Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Our Back-to-School Webinar is set for next Tuesday and more than 600 of you have already signed up to participate. We will provide you with an overview of a number of issues, including a discussion of what types of flexibility we have under the waiver from some aspects of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, the implementation of the new Illinois Learning Standards based on the Common Core and the accompanying Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) exams. There will also be a discussion about teacher and principal evaluations and Report Card metrics.

If you have not registered, it’s not too late. You may register for the webinar at www1.gotomeeting.com/register/3260806641. This is a chance for you to get additional information and ask questions. The webinar is set for 10 a.m., Tuesday, Aug. 19.

We are developing a number of materials in conjunction with the webinar for you to use to help you communicate with your constituencies. These are in addition to the existing materials already available on our website.

I’d like to point out one particular piece just recently developed by our Assessment Division that is aimed at helping to answer questions about the PARCC assessment. It is a very high-level fact sheet that answers some basic questions. You may access this fact sheet at www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/2015/asmt-top-10-for-teachers.pdf.

Finally, I know that every year in many districts there can be a scramble to fill positions prior to the start of school. Late last month, our licensure evaluators began processing priority requests from the Regional Offices of Education. We scan priority admissions into ELIS as they are received; licenses are typically issued within a few days of receipt of these requests. I encourage you to work with your local Regional Office of Education if you need expedited licensure action.

I hope you are enjoying your summer and you can join us for the webinar next Tuesday.

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.

- 2013-14 Pupil Transportation Reimbursement Claim – Aug. 15
- 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.)
- Deadline for 2014 Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Children Essay and Art Contest submissions – Aug. 15
- Part 25 (Educator Licensure), Part 50 (Evaluation of Certified Employees under Articles 24A and 34 of the School Code), Part 51 (Dismissal of Tenured Teachers under Article 24 and Dismissal of Tenured Teachers and Principals under Article 34 of the School Code) and Part 305 (School Food Service) – Public comment period ends August 25
- Deadline to submit 2014 salary data to the Employment Information System (EIS) – Aug. 29
- Deadline to apply for a Fuel Up 2014 Breakfast Grant – Aug. 29
- Capital Needs Assessment Survey deadline – Sept. 1 (http://www.isbe.net/construction/default.htm)
- ISBE offices closed for Labor Day – Sept. 1
- Annual bilingual program directors’ meeting – Sept. 10-11 (www.thecenterweb.org/irc/)
- ISBE offices closed for Columbus Day – Oct. 13
- FY 2015 School District Budget/Joint Agreement Forms – Must be submitted to ISBE no later than Oct. 31 (http://www.isbe.net/sfms/budget/default.htm)
- ISBE offices closed for Election Day – Nov. 4
- Eighth annual Conference on Best Practices in Nonpublic Special Education Programs – Nov. 6-7 (http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/np_handouts/default.htm)
- Annual Statement of Affairs (ISBE 50-37) – To be filed with ISBE by Dec. 15 (http://www.isbe.net/sfms/afr/asp.htm)
- ISBE offices closed for Veterans Day – Nov. 11
- ISBE offices closed for Thanksgiving – Nov. 27-28
- ISBE offices closed for Christmas Day – Dec. 25
- Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment (DLM-AA) testing window – March 23-May 1

Funding and Disbursements

Preliminary FY 2015 General State Aid Entitlement Calculations Completed

Preliminary fiscal year 2015 General State Aid (GSA) entitlement calculations for all local education agencies (LEA) have been completed.

The first FY 2015 GSA payment scheduled for Aug. 10 has been made. The $6,119 GSA foundation level established by the General Assembly was utilized in the GSA calculation based on a total budgeted FY 2015 appropriation of $4,522,530,530.

The preliminary GSA net entitlement is based upon local tax revenue and average daily attendance information calculated to $5.075 billion, leaving a shortage of $553 million. This shortage requires a preliminary proration of 89.06 percent, which has been applied toward the gross entitlement for LEA. The final proration percentage will be proportionally applied over 22 equal payments scheduled from August 2014 through June 2015.
Computations and individual claim information for school districts and regional offices can be accessed in the General State Aid Inquiry available at http://webprod1.isbe.net/gsainquiry/default.aspx.

Final entitlements, proration and payments will be calculated prior to the Sept. 10 GSA payment. No changes will be made after the statewide file is closed.

