Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Aug. 18, 2014

Tomorrow, we will host our second Back-to-School Webinar for educators. About 900 participants have registered, and it’s not too late if you wish to join us as well. You may register at www1.gotomeeting.com/register/326080664. The webinar will start at 10 a.m. and last about an hour. We will record it and post it on our website for playback at your convenience, if you miss it.

During the webinar, we will review several issues, including the flexibility we have under our No Child Left Behind waiver, 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. We will also discuss teacher and principal evaluations and Report Card metrics.

I also want to make you aware of another webinar we’re working on, this one in partnership with the Illinois PTA. The first Back-to-School Webinar for parents is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 9. This webinar is geared specifically toward parents, and we’re hosting it at a time we hope will be more conducive to their participation.

We will cover many of the same topics as we’re covering in tomorrow’s webinar for educators, but with a slightly different focus. We’ll discuss how schools are putting in place the new Illinois Learning Standards and assessments aligned to those standards, and we will include local teachers to provide a classroom perspective. We’ll also focus on parent engagement and the partnerships necessary between families and local schools to help students reach their full potential. Interested parents can register at www1.gotomeeting.com/register/185876249. Please share this information with your school communities.

On Wednesday, the Board will meet by videoconference in Springfield and Chicago to discuss a variety of topics. You can review the agenda that is posted on our website at www.isbe.net. The meeting will also be carried live on our website, starting at 9 a.m. Wednesday.

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

- **Back-to-School 2014 Webinar with State Superintendent Koch** – Aug. 19  
  ([www1.gotomeeting.com/register/326080664](http://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/326080664))
- **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](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/](http://www.thecenterweb.org/irc/))
- **Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education (IAASE) 16th annual fall conference** – Sept. 25-26
- **Application deadline for U.S. Senate Youth Program and Hearst Scholarship** – Oct. 3  
- **2014 Focus on Illinois Education Research Symposium** – Oct. 7-8  
- **ISBE offices closed for Columbus Day** – Oct. 13
- **Illinois School District/Joint Agreement Annual Financial Report** – Must be filed with ROEs by Oct. 15 and ISBE by Nov. 14  
  ([http://www.isbe.net/sfms/afr/afr.htm](http://www.isbe.net/sfms/afr/afr.htm))
- **Nomination deadline for U.S. Presidential Scholar Program** – Oct. 31  
  ([www.ed.gov/psp](http://www.ed.gov/psp))
- **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](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](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](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
- **Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by General Assembly in spring 2015** – Friday, January 16, 2015 (See [http://www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/default.htm) for public notice requirements for all waiver requests).
- **Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment (DLM-AA) testing window** – March 23-May 1

### Funding and Disbursements

#### Reminder on Use of Interrupted School Days for Adverse Weather Conditions

The health and safety of students are a primary concern for every school superintendent. Section 18-12 of the School Code allows the use of Interrupted School Days for “adverse weather conditions,” including extreme heat as well as extreme cold. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) allows four options with regard to extreme heat:

- Amend the public school calendar to start school at a later date
- Dismiss after five clock hours of instruction
- Utilize an Emergency Day
- Utilize an Interrupted Day
If a district uses an Emergency Day, ISBE recommends submitting an Amended Calendar electronically through ISBE Web Application Security (IWAS) to the Regional Office of Education (ROE) for approval to assure that the most up-to-date Public School Calendar is available online via the School Calendar Inquiry. If an Interrupted Day is utilized, an Amended Calendar must be submitted electronically through IWAS within 30 days of occurrence to the ROE, which will forward it to ISBE for approval as required by statute.

The Calendar Code for an Emergency Day is ED. The Calendar Code for an Interrupted Day is XID. When amending the calendar code to XID, Student Attendance Time is required to verify a minimum of one instructional clock hour was conducted as well as a brief explanation of why the day was interrupted.

ISBE’s policy further states that if the announcement is made in advance (i.e., on the previous day) that school will be closing because of heat on any day or days before five clock hours of instruction have been provided, an emergency day(s) must be used. You cannot count that shortened day as a full day of attendance under those circumstances.

At this time, all 2014-15 Public School Calendars should have ROE approval, making the calendar available for interested parties to view on ISBE’s School Calendar Inquiry. Per Section 10-19 of the School Code, any changes to the calendar must be approved by completing and submitting an amended calendar via IWAS prior to the change taking effect.

We hope that this information is helpful for the upcoming school year. If you require technical assistance or have further questions regarding the public school calendar, please contact your ROE or Marj Beck at mbeck@isbe.net or (217) 782-5256.

**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](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 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.

**English Language Learning**

**Guidance on Providing Educational Services for Immigrant Children**

Due to recent increases in the number of unaccompanied minors entering the United States, the U.S. Department of Education recently released a fact sheet on providing educational services for immigrant children. The fact sheet is available at www.ed.gov/policy/rights/guid/unaccompanied-children.pdf.

Additional information on registering and enrolling immigrant students can be found in ISBE’s Guidance for Registration and Enrollment, posted at www.isbe.net/recognition/html/registration_enroll.htm.

Additional information regarding the specific educational programs identified in the fact sheet can be found on ISBE’s website: Title I, IDEA, English Language Acquisition Programs, McKinney-Vento Act, and the Migrant Education Program.

**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 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 aszuber@isbe.net.

U.S. Presidential Scholar Program

ISBE Accepting Nominations for U.S. Presidential Scholar Program

ISBE is seeking candidates for the U.S. Presidential Scholar Program. The program honors outstanding high school students based on their excellent scholarship and promise of future success.

