Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

This week, the Illinois State Board of Education will meet in Champaign for its regularly scheduled business meeting and also to kick off the first of its fiscal year 2016 budget development hearings. The business portion of the meeting will begin about 10:30 a.m. Wednesday and will be audiocast at www.isbe.net. The budget hearing will follow the Board meeting and is scheduled to last from 3-5 p.m.

During the meeting, the Board will receive an overview of the 2014 Illinois State Report Card, which will be publicly released at the end of the month, and will review the results of the Capital Needs Assessment Survey, in which districts detailed their current and future Health/Life Safety capital needs. The Board will also consider action on rules related to the implementation of new teacher evaluations in the event a Joint Committee cannot come to agreement and rules limiting the number of fundraisers that schools participating in the National School Lunch Program may host that sell food or beverage items that do not meet program standards.

This week, Scholastic released the results from the 2014 Primary Sources survey. The results show that the percentage of teachers who feel prepared to teach to the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics has increased to 79 percent and that nearly 70 percent of teachers feel implementation is “going well.” More than half of the teachers surveyed who have implemented the new standards say they have seen a positive impact on their students’ critical thinking and reasoning skills. You can access more information on the survey at www.scholastic.com/primarysources/teachers-on-the-common-core.htm.

Illinois will again participate in the U.S. Department of Education’s Green Ribbon Schools Award program that recognizes schools for promoting sustainability and environmental education. ISBE will accept applications from schools that have integrated best practices in energy, water and waste management; healthy school environments; and environmental education. Applications are available at www.isbe.net/green_ribbon/pdfs/green-ribbon-app-14-15.pdf and must be submitted online or to the Springfield ISBE office by 5 p.m. Nov. 19.
We will announce the Illinois winner in late December and those applicants with the highest scores will be forwarded to compete in the federal Green Ribbon Schools program. The U.S. Department of Education will announce its winners in April 2015, with the award ceremony in Washington, D.C.

Finally, next week is Principal Appreciation Week and Principal Appreciation Day is Friday, Oct. 24. Please plan to take some time next week to celebrate these hardworking professionals who mean so much to the families we serve. They’re not just the lead educator in our buildings, but in many ways, the heart and soul of a school. Thanks for all you do on behalf of the students of Illinois.

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).

- **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
- **“Overview of the Freshmen On Track Metric” webinar** – Oct. 20 ([www1.gotomeeting.com/register/283124369](http://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/283124369))
- **“A Deep Dive into the PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations” webinar** – Oct. 27 ([https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8305651824268674305](https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8305651824268674305))
- **FY 2015 Supplemental General State Aid Plan deadline** – Oct. 30
- **Nomination deadline for U.S. Presidential Scholar Program** – Oct. 31 ([www.ed.gov/pisp](http://www.ed.gov/pisp))
- **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))
- **Registration deadline for the Eighth Annual Conference on Best Practices in Nonpublic Special Education Programs** – Nov. 1 ([www.isbe.state.il.us/spec-ed/np_handouts/default.htm](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/spec-ed/np_handouts/default.htm))
- **Special Education Summer School claim deadline** – Nov. 3
- **Deadline to submit No Child Left Behind performance report** – Nov. 3
- **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))
- **Biennial Preschool for All Administrators’ Forum** – Nov. 7 ([http://ec.thecenterweb.org/site](http://ec.thecenterweb.org/site))
- **Deadline to complete all revisions to the Pupil Transportation Reimbursement Claim** – Nov. 10
Center for Performance

**Pair of Webinars to Help Explain New Features of the 2014 Report Card**

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is inviting Illinois principals and superintendents to a pair of webinars on Oct. 17 and 20 that will provide important information on new features and tools appearing on the Illinois Report Card in 2014. In addition, principals and superintendents will be able to preview their Report Cards beginning Oct. 15 by logging into their MyIIRC accounts at [https://iirc.niu.edu/MyIIRC/](https://iirc.niu.edu/MyIIRC/).

