Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

We will begin a review of our arts and social studies education standards this fall. This continues our work to review all of the state’s learning standards, following the Board’s approval to implement new learning standards for math, English language arts, physical education and science.

I have asked Arts Alliance Illinois and the Illinois Civic Mission Coalition to lead the committees in the study of our current standards, review the standards of other states and make recommendations for improvements.

The committees will include teachers representing a variety of disciplines and grades, administrators and community partners. Members will review existing Illinois standards; analyze public input; and evaluate research and best practices in both areas. This will result in recommendations to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) for the adoption and implementation of new statewide arts and social studies standards.

This is the latest part of our work to update the Illinois Learning Standards. We adopted new learning standards in math and English language arts in 2010, physical education in 2013 and science earlier this year. I believe that in order to do what’s right for our students we must continually reassess where we are and where we want our students to be. Learning standards should evolve and not be stagnant. Technology and the world around us change and we must work to ensure that our standards keep pace.

We will no longer require schools to create and maintain technology plans. These were originally required as part of the creation of the Technology for Success Program in 1995–96. The goal was to increase the efficiency of federal and state investments in education and infrastructure systems. In July, the Federal Communications Commission determined that an approved technology plan is no longer needed for E-rate funding. Since no federal or state programs currently require an approved technology plan, schools are no longer required to complete and maintain them and ISBE will no longer review or approve technology plans on a yearly basis.

The technology plan template will remain a part of the Illinois Interactive Report Card site. Districts will be able to retrieve previous plans or write a new plan using that site for the remainder of this school year (through June 30, 2015). If a district needs a plan reviewed for approval for federal or state grant purposes, please contact Jamey Baiter at jbaiter@isbe.net.
I have been asked several questions about the I-TRAx technology tool that we are now using. This replaces the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Technology Readiness Tool (TRT) we have used to determine network infrastructure and device needs for digital learning and online testing. The PARCC tool is no longer available. We believe there is still a need for such a tool and have chosen I-TRAx, which can be accessed at http://app.i-trax.org. We’re asking districts to complete the tool by Sept. 15 to assist us in determining mode of testing and statewide infrastructure and device needs, should state funding become available in the future. I-TRAx has been populated automatically from previous surveys; however, you may need to update some data.

Additional information about I-TRAx immediately follows the column on page 3.

Thanks and I hope you enjoyed the Labor Day weekend, our unofficial end of summer.

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.

- 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/)
- Deadline to report changes for the 2014 5Essentials Survey of Learning Conditions results to UChicago Impact – Sept. 15
- Deadline for all districts to complete the I-TRAx tool – Sept. 15 (http://app.i-trax.org/admin/login)
- 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 (www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/hearst.htm)
- ISBE offices closed for Columbus Day – Oct. 13
- Part 1 (Public Schools Evaluation, Recognition and Supervision), Part 26 (Endorsements in Early Childhood Education and in Elementary Education) and Part 375 (Student Records) – Public comment period ends Oct. 20.
- 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/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
• FY15 NCLB Monitoring Instrument – Nov. 30 (available Sept. 30)
• FY15 NCLB Title I Comparability Analysis – Nov. 30 (available Sept. 30)
• 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

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**Student Assessment**

**ISBE Using New Statewide Technology Readiness Tool Called I-TRAx**

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is now using its own statewide technology readiness tool called I-TRAx ([http://app.i-trax.org](http://app.i-trax.org)).

For the past two years, ISBE has used the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Technology Readiness Tool (TRT) to determine a district’s network infrastructure and device needs for digital learning and online testing. The PARCC tool closed on Aug. 31.

All district and school device and network information previously loaded into the TRT has been imported into I-TRAx.

Anyone who previously entered data into the TRT will automatically have a login and password for the I-TRAx system. A user’s login is the email address, and the password has been set to the portion of the user’s email address prior to the “@” symbol. Users can immediately reset their password by clicking on the “My Account” button on the top right corner of the screen on the main I-TRAx page.

