Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Thanks to all of you who took time last week to attend our Back-to-School Webinar for educators. Nearly 800 participants joined us for a look at some of the key issues we’re facing and asked some thoughtful questions. We recorded the webinar, so you may still watch it even if you were unable to attend. You can view it as time allows at www.isbe.net/asx/2014/Back_to_School_081914.asx.

Like you, I am excited about the possibilities this year holds for our students. We have posted a communications toolkit on our website for you to use in providing information to your staff, parents and other constituents. The materials include fact sheets, talking points and other materials in Word format that you may print out or personalize and adapt for your own use. You may access the communications toolkit on our hot topics page at www.isbe.net/hot-topics2015.htm.

Last week, ACT released its nationwide results for the Class of 2014. Here in Illinois, the Class of 2014 achieved a composite score of 20.7 on the ACT, giving us the second highest score among the 12 states that tested 100 percent of their graduates. In addition, the percentage of Illinois students meeting all four of ACT’s College and Career Readiness Benchmarks increased to 26 percent from 25 percent last year.

We are making the ACT available to districts, even though students will no longer be required to take it as part of the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE). We are also moving forward with the new Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments that are aligned to our new learning standards in English language arts and math. Additional information about PARCC and ACT can be found on our hot topics page listed above.

If you plan to administer the ACT this year, please let us know by Sept. 2. Information on how to opt in to the ACT/WorkKeys administration follows this column on page 3. In addition, we’re asking you to complete a technology readiness survey. The information from this survey is necessary to give us the best possible information on technology needs and assist us in planning for PARCC administration. This information will also help to inform our decisions in the event that technology funding becomes available in the future. Information has been sent to your local technology
coordinator and the area Learning Technology Centers. More information will be sent via IWAS by the end of this week.

Last week, U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan indicated that he was willing to give some states additional flexibility in their timelines for implementing teacher evaluations that include student growth. The secretary pointed out that he would be willing to delay implementation to the 2015-16 school year for those states that had previously agreed to an earlier timeline. Illinois is not one of those states that agreed to an earlier timeline. You may recall that Illinois’ waiver from some aspects of No Child Left Behind was delayed in its approval primarily because we were unwilling to move our state timeline for new teacher evaluations. Our timeline currently set out in law has the lowest 20 percent of districts implementing in the 2015-16 school year, with the rest implementing in 2016-17.

Finally, at last week’s Board meeting in Springfield, we recognized Doris Edwards of Macomb for her 73 years of service as an educator with a resolution. Doris began her career in 1939 teaching all subjects for grades one through eight in one-room schools in McDonough County before moving to Pekin and then Beardstown. She served as both a teacher and administrator for a record 61 years. While working in Beardstown, Doris served as a teacher or principal – or both – at four of the five schools in the district before retiring in 2000. She then returned to the classroom as a Title I aide in 2001 and spent another 12 years working with students until officially retiring in 2013.

At our Board meeting, she indicated that she wished she could still be in the classroom! She is truly an inspiration for all of us.

Have a great week!

Chris

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**Upcoming ISBE Dates and Deadlines**

Please note this is not a complete list of events, meetings and deadlines. For questions, call the Illinois State Board of Education at (866) 262-6663 or (217) 782-4321 or visit the agency’s official website at [http://www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net).

- **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
- **Deadline to submit ACT/WorkKeys and PARCC fall block testing programs survey** – Sept. 2
- **Annual bilingual program directors’ meeting** – Sept. 10-11 ([www.thecenterweb.org/irc/](http://www.thecenterweb.org/irc/))
- **Deadline to report changes for the 2014 5Essentials Survey of Learning Conditions results to UChicago Impact** – Sept. 15
- **Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education (IAAASE)16th annual fall conference** – Sept. 25-26
- ISBE offices closed for Columbus Day – Oct. 13
- Nomination deadline for U.S. Presidential Scholar Program – Oct. 31 (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)
- 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/hp_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
- 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 for public notice requirements for all waiver requests).
- Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment (DLM-AA) testing window – March 23-May 1

**Student Assessment**

**Data Collection for ACT/WorkKeys and PARCC Fall Block Testing Programs**

As Dr. Koch mentioned during the Aug. 19 Back-to-School Webinar, the Student Assessment Division at the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is collecting information vital to the state-funded ACT/WorkKeys and PARCC fall block testing programs between now and Sept. 2.