These webinars aim to help educators understand these new features and tools so that they can use them to communicate and coordinate with parents and community members following the Oct. 31 Report Card release.

The Oct. 17 webinar will begin at 3 p.m. and inform viewers about most of the new improvements and expansions to the Report Card, including features that are new with this release and those that have been added since [www.illinoisreportcard.com](http://www.illinoisreportcard.com) debuted in 2013. Topics will include information on new metrics and how they’re calculated, examples of new features in action and guidelines for principals using the new School Highlights features. New metrics and features covered by this webinar include:

- School comparisons
- Expanded At-A-Glance highlights
- 5Essentials survey results
- Expanded test and achievement gap data
- Post-secondary enrollment data
- District finances
- Educator data

The new Freshmen On Track metric is covered in the second webinar on Oct. 20 at 3:30 p.m. This session will describe the research behind the on-track metric, how it is related to high school graduation and what schools can do to improve their on-track rates.
Invitations have been sent to principals and superintendents via email. ISBE hopes that educators interested in using the School Report Card as an engagement tool will attend these useful sessions.

Date: Oct. 17
Time: 3 to 4:30 p.m.
Register: www1.gotomeeting.com/register/291303064

Title: Overview of the Freshmen On Track Metric
Date: Oct. 20
Time: 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.
Register: www1.gotomeeting.com/register/283124369

Assessment
PARCC Webinars Scheduled for October

Two separate webinars are scheduled to discuss the basics of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and its accessibility features and accommodations.

What: “PARCC 101: The Basics for the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers”
Date: Oct. 20
Time: 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.
Description: This webinar will focus on the basic elements of the PARCC assessment system.
Register: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7918288380245000705

What: “A Deep Dive into the PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations”
Date: Oct. 27
Time: 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.
Description: This webinar will present that accessibility features and accommodations that are available for students taking the PARCC assessment. A demonstration of the online features will be provided.
Register: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8305651824268674305

Title Grant Administration
No Child Left Behind Performance Report for Fiscal Year 2014 Now Open

Each year, all districts that received No Child Left Behind (NCLB) funds are required to submit a performance report regarding the previous school year to ISBE. The NCLB performance report is located in IWAS and can be accessed when you log into IWAS under “Reporting” and then under “Annual.”

The NCLB performance report for fiscal year 2014 is now available for you to enter your information. To help with this process, instructions have been added to the report and a short recorded webinar (17 minutes) is available for viewing at www.isbe.net/grants/html/webinar_archive.htm#nclb130913.

Please note that Section III has been removed as that data is being collected elsewhere. Since ISBE received the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Waiver Flexibility for fiscal year 2015, this year will be the last for the collection of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), Choice and Supplemental Educational Services (SES) information. We appreciate your cooperation in providing this data one last time. We are working to further improve this data collection tool and hope to automate and/or populate more data next year.

The deadline to submit is Nov. 3, 2014. Failure to submit a complete report by this date may result in frozen NCLB funds. If you have any questions about how to submit the performance report, contact Lilibeth Gumia in ISBE’s Title Grants Division at (217) 524-4832.

Illinois Learning Standards
ISBE Seeks Pilot Schools and Districts for Model Mathematics Curriculum

ISBE is looking for districts and schools that are interested in piloting the ISBE Model Mathematics Curriculum resources.

The benefits of being a pilot district are:
- Gain access to standards-aligned resources before they are posted on the ISBE website.
• Use the resources for assessment and instruction this year.
• Become part of the development process, joining teachers from throughout Illinois in providing feedback and samples of student work to enhance the resources.

If you are interested in becoming a pilot district or school or have more questions about this opportunity, please email Diane Beedy at dibeedy@isbe.net by Nov. 3.

**Early Childhood**

**Preschool for All Administrators’ Forum Scheduled for Nov. 7 in Champaign**

All Illinois Preschool for All Administrators are invited to the Biennial Preschool for All Administrators’ Forum. The forum is scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Nov. 7 at the Hilton Garden Inn, 1501 S. Neil St., in Champaign.