For questions about GSA or the computations, please contact Ethelene Ferdinand at eferdina@isbe.net or (217) 782-5256.

Regular Transportation Reimbursement – Equalized Assessed Valuation Correction

Please be advised that the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has determined that the Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) figure utilized for all Regular Transportation claims prior to fiscal year 2014 was incorrect for districts subject to the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL).

For districts subject to PTELL, ISBE has historically used the PTELL EAV as used in General State Aid when computing each district’s Regular Transportation reimbursement claim. However, it was discovered that the reimbursement language for computing Regular Transportation in Section 29-5 [105 ILCS 5/29-5] of the Transportation Article does not encompass EAV as adjusted for PTELL.

The correct EAV that should be used is the Adjusted EAV, which includes the Alternative General Homestead Exemption also known as the 7 percent expanded homeowner exemption for districts in Cook County as well as other adjustments to the Original EAV, such as General Authority abatements and Property Tax Appeal Board adjustments.

The Adjusted EAV will be used to compute reimbursement for all Regular Transportation claims for the 2013-14 school year payable in FY 2015 and thereafter.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact Jamie Johnson at jjohnso@isbe.net or by phone at (217) 782-5256.

Data Analysis and Accountability

2014 Salaries for ISBE Employment Information System Due Aug. 29

ISBE is reminding Employment Information System (EIS) administrators to enter their employees’ salaries for 2014.

Salary data for all certified (licensed) employees are required in EIS by Aug. 29.

Salaries may be entered online or via the batch process. For the batch process, an Excel “Salary” template and related “Tips” and “Steps” are available at www.isbe.net/eis.

If further assistance is needed, please email datahelp@isbe.net or call the EIS Helpline at (217) 782-3950 and ask for EIS Support.

Assessment

PARCC ‘End of Course’ and ‘End of Year’ Components Explained

In response to recent confusion, ISBE’s Assessment Division wants to clarify the difference between the “End of Course” (EOC) and “End of Year” (EOY) components of PARCC.

All PARCC tests have two components: a Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) and an EOY assessment. Third- through eighth-grade students will take the two components of the PARCC in both English language arts (ELA) and math for their corresponding grade level.

At the high school level, students will take the PBA and EOY components of PARCC as part of an EOC exam that coincides with the completion of courses that contain the corresponding standards to be tested rather than at the end of a specific grade year. That means high school students would take one of the math exams (either associated with Algebra II or Integrated Math 3) and the ELA III exam regardless of age or grade level. For example, a ninth-grader and a 10th-grader enrolled in Algebra II would both take the EOC exam for that course. Additionally, it is possible for a high school student to take only the math exam, only the ELA exam or both.
For more explanation, please contact the Assessment Division at (866) 317-6034.

**2014-15 Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment Testing Window Set**

Starting this school year, the Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment (DLM-AA) will replace the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA).

The DLM-AA is an adaptive computer-based assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The assessment is aligned to the Common Core Essential Elements in English language arts and mathematics.

The testing window for the 2014-15 DLM-AA is from March 23-May 1. This six-week window allows district and school flexibility to create their own testing schedule within the test window based on their technology capabilities and school calendars.

For more information on the DLM-AA, visit www.isbe.net/assessment/dlm.htm.

**Special Education Services**

**ISBE Seeks Volunteers for Illinois Least Restrictive Environment Data Cohort 5**

ISBE’s Special Education Services Division is looking for districts that are interested in participating in an exciting opportunity. The purpose of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Data Cohort is to provide districts hands-on collaborative assistance in examining their data to enhance placement options for students with disabilities.

Districts that volunteer for the cohort and are chosen to participate will work with state technical assistance providers on modules that guide the process. Participating cohort districts will form a team and partake in three work sessions.

Details and specific dates for LRE Data Cohort 5 can be found at www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/lre-data-cohort.htm.

**ISBE-Funded Learning Ally Access Grants Available for FY 2015**

ISBE has provided funding for a limited number of prekindergarten through 12th-grade public schools to receive access to Learning Ally, formerly known as Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic, for their qualifying students with print disabilities.

Schools that enroll in the grant will receive unlimited student access to Learning Ally’s library of more than 80,000 human-voice recorded titles, including essential curriculum textbooks, fiction, literature and more, as well as unlimited, free playback software and training.

