Last week state legislators met in Springfield for veto session. They took action on a number of items, but no major issues impacting education were finalized.

The House held a hearing to discuss Senate Bill 16, legislation that would alter the way education funding is distributed in Illinois. Nine panels presented testimony regarding the legislation and more than 10,000 people submitted witness slips online in support or in opposition to the bill. The agency provided testimony expressing our appreciation that lawmakers are studying the formula, but our concern is that more work needs to be done. The bill’s sponsor will not move forward with the bill during veto or lame duck sessions. It is likely that it will be a significant part of the discussion during the spring legislative session.

Over the weekend Dave Dickson of Grant Park CUSD 6 was named the 2014 recipient of the Thomas Lay Burroughs Award. ISBE created the award for school board presidents in 1991 to honor Thomas Lay Burroughs, who served as chairman of the State Board of Education and the Board of Education for the Collinsville School District. The award recognizes extraordinary educational leadership at the local level, including leadership:

- on behalf of improved student learning and educational excellence;
- in resolving a crisis or major difficulty; and
- on behalf of equal education opportunities.

Dickson has served on the Grant Park CUSD 6 Board for more than eight years, including five years as president. Grant Park is a unit district located in central-eastern Illinois, approximately 60 miles south of Chicago. The district serves more than 500 students in grades pre-K to 12.

As we prepare for the holidays, Governor Quinn invites elementary school students across Illinois to help spread a little cheer this season by making holiday cards for our injured service members. Each year before the General Assembly reconvenes, Governor Quinn has made it a priority to personally deliver greeting cards from Illinois schoolchildren as a thank you to the troops for their courageous service. Governor Quinn welcomes your students to share in this holiday tradition.

Cards can be sent to:

Office of Governor Pat Quinn
Attn: Holiday Cards to Troops Program
James R. Thompson Center
100 West Randolph Street, Suite 16-100
Chicago, IL 60601

General Guidelines:

- Holiday cards of all types are welcome (i.e., Christmas, Chanukah, Kwanzaa, etc.)
- Cards created by grade school students only.
- Cards should be no larger than a regular 8.5x11 piece of paper.
- Cards may be handmade or computer generated.
- Stack cards neatly and bundle with rubber bands.
- Include one index card with your school’s name and mailing address.
- Cards Only - We are unable to accept items other than holiday cards.

Cards must be received no later than Friday, Dec. 12, 2014. Any questions about Governor Quinn’s Holiday Cards to Troops Program can be directed to GOV.Cards4troops@illinois.gov.

Happy Thanksgiving.
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.

- **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
- **ISBE offices closed for New Year’s Day** – Jan. 1
- **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.)
- **ISBE offices closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day** – Jan. 19
- **TECH 2015 application deadline** – Feb. 3 (www.iceberg.org/tech_2015)
- **ISBE offices closed for Lincoln’s Birthday** – Feb. 12
• ISBE offices closed for Presidents’ Day – Feb. 16
• Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment (DLM-AA) testing window – March 23-May 1
• 2015 Illinois Arts Education Week – March 16-22
• Eighth annual Illinois School Wellness Conference – April 23
• TECH 2015 student showcase – May 7
• ISBE offices closed for Memorial Day – May 25
• Deadline to submit data in the Student Health Data – Vision system - June 30
• ISBE offices closed for Independence Day – July 4

Assessment

PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual Available

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) has released an updated PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual.

The manual is a comprehensive accessibility policy document that provides guidance to districts and decision-making teams to ensure that the PARCC mid-year, performance-based and end-of-year assessments provide valid results for all participating students. This manual and its 11 supporting appendices are to be used as training tools to prepare schools for full administration of PARCC assessments. It also addresses the specific needs of students with disabilities, English learners and English learners with disabilities. The manual allows for maximum participation of all learners in Illinois schools and is a reflection of PARCC’s commitment to engage all students and establish equitable access as well as comparability of results for all students, schools, districts and states in the PARCC consortium.

Within the context of PARCC, accommodations are defined as adjustments to the testing situation, test format or test administration that provide equitable access during assessments for students with disabilities, students who are English learners and students with disabilities who are also English learners. Accommodations are to reduce or eliminate the effects of a student’s disability and/or English language proficiency level; however, accommodations do not reduce learning expectations.

On PARCC computer-delivered assessments, accessibility features are tools or preferences that are either built into the assessment system or provided externally by test administrators. Accessibility features can be used by any student taking the PARCC assessments (i.e., students with or without disabilities, gifted students, English learners and English learners with disabilities). Accessibility features are not accommodations. They are intended to benefit a wide range of students, and are available to any student at his or her discretion during testing.


Nutrition and Wellness Programs

Presentation Proposals Sought for Annual Illinois School Wellness Conference

Illinois Action for Healthy Kids (IL AFHK) invites individuals with expertise in school health and wellness to submit session ideas for presentation during the eighth annual Illinois School Wellness Conference.

The conference is scheduled for April 23 at the Hilton Garden Inn, 1501 S. Neil St., in Champaign.

AFHK is specifically interested in presentations that highlight successful school health and wellness-related outreach in schools, innovative projects that improve the overall health of the school community and emerging issues affecting school health and wellness. Presentations will be selected based on the need for the topic as it relates to school health and wellness and the speaker’s knowledge and expertise on the subject.

More information and the proposal application are available here or contact Jocelyn Toney at jtoney@actionforhealthykids.org. Please call (312) 878-2712 if you have questions. All proposals are due by 5 p.m. on Dec. 12.
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.

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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.

**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.

**Grant Opportunities**

- The Illinois Coastal Management Program is accepting applications for Illinois Coastal Grants for environmental education and outreach projects and sustainable coastal planning projects. New for this year will be proposals for habitat restoration projects and small grants. Application materials are available at www.dnr.illinois.gov/cmp/Pages/grants.aspx. Applications will be accepted through 5 p.m. Dec. 15. All potential applicants are invited to sign up for a one-on-one consultation about your project idea. Email Lisa Cotner at lisa.cottner@illinois.gov for more information.

**Educator Opportunities**

- Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) fishing and aquatic ecology programs are available for central Illinois educators. These programs work to develop positive attitudes towards natural resources, conservation and fishing in young people. Lessons align with the state and national learning standards and are adapted to all grade levels. For more information or to schedule a program, contact Van Grissom at (217) 720-3501 or van.grissom@illinois.gov. The counties served are Adams, Brown, Cass, Champaign, Christian, Clark, Coles, Cumberland, DeWitt, Douglas, Edgar, Ford, Hancock, Iroquois, Livingston, Logan, Macon, Mason, McLean,
Menard, Morgan, Moultrie, Piatt, Sangamon, Schuyler, Scott, Shelby and Vermilion.

**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).