Dr. Steve Tozer, professor of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Illinois-Chicago, will provide the keynote address on Transformative Leadership (http://news.uic.edu/experts/steven-tozer). The forum will provide updates from ISBE and the Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development on state and federal initiatives affecting Preschool for All (PFA) programs. Information on budgets, bilingual rules, special education blending and teacher evaluation in early childhood education, including teacher practice and student growth, will be provided.

At least one representative from each program is encouraged to attend, and there is no fee to attend this forum.

A pre-event dessert reception is planned for Nov. 6 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. and will provide an opportunity to meet informally with Reyna Hernandez, ISBE assistant superintendent for the Center for Language and Early Childhood Development, in addition to networking with other PFA administrators and representatives of the ISBE Early Childhood Division.

To register, visit the Early Childhood Center of Professional Development’s website at [http://ec.thecenterweb.org/site](http://ec.thecenterweb.org/site).

---

**Illinois State Library**

**FY 2015 School District Library Grant Application Now Available Online**

Applications are now being accepted for the fiscal year 2015 School District Library Grant. Applications and all other information concerning the grant can be found on the Illinois State Library’s (ISL) website at [www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/grants/schoolpercapgrant.html](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/grants/schoolpercapgrant.html).

All ISL grant forms may not be filled out in PDF format. For complete and current information, please see “Instructions for Completing Fillable PDF Grant Forms.”

Please be aware that this year, there are two changes. The State Library is no longer requiring the signature page, and the expenditures report is a separate document. This year's deadline to submit the grant application and expenditures report is Nov. 21.

Almost every public school district in Illinois is eligible for this grant. ISL encourages full participation from school district libraries. If you have questions concerning your district’s eligibility or other grant issues, contact Robert Jones at rjones1@ilsos.net and (217) 785-1168 or Becky Hunter at bhunter1@ilsos.net and (217) 782-7849.

---

**School Health Issues**

**Ebola Guidance Available for Schools**

Late last month, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced the first confirmed case of Ebola diagnosed in the United States in a person who traveled from West Africa.

The United States is prepared and has a strong health care system and public health professionals who will make sure this case does not threaten our communities. As CDC Director Dr. Tom Frieden has said, “I have no doubt that we will control this case of Ebola, so that it does not spread widely in this country.”

Should a school learn that a student or staff person may have traveled in an area of the world where Ebola is present, they should refer that student or staff to the school nurse. If student health clinicians determine that an individual has a high- or low-risk exposure, as
defined in the letter from the Illinois Department of Public Health, the clinician should contact their local health department to determine additional actions regarding evaluation and monitoring.

Although Ebola is a highly destructive disease, it is not a highly contagious disease. Please visit www.isbe.net/school_health.htm for more information or visit the CDC website, www.cdc.gov.

**School Compliance with Mandatory Health Exams and Vaccinations for Students**

Students entering certain grades are required to obtain health examinations and immunizations, with few exceptions. Any student who does not have the required health examination or required vaccinations completed and proof submitted to the school, without valid exemption, must be excluded from school after Oct. 15 until those requirements are met.

Some school districts have established earlier exclusion dates by which those students must have met those requirements or remain excluded from school. Parents, as well as school districts, are subject to sanctions being imposed on them for not meeting those requirements. Parents who do not comply nor have valid exemptions are subject to the penalties imposed by the state’s compulsory attendance laws; school districts that do not enforce the requirements are subject to sanction against the school by ISBE.

The only valid exemptions recognized in Illinois are for:

1. Parental objection to any exam or immunization based on religious beliefs
2. Medical exemption due to health condition verified by the physician
3. Medical schedule written by the health care provider based on medical reason for not being able to be given the required immunization by the exclusion date
4. Verified homeless status
5. Transfer from out of state with an extension up to 30 days

No other exemptions or reasons for noncompliance are recognized in Illinois. This requirement pertains to all students in all Illinois schools, both public and private, at all required grade levels.