A webinar was held for district and school technology coordinators on Aug. 25 to explain the network infrastructure and device information that the tool will be requesting and how to read the reports that the tool will provide. The recording of the I-TRAx webinar will be posted at [www.isbe.net/assessment/parcc.htm](http://www.isbe.net/assessment/parcc.htm) under Presentations and Webinars.

All districts are required to complete the I-TRAx tool by Sept. 15, 2014. The first report pulled from the tool on Sept. 15 will help ISBE work with districts to determine mode of testing (paper and pencil versus online). Reports pulled after September will be used to demonstrate statewide infrastructure and device needs for future technology funding.

If you have any difficulty logging in or working with the tool, please contact your Learning Technology Center at [www.isbe.net/ed-technology/html/ltc_listing.htm](http://www.isbe.net/ed-technology/html/ltc_listing.htm).

Assessment questions should be directed to the ISBE Student Assessment Division at (866) 317-6034.

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

As Dr. Koch mentioned during the Aug. 19 Back-to-School Webinar, ISBE’s Student Assessment Division is collecting information vital to the state-funded ACT/WorkKeys and PARCC fall block testing until today, 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 counts if you are testing fall block.
Thank you for your cooperation with this quick data collection.

Additional Student Growth Training Modules Now Available Online

The Student Assessment Division announces the availability of additional student growth training modules at [www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/balanced-asmt.htm](http://www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/balanced-asmt.htm).

- Module 1 Introduction to Balanced Assessment
- Module 2 Performance Evaluation Reform Act
- Module 3 Conversations for Joint Committees
- Module 4 Introduction to the SLO Process
- Module 5 Defining a Learning Goal
- Module 6 Selecting Assessments and Scoring Procedures
- Module 7 Example Measurement Model
- Module 8 Identifying Expected Growth Targets
- Module 9 Documenting Actual Outcomes
- Module 10 Assigning a Teacher Rating – Coming Soon!
- Module 11 Statistical Measurement Models
- Module 12 Guidance for Special Populations – Coming Soon!

An updated facilitation guide is also available that provides a suggested facilitation process for each module, including additional activities. The module, facilitation guide and guidance documents will be regularly updated to ensure quality and usability based on educator feedback. Our goal is to make quality professional development materials available for free to all educators in Illinois.

Please check the Balanced Assessment website regularly for updated modules, guidance documents and examples.

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](http://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](mailto:jdare@isbe.net) or Laura Quimby at [lquimby@isbe.net](mailto:lquimby@isbe.net).

Center for Performance

ISBE Removes District Mandate to Create Technology Plans

As part of the E-rate Modernization Order released on July 23, 2014, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) determined that an approved technology plan is no longer needed for E-rate funding.

Since no federal or state programs require an approved technology plan, ISBE has determined that it will release schools from the technology plan mandate. To that end, ISBE will no longer review or approve technology plans on a yearly basis.

The technology plan template will remain a part of the Illinois Interactive Report Card site. Districts will be able retrieve previous plans or write a new plan using that site for the remainder of this school year (through June 30, 2015). If a district needs a plan reviewed for approval for federal or state grant purposes, staff may contact Jamey Baiter at [jbaiter@isbe.net](mailto:jbaiter@isbe.net).

Federal and State Monitoring

NCLB Monitoring Instrument and NCLB Title I Comparability

The fiscal year 2015 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Monitoring Instrument will be available for completion and submission in the IWAS system beginning Sept. 30. The due date is Sunday, Nov. 30.

All districts receiving NCLB funding are required to submit the document every year. As before, the previous year’s information will be imported to the document, and the district should ensure its accuracy.
before submitting. Each “Comment/Proof Indicator” will need to have a comment that identifies the documents that support your answers or clarifies your “yes,” “no” or “N/A” response. You will not be able to submit the form without providing an answer in each box. There are additional validation and status questions that will require your attention. The form has changed in conjunction with the NCLB waiver approval concerning Supplemental Educational Services (SES)/Choice and other NCLB components that were previously required.