In addition, access includes:

- The ability to create unlimited student accounts that can be used by students to read their books at home and on-the-go.
- Unlimited audio books for all qualifying learners, including select VOICEtext titles with synchronized audio/text capabilities.
- Access to unlimited download and install of book playback software for PC/Mac computers at home or school.
- Access to the free Learning Ally Audio App for iOS and Android Devices.
- Access to Teacher Ally – Learning Ally’s online student management and progress monitoring tool.

All fiscal year 2015 ISBE-funded membership spots will be filled on a first-come, first-serve basis and space is limited.

Please visit www.learningally.org/illinois for more information and to fill out the FY 2015 ISBE Grant Enrollment Form. To see if your school or district is already enrolled, go to www.learningally.org/illinois. Please contact Lindsey (Novak) Lipsky at (847) 494-0887 or LLipsky@learningally.org with any questions.

**English Language Learning**

**Bilingual Program Directors’ Meeting Scheduled for Sept. 10-11**

ISBE’s Division of English Language Learning (DELL) will hold its annual bilingual program directors’ meeting Sept. 10-11 in Lisle.

The meeting is required for all program directors of Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE)/Transitional
Program of Instruction (TPI) and Title III (Language Instruction Program for Limited English Proficient Students/Immigrant Education) programs. This year’s meeting will be at the Lisle/Naperville Hilton, 3003 Corporate West Drive, and will address topics related to program directors’ implementation of programs serving English learners and to provide a forum where they can discuss these issues with other directors.

This year’s keynote speakers are Dr. Debbie Zacarian and Dr. Catherine Snow. Other outside speakers include an early childhood specialist, educational specialists from the Illinois Resource Center and an assessment specialist. New this year is a Program Directors’ Forum in which three experienced program directors have been invited to sit on a panel to discuss challenges they have faced in their districts and share strategies with fellow program directors. There will also be a New Leadership session for new program directors unable to attend the New Leadership Institute in early August.

Registration will begin at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 10, with the general meeting starting at 9 a.m. Registration information is available online at www.thecenterweb.org/irc/.

Interactive Parent Engagement Workshop for Families of English Learners

DELL is hosting a parent engagement workshop, titled “Engaging Families of English Learners: Enhancing Home-School Communication on English Language Development,” in Lisle.

The workshop will be presented in Spanish on Oct. 4 and in English on Oct. 18. Both workshops will cover the same topics and go from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The interactive workshop brings together two critical stakeholders in the education of English learners: parents and educators. The workshop aims to build local capacity around ways to enhance communication with families of English learners about English language development. The presentation is structured to allow opportunities for collaborative discussions between parents and educators, along with small group sessions that cater to each group.

After completing the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Discuss why communication about language development benefits families and schools.
- Identify opportunities for communication about English language development with families of English learners.
- Develop a plan for engaging families of English learners around language development.

Districts are invited to nominate participant teams to attend. Each team should include one to three parent leaders and one or two district staff (English language staff, program directors, parent liaisons and building administrators).

For application forms, contact Sonia Serrano at sserrano@isbe.net. For questions about the workshop, please contact Tina Paduck at tpaduck@isbe.net or Anna Szuber at azuber@isbe.net.

Illinois Education Research Council

2014 Focus on Illinois Education Research Symposium Oct. 7-8

The 2014 Focus on Illinois Education Research Symposium is scheduled for Oct. 7-8 at the DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton in Bloomington.

The registration form and symposium information are available at www.siue.edu/ierc/Symposium2014.shtml. Registration is required by Sept. 15.

If you have questions, please contact Jennifer Barnhart at jebarnh@siue.edu or call toll free at (866) 799-4372.

The Illinois Education Research Council advisory board includes State Superintendent of Education Christopher Koch and ISBE Chief Performance Officer Peter Godard.

School Business Services

Requirements for School Treasurer Bonds

Section 3-8 and Section 8-2 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/3-8 and 105 ILCS 5/8-2) require regional superintendents of schools to file an affidavit with ISBE showing which treasurers of school districts in their region are properly bonded. This affidavit must be filed before Sept. 1 of each year. Copies of the
actual school treasurer bond should not be filed with ISBE.