Reminder: Last year’s temporary shortage of Tdap vaccine is not in effect this year and no exemptions are allowable based on a health care provider’s temporary lack of supply.

---

**Educator Licensure**

**General Administrative Endorsement No Longer Available to be Issued**

The General Administrative endorsement is no longer available to be issued as of Sept. 1, 2014.

Any educator who already holds the General Administrative endorsement will continue to hold the endorsement and be able to serve in the same roles as before. ISBE is not taking the General Administrative endorsement away from any educator who already holds the endorsement or the ability to serve in the positions that required the General Administrative endorsement.

After Sept. 1, those wishing to become a principal or an assistant principal who do not hold the General Administrative endorsement will have to earn the Principal endorsement.

---

**Funding and Disbursement**

**Correction Period Open for Pupil Transportation Reimbursement Claims**

The correction period for fiscal year 2015 (2013-14 school year) annual claims for Pupil Transportation Reimbursement is now open.

All local education entities are hereby notified that the review and amendment (if needed) process is open and will end at midnight on Nov. 10. All revisions to the Pupil Transportation Reimbursement Claim must be completed and transmitted on or before midnight on Nov. 10. No revisions will be accepted after this date in order to close the claim file and schedule the three remaining quarterly payments.

Instructions for reviewing the claim are as follows:

1. Log into the ISBE Web Application Security system (IWAS).
2. Click on “System Listing” on the IWAS homepage.
3. Select "Pupil Transportation Claim Reimbursement System" under the "Annual Claims" heading.
4. Click on "Review Claim" under the "Reimbursement Claim" heading on the homepage. Do not click on "Revise Claim" button unless you need to make revisions.
5. The claim will be loaded to the screen in read-only format. Carefully review each line on the claim for possible revisions. If you entered transportation assets on the Depreciation Schedule, don't forget to click on the "Depreciation Schedule" button at the bottom of the screen and review the depreciation schedule data for possible revisions.

If you do not have revisions, you do not need to do anything. Your claim will remain as originally submitted by the statutory Aug. 15 due date.

If you have reviewed the claim and found that revisions are needed to the depreciation schedule and/or the pupil transportation reimbursement claim:

1. Click on the "Revise Claim" link under the "Reimbursement Claim" heading on the homepage.
2. You may enter notes in the "Your Comments" text box to help you remember why revisions were needed. Click on the "Revise Claim" button at the bottom of the screen to proceed with revisions to the depreciation schedule (if needed) and the pupil transportation reimbursement claim.
3. Note that all links for the reimbursement claim are open and may be revised as needed. The "Depreciation Schedule Summary" link under the "Depreciation Schedule" heading has been changed to "Calculate Depreciation Allowance." If you made any changes to transportation assets after the August submit date, you must click on this link and update the Depreciation Schedule.
4. After all revisions have been made, click on the "Review & Submit Claim." All revised claims must be resubmitted to ISBE through the proper channels (document author to the district superintendent and district superintendent to ISBE).

No revisions to the claim will be accepted after midnight on Nov. 10.

If you have questions regarding the amendment process, contact Jamie Johnson at (217) 782-5256 or jjohnson@isbe.net.

Special Education Summer School State Aid Claim Due to ISBE Nov. 3

The Special Education Summer School claim authorized under Section 18-4.3 is statutorily required to be received by ISBE on or before Nov. 3. Claims are for eligible students educated in 2014 summer programs and must be filed electronically via ISBE’s Web Application Security System (IWAS). No claims will be accepted or honored after the statutory date.

Eligibility requirements for pupils claimed for summer school are:

1. The pupil must be enrolled in one or more courses offered for at least 60 clock hours in the summer session.
2. The pupil must be eligible pursuant to the requirements for continued summer school services per his or her Individualized Education Program (IEP).
3. There shall not be a tuition charge to families to insure a "free, appropriate public education."