There is a sample list of proof indicators on the Federal and State Monitoring website at www.isbe.net/ea/word/proof_indicators.doc.

The Title I Comparability analysis will be available for completion and submission in the IWAS system beginning Sept. 30. There will be new adjustments to how districts complete their analysis this year.

Title I directors, coordinators and their staff who work with the Comparability document are encouraged to attend the Title I Directors’ conference in Springfield at the Crowne Plaza on Sept. 16-18 this year to learn about the changes and new features that are being introduced for the fiscal year 2015 analysis.

Districts that are “exempt” will continue to select the “Exempt” radio button and then “Submit.” Their submittal requirements will have been met when the superintendent submits it.

An updated “Comparability User’s Guide” for FY 2015 is located on the menu bar of the comparability application and on our Federal and State Monitoring website.

All districts receiving Title I funds must complete the document. Failure to comply will result in frozen program funds and a recovery of expenditures of Title I funds in buildings where they are determined to be non-comparable.

If you have questions concerning the Title I Comparability or the Monitoring Instrument, contact Paul Williams, Federal and State Monitoring, at (217) 782-7970 or pwilliam@isbe.net.

Title Grant Administration

Waiver Request for State-Administered ESEA Programs

ISBE is seeking the following waiver from the U.S. Department of Education in hopes that students in Illinois will be better served.

- Waive the period of availability of fiscal years 2010 and 2012 funds under state-administered Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) programs. The extended authority to obligate these funds would enable ISBE and its sub-recipients to increase the quality of instruction for students, improve their academic achievement and continue to assist the same populations served by the programs for which this waiver is being requested in accordance with applicable program requirements.

ISBE encourages interested parties to review the complete waiver at www.isbe.net/nclb/pdfs/waiver-request-fy10-fy12-funds-082714.pdf. To submit a comment on this request, please send an email to nclbwaiver@isbe.net by Friday, Sept. 5.

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

- **Title:** Illinois Association of Title I Directors
- **Date:** Sept. 16-18
- **Location:** Crowne Plaza, 3000 S. Dirksen Parkway, in Springfield

**Rules and Waivers**

**Invitation to Comment on Rules**

Three sets of proposed amendments recently reviewed by ISBE are available for public comment. The proposals have been posted on the agency’s website at www.isbe.net/rules; choose “Proposed Rules and Amendments.” Please submit any comments or suggestions to rules@isbe.net.

**Part 1 (Public Schools Evaluation, Recognition and Supervision):** Responds to P.A. 98-506, effective Aug. 27, 2013, which establishes the criteria for the receipt of the State Seal of Biliteracy, an optional designation that school districts may choose to award to students who demonstrate proficiency in both a foreign language and English. **Public comment period ends Oct. 20, 2014.**

**Part 26 (Endorsements in Early Childhood Education and in Elementary Education):** Proposes new standards that articulate the knowledge and skills in several areas, including English language arts and mathematics, needed for receipt of the early childhood endorsement and to which educator preparation programs and content-area tests must align. **Public comment period ends Oct. 20, 2014.**

**Part 375 (Student Records):** Proposes a technical change to remind school districts to designate on a student's academic transcript, which is part of the student’s permanent record, his or her receipt of the State Seal of Biliteracy or the State Commendation Toward Biliteracy; reiterates the need for school districts to retain the copy of a student's certified birth certificate or other relevant documentation in the student's permanent record; and acknowledges the change in the statutory citation for the state assessments. (See P.A. 98-972, effective Aug. 15, 2014) **Public comment period ends Oct. 20, 2014.**

**School Health Issues**

**Health Exam and Immunization Requirements for School Attendance**

Illinois requires that students receive a physical examination when they enter kindergarten, sixth and ninth grades. Vaccination against a number of diseases at specified intervals is also required.

