Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Last week I attended the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) annual policy meeting. There was significant discussion on a number of topics, including implementation of new assessments and data privacy. However, much of our discussion centered on the possibility of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

The recent election has changed the playing field in Congress, with both houses under control of one party. Many observers feel that this is the best chance that we have had for ESEA reauthorization in years. CCSSO is committed to promoting reauthorization and we will advocate for quick action on the law that was last authorized in January 2002.

We met with U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan, who restated his department’s desire to move forward with reauthorization of ESEA. Duncan said he feels waivers have been good not only in providing relief for states and districts, but also in providing new ideas on how to drive student improvement. Duncan seems optimistic that reauthorization is a real possibility in the last two years of this administration.

I was also elected to serve a two-year term on the CCSSO Board of Directors. I was last on the Board in 2011-12 and also served as president of the organization in 2010-11. As a member of the Board, I will help guide the organization as it advocates for education at the federal level.

Fall block administration of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) exams begins Dec. 1. This will be the first administration of PARCC. The fall block testing is only for the high school, paper-based assessment, with about 3,200 students in Illinois participating.

PARCC released the third edition of the PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual, a comprehensive policy document that provides guidance to districts to ensure that the PARCC mid-year, performance-based, and end-of-year assessments provide valid results for all participating students. This manual is to be used as a training tool and addresses the specific needs of students with disabilities, English learners, and English learners with disabilities.


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.

- Green Ribbon Schools Award applications due – Nov. 19 (www.isbe.net/green_ribbon/pdfs/green-ribbon-app-14-15.pdf)
- School District Library Grant program deadline – Nov. 21 (www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/grants/schoolpercapgrant.html)
- Extended deadline for districts to submit plans for an alternate learning conditions survey – Nov. 27 (www.surveymonkey.com/s/ISBELearningConditions)
- ISBE offices closed for Thanksgiving – Nov. 27-28
- FY 2015 NCLB Monitoring Instrument – Nov. 30
- FY 2015 NCLB Title I Comparability Analysis – Nov. 30
- Deadline to enter the 2015 Illinois Arts Education Week Poster Contest – Dec. 2 (www.isbe.net/arts-week/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)
- Part 30 (Programs for the Preparation of Principals in Illinois) – Public comment period ends Dec. 15
- ISBE offices closed for Christmas Day – Dec. 25
- Deadline to submit written opt-out petition to regional superintendent of schools for Summer Food Service Program mandate (Public Act 096-0734) – Jan. 15
- Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by General Assembly in spring 2015 – Friday, Jan. 16, 2015 (See http://www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/default.htm for public notice requirements for all waiver requests.)
- TECH 2015 application deadline – Feb. 3 (www.iceberg.org/tech_2015)
- Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment (DLM-AA) testing window – March 23-May 1
- 2015 Illinois Arts Education Week – March 16-22
- TECH 2015 student showcase – May 7
- Deadline to submit data in the Student Health Data –vision system - June 30

Nutrition and Wellness Programs

Rise and Shine Illinois Campaign Aims to Increase School Breakfast Participation

A new public affairs campaign seeks to make breakfast widely available in Illinois schools.

Rise and Shine Illinois – a partnership of No Kid Hungry Illinois, the Greater Chicago Food Depository, Central Illinois Foodbank, EverThrive Illinois, the Illinois Coalition of Community Services, Illinois Hunger Coalition, the Midwest Dairy Council and St. Louis Area Food Bank – aims to increase the state’s school breakfast participation by 5 percent annually.

More than 660,000 children in Illinois, or one in five, are unsure of their next meal, according to Feeding America’s 2014 Map the Meal Gap study. Research confirms that children cannot concentrate in school when they’re hungry, and inadequate nutrition leaves many children distracted and unready to learn. In Illinois, more than 449,000 children who receive free and reduced-price lunches do not receive breakfast.

In 2011, the Illinois Commission to End Hunger identified school breakfast as a key strategy for reducing child food insecurity in the state. Rise and Shine Illinois encourages schools to consider implementing alternative breakfast models, such as Breakfast in the Classroom and Grab N Go, as well as...
the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), which streamlines the meal application process for schools in low-income areas. Additionally, meal costs are reimbursed by the federal government. No Kid Hungry Illinois makes funds available to schools for equipment and salaries and offers technical assistance. Through the Illinois Breakfast Challenge, No Kid Hungry Illinois also annually offers cash awards for schools with the highest annual increases in breakfast participation.

More information on school breakfast is at www.riseandshineillinois.org.

If you have questions about the campaign, contact the Greater Chicago Food Depository at (773) 247-3663 or schoolbreakfast@gcfd.org.