Questions regarding completion of the Special Education Summer School claim should be directed to Jodi Whitlow, Division of Funding and Disbursement Services, at (217) 782-5256 or jwhitlow@isbe.net.

FY 2015 Supplemental General State Aid Plans Due to ISBE Oct. 30

Per Section 18-8.05(H)(3) of the School Code, school districts with an average daily attendance of more than 1,000 are required to submit a Supplemental General State Aid (SGSA) plan to ISBE on or before Oct. 30.

The SGSA plan shall include the identification of strategies for the improvement of instruction that give priority to meeting the educational needs of low-income students, i.e., students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 USC 1771 et seq.) or the National School Lunch Act (42 USC 1751 et seq.)

The SGSA plan for qualifying districts must be filed electronically via the ISBE IWAS system. The SGSA
system is now open for fiscal year 2015. Critical information is pre-populated for each district. A brief narrative is required along with a budget breakdown of the SGSA funds. SGSA funds may be expended in various ways but must primarily benefit disadvantaged, low-income students who generate the district funding without supplanting other funds already in place.

Questions regarding completion of the Supplemental General State Aid plan should be directed to Ethelene Ferdinand, Division of Funding and Disbursement Services, at (217) 782-5256 or eferdina@isbe.net.

---

**Data Analysis and Accountability**

**2014-15 Unfilled Positions Survey Now Available in IWAS for Data Entry**

The 2014-15 Unfilled Positions Survey is now available in IWAS for data entry. The deadline for completing the survey and submitting it to ISBE is Nov. 13.

Districts are to report the number of budgeted positions they were unable to fill as of Oct. 1, 2014. All districts that hire staff are required to complete the survey, even districts that did not have any unfilled positions.

To avoid duplicating unfilled positions reported by public school districts, other reporting entities (e.g., special education cooperatives) should only report their unfilled employee positions.

Questions about the survey content may be directed to Jim Sweeney at jsweeney@isbe.net or Marjurie Ribeiro at mribeiro@isbe.net.

Call the Call Center at (217) 558-3600 for technical issues or questions about your IWAS account.

---

**School Business Services**

**Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet Due to ISBE Nov. 14**

Section 17-1.5 of the School Code requires school districts to limit the growth of “administrative” expenditures to a maximum of 5 percent from one fiscal year to the next. School districts must file the Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet with the ISBE’s School Business Services Division by Nov. 14.

A blank Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet is available on ISBE’s website at [www.isbe.net/sfms/AdminCaps/AdminCaps.htm](http://www.isbe.net/sfms/AdminCaps/AdminCaps.htm).

Additionally, the Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet is included in the Illinois School District Annual Financial Report – June 30, 2014 (ISBE 50-35). If a completed Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet is submitted along with the school district’s Annual Financial Report, a separate worksheet does not have to be submitted. Please note that the worksheet included in the School District Budget Form July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015 (ISBE 50-36) is a working document for local use only and will not be accepted for official submission of the Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet.

Submitted Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheets will be reviewed to ensure figures match to the district’s submitted School District Budget Form July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015 (ISBE 50-36) and the district’s submitted Annual Financial Report – June 30, 2014 (ISBE 50-35). Inaccurate Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheets will be returned to districts for correction.

Districts exceeding the limitation may amend their budgets prior to June 30, 2015, to become in compliance with the limitation. Districts unable to amend their budgets would have to waive the limitation in order to become compliant. School districts with administrative expenditures in the 25th percentile or below (fourth quartile) may waive the limitation following a public hearing and with the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the school board. Any district waiving the limitation shall notify ISBE within 45 days of such action. If a school district that is ineligible to waive the limitation by board action exceeds the limitation solely because of circumstances beyond the control of the district, and the district has exhausted all available and reasonable remedies to comply with the limitation, the district may request a waiver from the General Assembly pursuant to Section 2-3.25g of the School Code. Procedures for requesting a waiver in accordance with Section 2-3.25g of the School Code can be found at [www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/default.htm).
Quartile rankings for all school districts and a sample waiver resolution for qualifying districts can be found at www.isbe.net/sfms/AdminCaps/AdminCaps.htm.