Section 8-2 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/8-2) requires each treasurer of a school district to be properly bonded. The penalty of the bond shall be 25 percent of the amount of all bonds, notes, mortgages, moneys and effects of which the treasurer is to have custody at any given time. The bond shall be increased or decreased from time to time, as the increase or decrease of the amount of notes, bonds, mortgages, moneys and effects may require. The bond shall be payable to the township trustees of schools over the district or payable to the school board of the district, whichever is applicable. The bond shall be filed with the regional superintendent of schools. Again, school districts should not file a copy of their bonds with ISBE.

For additional information on ISBE’s interpretation of this section, please refer to the State Superintendent’s Weekly Message for May 3, 2010, and May 11, 2010, which can be accessed at www.isbe.net/board/archivemessages/archivemessage.htm.

Section 3-8 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/3-8) describes the duties of the regional superintendent of schools upon receipt of the treasurer bonds. When the bond of any school treasurer is filed with the regional superintendent of schools, the regional superintendent shall carefully examine it. If the bond is found to be in all respects according to law and the sureties sufficient, the regional superintendent shall endorse his/her approval and file it with the papers of his/her office. If the bond is in any respect defective, or if the sureties are insufficient, the bond shall be returned for correction.

In Cook County, the responsibilities and duties of the regional superintendent of schools detailed in Section 3-8 and Section 8-2 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/3-8 and 105 ILCS 5/8-2) will be assumed by the respective Intermediate Service Center.

An electronic version of the affidavit, and other information, can be found online at www.isbe.net/sfms/html/t_bonds.htm.

Please contact Michelle Heninger, School Business Services Division, at (217) 785-8779 or mheteninge@isbe.net with any follow-up questions.

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**Early Childhood Division**

**New Quality Rating and Improvement System for Preschool for All Programs**

Preschool for All (PFA) programs will receive a letter on behalf of ISBE, the Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and the Illinois Department of Human Services to recognize the Circle of Quality that their PFA program has achieved in Excelerate Illinois, the state’s new quality rating and improvement system for early learning and development programs that serve children from birth to age 5.

Excelerate Illinois unifies all of the state’s early learning programs under a common set of standards across multiple settings to provide families with important information about quality early learning programs in their community.

Excelerate Illinois is anchored by a set of standards that focuses on early learning and development and places a high priority on instructional excellence, family services, staff qualifications, professional development and program administration. Central to its design is the recognition of multiple forms of evidence to meet the universal standards.

For PFA programs, evidence is obtained during monitoring visits conducted through National Louis University’s contract with ISBE. During these monitoring visits, assessors collect evidence using the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) and the ISBE Compliance Checklist. Each Preschool for All program site is awarded an Excelerate Circle of Quality based on its Compliance and ECERS-R scores.

To learn more about Excelerate Illinois, including the specific requirements for each Circle of Quality, visit www.excelerateillinoisproviders.com/. A website that provides parents and families with information to assist them in making early care and education decisions can be found at www.excelerateillinois.com/.
Please contact ISBE’s Early Childhood Division at (217) 524-4835 with any questions.

**College and Career Readiness**

**Illinois Family and Consumer Sciences Leaders Earn National Honors**

Family and consumer sciences leaders from across the state received top honors during the National Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) Leadership Conference in San Antonio, Texas, last month.

The event drew 177 members, advisers and guests from Illinois. Ninety-five members participated in STAR (Students Taking Action with Recognition) competitive events, bringing home 41 gold, 45 silver and nine bronze medals.

Among the gold medal finishes, Sarah Chrenko from West Aurora High School finished first in the nation in the Interior Design STAR event. Jeannae Shier, family and consumer sciences teacher and FCCLA adviser from Prairie Central High School, received the National Spirit of Advising Award for her outstanding work and dedication as an FCCLA adviser.

FCCLA is an integral component of family and consumer sciences programs in middle and high school, with the mission to promote personal growth and leadership development through family and consumer sciences education.

**Exemplary Teacher Recognition Award**

**ISBE Seeks Honorees for Exemplary Teacher Recognition Award Luncheon**

Several professional educator organizations name a teacher of the year or an educator of the year. For the past four years, the Illinois Education Association and the Illinois Federation of Teachers have sponsored ISBE’s Exemplary Teacher Recognition Award Luncheon to publicly recognize these educators.

We are beginning to plan the fifth annual luncheon and want to ensure that all outstanding teachers are included. If your professional organization names a teacher of the year, please contact ISBE’s Public Information Division at (217) 782-4648.