To learn more about CEP, contact the Illinois State Board of Education’s (ISBE) Nutrition and Wellness Programs Division at (800) 545-7892 or CNP@isbe.net.

**Illinois Arts Education Week**

**Last Call for Entries From High School Students for Annual Poster Contest**

High school students are encouraged to enter the 2015 Illinois Arts Education Week Poster Contest.

Gov. Pat Quinn traditionally designates the third week of March as Illinois Arts Education Week. In cooperation with the Illinois Art Education Association (IAEA) and ISBE, the 2015 Arts Education Week is scheduled for March 16-22.

The contest reinforces the importance of the arts in the growth and development of all students. This year’s theme is “Art is Timeless!” The contest winner’s artwork will be featured on a poster that is sent to all public and private schools in Illinois.

Entries must be postmarked no later than Dec. 2.

The contest focuses on different grade levels (K-8 and 9-12) in alternating years. The 2015 contest is open to all public, nonpublic and home-schooled high school students.

For more information and contest criteria, visit www.isbe.net/arts-week/default.htm.

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**U.S. Department of Education**

**Office for Civil Rights Issues Bullying Guidance to Schools**

The U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has issued guidance to schools on how to handle bullying, including against America’s 6.75 million public school students with disabilities.

The guidance, in the form of a letter to educators, details schools’ responsibilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act regarding the bullying of students with disabilities. If a student with a disability is being bullied, federal law requires schools to take immediate and appropriate action to investigate the issue and, as necessary, take steps to stop the bullying and prevent it from recurring (see fact sheet).

The guidance builds upon anti-bullying guidance issued in recent years by OCR and the department’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) concerning schools’ legal obligations, including:

- A 2000 letter by OCR and OSERS explaining that bullying based on disability may violate civil rights laws enforced by OCR, as well as interfere with a student’s receipt of special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA);
- A 2010 letter by OCR elaborating on potential violations when bullying and harassment is based on race, color, national origin, sex or disability; and
- A 2013 letter by OSERS clarifying that when bullying of a student with a disability results in the student not receiving meaningful educational benefit under IDEA, the school must remedy the problem, regardless of whether the bullying was based on the student’s disability.

Visit www.StopBullying.gov for additional information on bullying prevention and remedies.
Federal and State Monitoring

NCLB Monitoring Instrument and NCLB Title I Comparability

The fiscal year 2015 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Monitoring Instrument is now available for completion and submission in the IWAS system. 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/pdf/proof-indicators.pdf. We have also added two new training presentations that were used at the recent Title I Directors’ Conference addressing “How to prepare for an audit/monitoring visit” and “Updates on the changes to the Super Circular,” as well as “Time and Effort” documentation requirements.

The Title I Comparability analysis is now available for completion and submission in the IWAS system. There are new adjustments to how districts complete their analysis this year.

For those who were not able to attend the Title I Director’s Conference in Springfield, we have posted the training video on our website that explains the changes in the FY 2015 Comparability application and how to submit the form. The video is approximately 33 minutes in length. However, you may fast-forward to the portions that are of most concern to you and repeat them as many times as you like.

In Brief

School Safety

- A symposium is scheduled for Dec. 16 at the University of Illinois Springfield to educate non-criminal justice users about the Illinois State Police and Federal Bureau of Investigation Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) programs. State police’s Bureau of Identification has partnered with the Suburban Law Enforcement Academy (College of DuPage) and the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police to put on the event. In order to protect children, the elderly and people with disabilities, it is important that non-criminal justice CHRI users make good hiring and licensing decisions regarding potential child care providers, health care workers, local governmental, school and retail employees as well as general employment staff. More information is available at www.isbe.net/pdf/fbi-isp-symposium-fall-2014.pdf. The registration deadline is Dec. 9.

Awards and Recognition

- Nila Hawkins of Centralia City Schools received the School Nurse of the Year award during the Illinois Association of School Nurses (IASN) conference on Oct. 24-25 in Rockford.
• Monica Blum from the Marquardt School District in Glendale Heights received the **School Nurse Administrator of the Year award** during the IASN conference.

• Cheryl Hayes of the East Moline School District was recognized for her award of **National Special Needs School Nurse of the Year** from the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) during the IASN conference.

**Professional Development**

• Induction is the catalyst for a successful teaching career. It is the heartbeat that motivates new teachers to do their best. Join the **Illinois New Teacher Collaborative (INTC)** for its 10th annual Induction and Mentoring Conference, “The Heart of Teaching,” on Feb. 24-25, 2015, in Springfield. Registration is now open. More information is available online at [http://intc.education.illinois.edu/conference](http://intc.education.illinois.edu/conference).

• 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](http://intc.education.illinois.edu/conference).

**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).