If you have any questions, contact Michelle Heninger, School Business Services Division, at (217) 785-8779 or mheninge@isbe.net.

**Legal Division**

**New Website Explains ISBE’s Educator Misconduct Project**

The Educator Misconduct Project encompasses tenured teacher dismissals, review of licensure applications with impediments, automatic disqualification/revocation of licenses, investigations of misconduct by licensed educators and actions to suspend or revoke licenses.

ISBE has recently released a webpage at www.isbe.net/EMP/default.htm that explains the project and includes project statistics and the Orders for Licensure Sanctions issued by the State Educator Preparation and Licensure Board (SEPLB) or State Superintendent Koch. There is also a complaint form (optional) that can be used to file a complaint about a licensed educator and a designated email address for complaints at reportmisconduct@isbe.net.

**Special Education Services**

**8th Annual Conference on Best Practices in Nonpublic Special Education Programs**

Registration for the annual Conference on Best Practices in Nonpublic Special Education Programs is now open. The conference will be held Nov. 6-7 at the Hilton Oak Lawn.

Joshua Schneider is the keynote speaker for Nov. 6 and will kick off the conference with a talk on “Embracing Change and Helping Others Adapt.”

Breakout sessions will review the latest in special education trends, school program and policy sessions, services, legal issues, public perspectives and the latest in clinical updates. Nonpublic administrators, other leaders in the field of education, researchers and ISBE staff will lead the sessions.

This year’s conference will feature a social event sponsored by the Illinois Association of Private Special Education Centers (IAPSEC) and the National Association of Private Special Education Centers (NAPSEC).

The conference rate is $150 and includes two days of keynotes, breakout sessions, meals, networking, a mobile application and the social event. Registration closes Nov. 1. The registration page is available at www.isbe.state.il.us/spec-ed/np_handouts/default.htm. If you have questions, please contact npconf@isbe.net.

**Nutrition and Wellness Programs**

**Webinar on HealthierUS School Challenge Scheduled for Oct. 23**


Smarter Lunchrooms is the focus of the newly revised HealthierUS School Challenge criteria for 2014. The HUSSC: SL is a voluntary certification initiative recognizing those schools enrolled in Team Nutrition that have created healthier school environments through promotion of nutrition and physical activity.

The USDA recently revised the criteria to include the Smarter Lunchroom Self-Assessment Scorecard.

Attend this webinar to learn more about the changes to the application and the new criteria. Additionally, learn about the modifications to the nutrition education requirements for schools, as well as tips and resources to help you complete all areas of the HUSSC application.

- HealthierUS School Challenge: Smarter Lunchrooms Webinar
- Date: Oct. 23
- Time: 2 to 3 p.m.
- Sponsor: ISBE’s Division of Nutrition and Wellness Programs and Illinois Action for Healthy Kids
- Register: https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/395769057
Green Ribbon Schools

Green Schools Application Now Available

Applications are now available for the U.S. Department of Education’s Green Ribbon Schools Award program, recognizing schools that are leading the way to promote sustainability and environmental education. ISBE will accept applications from schools that have integrated best practices in energy, water and waste management; healthy school environments; and environmental education.

School districts with fewer than 200,000 students may select one school for which they submit an application. School districts with more than 200,000 students may select two schools for which they submit applications. Additionally, a district may apply as a district rather than selecting an individual school.

Applications are available on ISBE’s website at www.isbe.net/green_ribbon/pdfs/green-ribbon-app-14-15.pdf, and must be submitted online or to the Springfield ISBE office by 5 p.m. Nov. 19. More information about the award program is available at www.isbe.net/green_ribbon/.

