated and consistent professional development, technical assistance and networking. Districts seeking more information about professional development for the new Illinois ELA Learning Standards should contact their local Regional Office of Education/Intermediate Service Center.

- ELA Instructional Shift Kits: which include links to resources for teachers to better understand and be better prepared to address the instructional shifts that are needed to meet the demands of the new Illinois Learning Standards.
- EQuIP (Educators Evaluating the Quality of Instructional Products) Rubric: a quality review process designed to determine the quality and alignment of instructional lessons and units to the CCSS.

In cooperation with the Illinois Center for School Improvement, locally-identified ROE/ISC Service Providers will offer professional development using ISBE-designed and approved resources and networking opportunities for sharing between schools and districts.

**SIG 1003(g) School Improvement Grant Request for Proposals Now Available**

The System of Support and District Intervention Division announces the posting of the SIG 1003(g) School Improvement Grant Request for Proposal (RFP).
Annual grant awards to districts will range from not less than $50,000 to $2 million per year for each Priority Services eligible school, subject to available funds. Actual allocations are based on the intervention model chosen (Turnaround, Transformation, Restart or Closure) and ISBE guidelines as outlined in this RFP. The grant period will begin during Fiscal Year 2015 and may be renewed through FY 2017.

To access the RFP, associated Needs Assessment and Application Forms, refer to the SIG 1003(g) home page at [www.isbe.net/sos/htmls/sip_1003.htm](http://www.isbe.net/sos/htmls/sip_1003.htm). Links to resources and the list of eligible schools can also be accessed from that page.

Applicants should also reference the SIG 1003(g) Lead Partner webpage at [www.isbe.net/apl/default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/apl/default.htm) for more information about Lead Partner organizations that have been pre-approved by ISBE. The deadline for submission of applications is Wednesday, May 7, 2014 at 4 p.m.

The SIG 1003(g) Team has also developed a series of technical assistance webinars to assist priority schools in the application process. Three pre-recorded webinars and associated resources will be made available on the SIG 1003(g) webpage shortly. They include:

- **Introduction to the SIG 1003(g) School Improvement Grant (Pre-Recorded)** located at [http://www.isbe.net/asx/2014/SIG Intro 040814.asx](http://www.isbe.net/asx/2014/SIG Intro 040814.asx).
- **SIG 1003(g) Developing the Needs Assessment (Pre-Recorded), Step 1** located at [http://www.isbe.net/asx/2014/SIG Dev Needs St1 040814.asx](http://www.isbe.net/asx/2014/SIG Dev Needs St1 040814.asx). Step 2 located at [http://www.isbe.net/asx/2014/SIG Dev Needs St2 040814.asx](http://www.isbe.net/asx/2014/SIG Dev Needs St2 040814.asx).
- **SIG Budget – (Pre-Recorded)** located at [http://www.isbe.net/asx/2014/SIG Budget 040814.asx](http://www.isbe.net/asx/2014/SIG Budget 040814.asx).

The SIG 1003(g) team will also provide two live webinars:

- **SIG 1003(g) Successful Applications “by Design”** to be presented on Wednesday, April 16, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- **SIG 1003(g) Compiling and Submitting Application** to be presented on Thursday, April 17, from 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Access the SIG 1003(g) webpage at [www.isbe.net/sos/htmls/sip_1003.htm](http://www.isbe.net/sos/htmls/sip_1003.htm) in order to register for these webinars.

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**Student Advisory Council**

**Student Advisory Council Application Available Online for 2014-2015 School Year**

Applications are currently being accepted for ISBE’s Student Advisory Council for the 2014-2015 school year.

Students attending a public high school in Illinois who are entering the fall semester as a sophomore, junior or senior are eligible to apply. The application is now available on the ISBE website at [www.isbe.net/sac](http://www.isbe.net/sac).

Interested candidates must complete an application and essay. The application closing date is Friday, May 30, at 5 p.m.

Eleven positions are open for the 2014-15 school year. Four face-to-face meetings are required if selected.

If you have questions, please contact Vince Camille at (217) 782-3007 or [vcamille@isbe.net](mailto:vcamille@isbe.net).

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**In Brief**

**In the News**

- Pearl Westerlund, a fifth-grade student at Lincoln Elementary School in Calumet City, is among six national grand prize winners in the 2014 Preferred Meals “Healthy Lunch for a Healthier Me!” Art Contest for fourth- through sixth-graders. Pearl’s winning design is now a featured billboard display on a Preferred Meals 24-foot truck that delivers food for the school’s meals.

**Professional Development**

- **The Chicago Botanic Garden** is offering a variety of professional development opportunities throughout the summer, including “STEM in Your Neighborhood” and “Field Research for Educators.” For a full list of upcoming
workshops and additional information, go to http://tiny.cc/hj93dx.

- **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.

**Employment Opportunities**

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