State law also requires that students without those exams and/or vaccinations are excluded from school attendance unless certain exceptions are met. The valid exemptions are those based on medical reason, written by a health-care provider, or religious reason, written by a parent or guardian. In addition, students transferring from out of state are allowed an extra 30 days to meet the requirements.

As written in the school code, schools are to exclude students who do not have either the health exam or vaccines by Oct. 15 or an earlier date, if established by the local school board. Specifically, the law states: “the local school authority shall exclude that child from school until such time as the child presents proof of having had the health examination as required and presents proof of having received those required immunizations which are medically possible to receive immediately. During a child's exclusion from school for noncompliance with this subsection, the child's parents or legal guardian shall be considered in violation of Section 26-1 and subject to any penalty imposed by Section 26-10. This subsection (5) does not apply to dental examinations and eye examinations.”

Appointments beyond the mandatory exclusion date may be accepted only for students transferring from out of state. State law allows an “out-of-state transfer student [who] does not have the proof required under this subsection (5) before Oct. 15 of the current year or whatever date is set by the school district, … may only attend classes (i) if he or she has proof that an appointment for the required vaccinations has been scheduled with a party authorized to submit proof of
the required vaccinations. If the proof of vaccination required under this subsection (5) is not submitted within 30 days after the student is permitted to attend classes, then the student is not to be permitted to attend classes until proof of the vaccinations has been properly submitted.” (School Code Section 27-8.1, from Public Act 97-0910).

**Illinois History Teacher of the Year**

**David Elbaum Named 2014 Illinois History Teacher of the Year**

David Elbaum of Adlai E. Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire was recently named the 2014 Illinois History Teacher of the Year. ISBE is a partner in the award program, which is co-sponsored by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, the HISTORY channel, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation through its Preserve America program.

Elbaum started at SHS in 2006, where he teaches 11th- and 12th-graders. He taught at Aptaskistic Junior High in Buffalo Grove prior to joining Lincolnshire District 125. Elbaum earned a master’s degree in political science from Northeastern Illinois University, a master’s degree in educational leadership from National Louis University in Wheeling and his bachelor’s degree and teacher certification from the University of Iowa.

The History Teacher of the Year Award alternates each year to honor K-6 teachers one year and those teaching grades 7-12 the next. A national winner is chosen from the pool of winners from each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. Territories and Department of Defense Schools. Each state honoree receives $1,000 and an archive of books and resources from Gilder Lehrman and HISTORY for his or her school’s library.

**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.

**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
Time: 7 p.m.
Register: www1.gotomeeting.com/register/185876249

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.

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

In Brief

Professional Development

- The Illinois Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (IAHPERD) state convention will be held Nov. 20-21 at Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles. All health and physical education teachers, as well as others interested in promoting physical development and health, can register by clicking here.
- 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.

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

- Infinite Scholars Program Inc., and its collaborative partners in Illinois are hosting two Illinois Annual Fall Scholarship Fairs. The events are scheduled for Thursday, Sept. 25, from 4 to 8 p.m. at Thornton High School, 15001 Broadway, in Harvey and Friday, Sept. 26, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 4 to 7 p.m. at Frederick Douglass Academy, 543 N. Waller Ave. in Chicago. For more details and to register, visit www.infinitescholar.org.
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.

Educator Resources

Thanks to a grant from the Susan Cook House Educational Trust, the Illinois State Museum now offers Play Museum Outreach Kits to educators to help them and their students get the most out of a field trip visit to the Mary Ann MacLean Play Museum. Kits may be borrowed at no charge; however, a refundable damage deposit is required. The kits are available for a two-week lending period and are picked up and returned to the Illinois State Museum. For more information or to reserve a kit, contact Kara Fedje at play@museum.state.il.us or (217) 782-6044.

Employment Opportunities

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