ISBE encourages principals to nominate students who might not otherwise be nominated through the current SAT/ACT or arts recognition process. All high school seniors who will graduate between January and June 2015 and are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents, who attend public, parochial or independent schools, as well as those who are homeschooled, are eligible.

The Commission on Presidential Scholars will select the 2015 U.S. Presidential Scholars, who will receive the Presidential Scholars Medallion and an expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., in June.

Nomination letters for students should address the following questions:

1. What about the student makes him or her stand out as having outstanding scholarship?

2. What special challenges or hurdles has this student overcome while still achieving high academic success?

Please submit nominations by mail to ISBE, Public Information, 100 N. First St., Springfield, IL 62777. Nominations must be received by Oct. 31, 2014.

For additional information about the program, visit www.ed.gov/psp.

Student Opportunities

Applications Sought for U.S. Senate Youth Program and Hearst Scholarship

ISBE is seeking applicants for the 2014-15 U.S. Senate Youth Program and Hearst Scholarship. Information about the program is now available online at www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/hearst.htm. State Superintendent of Education Christopher Koch has also sent a mailing about the program to the state’s high schools.

The program’s first phase brings two students from each state to Washington, D.C., from March 7-14, 2015, to participate in the U.S. Senate Youth Program. Delegates will be immersed in Washington activities throughout their weeklong stay. The William Randolph Hearst Foundation will pay all expenses for the week, including transportation, hotel and meals.

The second phase awards both recipients a $5,000 college scholarship. The Hearst Foundation requires that scholarship recipients enroll at an accredited U.S. college or university within two years after high school graduation. The student is also encouraged to take courses in government or related subjects as part of his or her undergraduate program.

In addition to the superintendent’s mailing, applications are also available on ISBE’s website at www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/42-60-hearst.pdf. ISBE must receive a hard copy no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 3.

More information about this program is available at www.hearstfdn.org/ussyp/ or by contacting Sally Veach, ISBE principal education consultant, at (217) 782-5589 or sveach@isbe.net.

Special Education Services

Free Training Available on Mental Health Awareness and Suicide Prevention

The recent death of actor Robin Williams has raised awareness of mental health disorders, particularly depression.
A survey of Illinois high school students conducted in spring 2013 revealed that almost 19 percent of those surveyed had seriously contemplated suicide, and about 12 percent had made one or more attempts.

School personnel are required to receive training on suicide and on mental health. One research-based training is offered free of charge by the Illinois Department of Public Health, under a grant from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The program helps school personnel recognize, approach and refer students in psychological distress.

The trainings are available online at [http://illinois.kognito.com/](http://illinois.kognito.com/). Follow the on-screen instructions to create a new account. All public and private schools are pre-enrolled. Choose “other” if you work with multiple schools or an agency. Middle and high school personnel may earn continuing professional development units (CPDUs).

**Registration Open for 16th Annual IAASE Fall Conference Sept. 25-26 in Tinley Park**

Registration is now open for the 16th annual Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education (IAASE) fall conference to be held on Sept 25-26 in Tinley Park.

The two-day event will highlight a wide variety of topics, from legal to curriculum to interventions, with professionals in the education and legal field presenting. The keynote speakers, Dr. Lynne Johnson and Dr. Randy Sprick, will provide strategies and inspiration.

The conference will take place at the Holiday Inn Select Hotel and Conference Center, 18501 S. Harlem Ave. More information about the venue, schedule and registration process is available on the program brochure posted at [http://iaase.org/Documents/NavLink/FC14_Registratio n_Brochure_uid8122014822001.pdf](http://iaase.org/Documents/NavLink/FC14_Registratio n_Brochure_uid8122014822001.pdf).

**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.


**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.

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

Dynamic Learning Maps District Staff Training Opportunity

District-level assessment coordinators have the opportunity to participate in a Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) training on site Sept. 3 in Kansas City, Mo.

Assessment coordinators will be trained on the responsibilities for each role in Educator Portal. Assessment coordinators are responsible for registration fees, travel and lodging costs. Materials will be provided by the DLM.

Registration closes Wednesday, Aug. 20. To find out more information and to register, go to https://kansasedu.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_bOYWWqt1ZphFezi. If you have any questions, please contact DLM at dlm@ku.edu.

Additional live webinar trainings will be made available through the ISBE Assessment and Special Education divisions and the DLM Consortium beginning in September.

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.

Illinois Teacher of the Year

Award-Winning Teacher Pam Reilly Available for Speaking Engagements

Pam Reilly, the 2014 Illinois Teacher of the Year, is seeking speaking engagements for the fall semester this year. She is anxious to meet teachers and students from all over the state.

Pam is a second-grade teacher at Woodbury Elementary School in Sandwich CUSD 430. She would be happy to meet with other teachers, read to young students, visit classrooms, speak at professional
development opportunities or share her experiences as a classroom teacher with student teachers.

You can contact her either via email at reillypc@comcast.net or by submitting the speaker request form found at http://www.sandwich430.org.

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.

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. tomorrow 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.

Special Program

Cable Company Provides Internet Access Opportunity to Low-Income Families

As students return to school, Comcast’s Internet Essentials program is offering up to six months of 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

- Booker T. Washington STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) Academy in Champaign is hosting a symposium, “Creating a Culture of School Sustainability: A Design Challenge,” on Sept. 20. The event, presented by CannonDesign and the Council of Educational Facility Planners International (CEFPI), invites participants to explore how a sustainable ecology develops and becomes ingrained in a school’s learning environment and is a part of the school’s culture. Activities will investigate the building’s design – how the design process became a catalyst for creating a sustainable school practice and how the building supports a STEM education. More information is available at www.cefpi.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=5725.

- 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://msep.mhec.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. More details are available at the following website: www.inspra.org.

#### Employment Opportunities

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