Only districts that serve high school students must complete the survey.

The survey is accessed by following these steps:

- Click “System Listings” in the left side menu.
  - Click “Survey” to show all surveys.
    - Click “High School Assessment Survey.”
    - Answer the three questions and provide estimated student n-counts if you are testing fall block.

Thank you for your cooperation with this quick data collection.

**DLM Alternate Assessment System Pre-Recorded Webinar Training Available**

A prerecorded webinar training for the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate Assessment system is now posted to the ISBE DLM website at www.isbe.net/assessment/dlm.htm.

This webinar training provides information regarding the transition to the new state assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, an overview of the DLM Alternate Assessment system and upcoming training opportunities.

For more information, contact Jessica Dare at jdare@isbe.net or Laura Quimby at lquimby@isbe.net.

**5Essentials Survey**

**Opportunity to Review 2014 5Essentials Survey of Learning Conditions Results**

Preliminary results from the 2014 5Essentials Survey of Learning Conditions were sent to principals and superintendents for preview on July 30. On that date, each principal and superintendent received an email from our survey provider, UChicago Impact, with details on how to access the secure reports.

5Essentials Reports will go public on Oct. 31 in conjunction with the release of the State School Report.
Card. Principals and superintendents should take advantage of this preview window to ensure their school and district information, including teacher and student response rates, is accurate.

Any potential changes should be reported to UChicago Impact by Sept. 15 in order to be reflected in the public version of the report. Changes may be submitted to 5essentials@uchicago.edu.

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**Back-to-School Parent Webinar**

**Registration Open for Back-to-School Webinar for Parents on Sept. 9**

Dr. Koch invites parents to join him for a one-hour Back-to-School Webinar at 7 p.m. Sept. 9.

The session, held in conjunction with the Illinois PTA, will cover the following topics:

- **Putting in place the new Illinois Learning Standards** – A discussion of how and why the standards drive new instructional approaches and lesson plans.
- **PARCC 2015** – Third- through eighth-graders, as well as high school students, will take online state assessments for the first time this school year. Dr. Koch will discuss these new tests and the information they will generate about children’s progress toward college and career readiness.
- **Parental Engagement** – A discussion of state initiatives to promote the vital partnership between parents and the school community to achieve student success.

Registration information is available at www1.gotomeeting.com/register/185876249. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions and are encouraged to log in a few minutes early to establish connections, especially if it is their first time attending a live “Go to Webinar” from their computer or mobile device.

**Title:** Back-to-School Webinar for Parents with State Superintendent Koch and the Illinois PTA

**Date:** Tuesday, Sept. 9

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**School Business Services**

**Important Notice for School Maintenance Project Grant FY 2014 Recipients**

School Maintenance Project Grant recipients for fiscal year 2014 rounds 1 and 2 are asked to read an important notice regarding quarterly reports.

Quarterly reports through June 30, 2014, are due and must be submitted by Sept. 12. These reports are now available in IWAS.

According to the assurances of the grant, “Quarterly reports are required of all award recipients receiving funds, unless otherwise specified in the program specific terms. Quarterly reports must describe the progress of the project or use and the expenditure of the grant funds.” The expenditure through dates are used in reporting quarterly expenditures and obligations from the project beginning date through June 30, Sept. 30, Dec. 31 and March 31 of each fiscal year until the Final Expenditure Report has been submitted.

To complete the Quarterly Expenditure Report, please follow the instructions found within IWAS. Please remember the following:

- Quarterly reports must be completed, even if you have not started any of the work items on the grant. If work has not begun on a work item, please enter “0” for that work item.
- Quarterly reports must be completed until the final expenditure report has been completed in IWAS to close out the grant.
- All work items must be updated every quarter until the work item is 100 percent completed.
- When a work item is 100 percent completed (i.e., no additional costs will be reported for that work item), check the “Work item 100% Completed” button on that work item.
- Once you have updated all items, you must submit the quarterly report to ISBE. Click “Submit Quarter” to submit the completed report to ISBE.
• The quarterly report has been submitted to ISBE when you see the verification bar in green at the top of the screen.