**Nutrition and Wellness Programs**

**Fuel Up! Grants Available to Expand School Breakfast Programs**

General Mills Foodservice has teamed up with the National Dairy Council (NDC) to improve children’s health by supporting grants to expand school breakfast.

Addressing the important role that the breakfast meal plays in providing nutrient-rich foods and beverages to students, these grants are designed to increase student participation by serving breakfast outside of the cafeteria in creative ways.

Schools may apply for a grant to start a new breakfast program or improve an existing one. Kids and school programs will benefit when more students eat breakfast, whether it is breakfast in the classroom, grab 'n' go breakfast, second-chance breakfast after first class period or expanded breakfast offerings to include dairy options, such as yogurt, to serve breakfast to more students.


**Back-to-School Webinar**

**2014 Back-to-School Webinar Aug. 19 to Highlight Ongoing Education Initiatives**

State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch will lead a webinar at 10 a.m. Aug. 19 to update district administrators about key ongoing education initiatives, including the debut of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) exams, the state’s flexibility under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver and the ongoing implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards based on the Common Core.

Participants should register early at
www1.gotomeeting.com/register/326080664 as space is limited.

This informational session will cover:

- PARCC 2015 – What the new online assessments should look like as they debut this school year, what districts can do now to prepare and what they should expect from ISBE through the year and during the administration.
- Implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards based on the Common Core – Discussion of the innovation ISBE has seen in districts and how educators can learn more about best practices and professional development opportunities.
- Flexibility Waiver – Description of ISBE’s ESEA flexibility waiver that goes into effect this school year.
- Teacher and Principal Evaluations – Update on districts’ continued efforts to implement or plan implementation of a new educator evaluation system that incorporates multiple measures of student growth and professional practice.
- Report Card Metrics – Overview of new Report Card metrics, including the full 5Essentials profile and report for districts and schools, to be released this fall.

Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions and will receive additional supporting materials following the webinar.

Title: Back-to-School 2014 Webinar with State Superintendent Koch
Date: Tuesday, Aug. 19
Time: 10 to 11 a.m.
System requirements: Windows 8, 7, Vista, XP or 2003 Server for PC-based attendees; Mac OS X 10.6 or newer for Mac-based attendees; iPhone, iPad, Android phone or Android tablet for mobile attendees.

complementary Internet service for low-income families.

The broadband adoption program provides low-cost broadband service for $9.95 a month plus tax, the option to purchase an Internet-ready computer for less than $150 and multiple options to access free digital literacy training. Eligible families must have at least one child eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program, including public, parochial, private and homeschooled students.

New families who apply for Internet Essentials and are approved between now and Sept. 20, 2014, will receive up to six months of Internet service. The program is available in 39 states and the District of Columbia.

For more information about Internet Essentials and Comcast’s amnesty program for low-income families, go to http://comcastgcr.com/2014/08/04/comcast-offers-up-to-six-months-of-complimentary-internet-service-and-an-amnesty-program-for-low-income-families/.

In Brief

Educator Opportunities

- The 2014 fall conference of the Illinois Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ICTFL) will be held Oct. 24-25 at the Tinley Park Conference Center. The theme “A Gallery of Strategies: Touch up your Professional Portrait” has been intentionally focused on the Danielson Framework for Professional Practice and designed to help Illinois language educators prepare for the new Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) teacher evaluation system. Teachers will learn new strategies that effectively move language learners toward greater language proficiency. For more information and to register, go to www.ictfl.org.

Student Opportunities

- The Midwest Student Exchange Program is a tuition reduction program that helps students attend participating out-of-state colleges and universities. Visit http://msepmhec.org for more information.
**District Opportunities**

- The **Illinois Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association** (INSPRA) has invited Dr. C.J. Huff, superintendent of Joplin Schools, to speak on the value of developing an effective communications plan through building positive relationships. In May 2011, a deadly tornado struck Joplin, Mo., devastating the area and destroying Joplin High School. Huff led the district’s recovery effort. The presentation will take place at 6:30 p.m. on Sept. 25 at Addison Trail High School, 213 N. Lombard Road in Addison. The cost to attend is $20 per person. The event is open to the public, but reservations are required. For more details, go to [www.inspra.org](http://www.inspra.org).

**Employment Opportunities**

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