Illinois will announce its winners in late December. Applications will be reviewed and scored by a panel of individuals with expertise in the field of environmental science. Those applicants with the highest scores will be forwarded to compete in the U.S. Department of Education’s Green Ribbon Schools program. The U.S. Department of Education will announce its winners in April 2015, followed by an award ceremony in Washington, D.C.

U.S. Department of Education


The U.S. Department of Education, through its Office for Civil Rights (OCR), has released guidance in the form of a “Dear Colleague” letter to ensure that students have equal access to educational resources. The guidance provides detailed and concrete information to educators on the standards established by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The guidance is one part of President Barack Obama’s larger equity agenda and takes into account the ongoing efforts of states, school districts and schools to improve equity. All students – regardless of race, color, national origin or ZIP code – deserve a high-quality education that includes resources such as academic and extracurricular programs, strong teaching, technology and instructional materials and safe school facilities.

The guidance is directed to all federal fund recipients that oversee or operate elementary and secondary education programs, including state and local superintendents, school board members, principals and other education officials. It will help educators, parents, students and advocates understand how OCR addresses resource equity in our nation’s schools. The guidance builds upon the resource equity guidance issued by the department in 2001.

To read the new “Dear Colleague” letter and related materials, please visit www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/resourcecomparability.html.

In Brief

Professional Development

- A free Half Day Conference for the Care of School Age Children is being sponsored by Advocate Children’s Hospital in Oak Lawn on Oct. 28, from 7:30 a.m. to noon. Continuing education units are available. For program content or to register, call (855) 312-KIDS.
- 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.
- 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.
**Educator Opportunities**

- The Interstate Mining Compact Commission (IMCC) seeks applications for its **Mining Awareness Educator Award**. The first-place winner receives a gift certificate for $500 worth of classroom resource materials. For more information, visit [www.imcc.isa.us/Awards.htm](http://www.imcc.isa.us/Awards.htm). Applications must be received by Feb. 1.
- The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Division of Education and the Illinois Conservation Foundation in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife program are offering a **Schoolyard Habitat Action Grant program**. Teachers and youth group leaders may receive up to $1,000 for natural resources projects. For more information and to access the application form, go to [http://dnr.state.il.us/education/CLASSRM/grants.htm](http://dnr.state.il.us/education/CLASSRM/grants.htm). The application deadline is Nov. 30.
- IDNR is offering a “virtual” trip for late-elementary school teachers, students and their parents. **Wild Illinois History** helps students in grades 3-5 focus on early French exploration, along with river and settlement geography. Teachers also get access to lesson plans, activities, photos, posters and correlations to the Illinois Learning Standards. Try it out at [www.wildillinois.org/](http://www.wildillinois.org/). For more information, contact Bob Bluett, IDNR wildlife diversity coordinator, at (217) 782-7580 or bob.bluett@illinois.gov.

**Student Opportunities**

- Illinois Partners for Clean Air has launched its annual **Shoot for the Skies PSA Video Contest**, a creative competition open to Chicago area high school students in Cook, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will counties. The public service announcements should educate the general public about Chicago area air quality and ways to improve it. For more information, visit [www.cleantheair.org/educational-programs/shoot-for-the-skies-psa-video-contest](http://www.cleantheair.org/educational-programs/shoot-for-the-skies-psa-video-contest). The submission deadline is Dec. 10.
- Applications for the 20th annual **Prudential Spirit of Community Awards** for middle school and high school youth volunteers are available online at [http://spirit.prudential.com](http://spirit.prudential.com). The application deadline is Nov. 4. Paper application forms are available by calling (877) 525-8491. The awards are sponsored by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

**District Opportunities**

- The National Center for Urban School Transformation is seeking eligible elementary, middle, high and alternative schools for its 2015 **National Excellence in Urban Education Award program**. The criteria and award application are available at [www.ncust.org](http://www.ncust.org). The application deadline is Nov. 14.

**Employment Opportunities**

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