For detailed instructions on how to complete the quarterly report, go to www.isbe.net/sbss/pdf/smpg-quarterly-exp-inst.pdf.

For additional assistance, please contact Kimberly Beachy with ISBE’s School Business Services Division at kbeachy@isbe.net or (217) 785-8779.

Title Grant Administration

Annual Title I Directors Conference Scheduled for Sept. 16-18 in Springfield

The Illinois Association of Title I Directors (IATD), in cooperation with ISBE, is hosting the annual Title I Directors Conference on Sept. 16-18 in Springfield.

The conference begins with a new directors preconference. An individual technical assistance opportunity, which is new this year, is scheduled for the afternoon of Sept. 16.

The conference officially begins Wednesday, Sept. 17, with a kickoff by ISBE Assistant Superintendent Amy Jo Clemens to provide informative updates. Breakout sessions hosted by ISBE members and collaborating individuals will follow. The day will end with libations, light snacks and a game of Title I Jeopardy.

Thursday, Sept. 18, will include a keynote speech by Debra Pickering from the Marzano Group. She will discuss designing and teaching learning goals and objectives. Afterward, district Title I leadership will share their best practices. An assessment update and luncheon will follow.

Registration is available online at: www.regonline.com/Register/Checkin.aspx?EventID=1548151

School Safety

Free School Safety Conference Sept. 25 in Arlington Heights

ISBE, the Illinois Terrorism Task Force, Oak Park and River Forest High School District 200, Oak Park Police and Fire Department, RETA Security and the Proviso Area for Exceptional Children invite district personnel to heighten their safety awareness during a free conference on Sept. 25 in Arlington Heights.

Experts in the field of school safety and crisis prevention will discuss how to enhance the safety and security of school facilities on a day-to-day basis and long term. Speakers include Jonathon Monken, director of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, and Ron Ellis, state program director of the School and Campus Security Training Project. There will be ample time for participants to ask specific questions.

The conference is open to district and school administrators, police and fire personnel, transportation directors and other parties in charge of safety.

Register online by Sept. 20 at www.gbriskcontrol.com/retasecurityregistration/.

Registration is limited to eight people per department or school. If more than eight participants are needed, please call Randy Braverman at (224) 578-0484.

• Title: School Safety Conference
• Date: Sept. 25
• Time: 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
• Location: House of Music & Entertainment, 1227 N. Rand Road, in Arlington Heights

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.
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 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.

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**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 www2.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.

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**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.

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**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.

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**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/. 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).

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**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.

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.

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.

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.

In Brief

Professional Development

- Projects from the ISBE Illinois Mathematics and Science Partnerships program will share their work around the new Illinois Learning Standards for science at Illinois State University on Sept. 6. The event features keynotes from leaders in science education research and breakout sessions featuring the work of Illinois teachers. Registration costs $70 and includes lunch. More details are at http://cemast.illinoisstate.edu/educators/development/ngss-conference.shtml.
- The 2014 annual conference of the Illinois Association of School Nurses (IASN) will be held on Oct. 24-25 in Rockford. The conference is open to registered nurses with an Illinois Professional Educator’s License in school nursing as well as registered nurses working in schools and communities. The brochure is available for download at www.iasn.org.
- National Geographic is offering teachers free online professional development courses this fall to learn about water as a resource and how to facilitate learning through outdoor watershed education. “FLOW Education: Facilitating Learning through Outdoor Watershed Education” will take place Sept. 17-Oct. 29 and is designed for classroom teachers of grades 4-9 to learn.
about watersheds and outdoor education using the Chesapeake Bay watershed as an example. Sign up at www.coursera.org/#course/watershed. “Water: The Essential Resource” is scheduled for Oct. 15-Dec.17 and focuses on both ocean and freshwater subjects and provides strategies for teaching environmental topics in grades 4-8. Sign up at www.coursera.org/#course/waterandenvironment.

**District Opportunities**

- The Illinois Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association (INSERA) 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.

**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.