Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

The General Assembly finished its veto session last week in Springfield. The House is not scheduled to meet again, but the Senate is scheduled to meet one more time, Jan. 13, 2015, the day before the new General Assembly begins.

Members of the General Assembly passed SB 2711, which amends the School Code to allow out-of-state teaching and – until June 30, 2019 – school service personnel experience to qualify a candidate for a principal endorsement on an educator license. Currently, only in-state experience qualifies a candidate for the endorsement. The amendment also authorizes a not-for-profit organization that has or has had a grant from or a contract with the State Board to provide professional development services in the area of English language learners (ELL) to Illinois school districts, teachers or administrators. It awaits action by the Governor.

Sen. Kimberly Lightford held multiple stakeholder meetings regarding her student discipline bill, SB 3004, during the last three weeks. No agreement has been reached yet. Sen. Lightford has scheduled another meeting for next week. It is our understanding that she would like to introduce a new bill in the spring.

Last week the State Board approved $33 million in federal 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) grants. These grants will support 70,000 students in before- and after-school enrichment programs in schools and organizations across the state.

ISBE received 142 proposals, requesting more than $53 million. Eighty-seven 21st CCLC grants on behalf of 300 schools and entities were awarded. The purpose of the 21st CCLC grant program, a key component of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), is to serve schools where low-income students make up at least 40 percent of the population or schools eligible for Title I school-wide programs. A complete listing of those entities awarded the grants is available at http://isbe.net/news/2014/dec2.htm.

Finally, congratulations to the six superintendents from Illinois selected by the U.S. Department of Education to participate in “ConnectED to the Future,” which was hosted by President Obama last month at the White House. Those honored from our state for their leadership in the transition to digital learning include:

- Steven Baule of North Boone CUSD 200
- Art Fessler of Community Consolidated School District 59
Brian Harris of Barrington 220 School District
John Hutton of Gurnee School District 56
Donald Owen of Urbana School District 116
Kenneth Spells of Alton Community School District 11

The event brought together more than 100 educators from across the country as part of the ConnectED Initiative, a plan aimed at connecting students to high-speed Internet and empowering teachers with the technology they need to transform teaching and learning.

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).

- **Deadline to send cards for Governor Quinn’s Holiday Cards to Troops Program** – Dec. 12
- **Annual Statement of Affairs (ISBE 50-37)** – To be filed with ISBE by Dec. 15 ([http://www.isbe.net/sfms/afsr.asp.htm](http://www.isbe.net/sfms/afsr.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](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
- **Employment Information System (EIS) open for data submissions** – Jan. 26
- **TECH 2015 application deadline** – Feb. 3 ([www.iceberg.org/tech_2015](http://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 3

**Standards and Assessments**

**School and Classroom Participants Sought for PARCC Diagnostic Field Test**

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is seeking schools and classrooms to participate in a field test for the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Diagnostic Assessments.

The purpose of the PARCC Diagnostic Assessments is to provide instructionally useful information about how well students have learned – or how prepared they are to learn – key content and skills tied to the...
Common Core State Standards in English language arts/literacy and mathematics to educators.

This is a voluntary opportunity for schools with grades 2 through 8. If your school chooses to participate, your staff and students will have gained experience with the type of items that will be on the diagnostic test and become familiar with how the test is administered. The PARCC Diagnostic Assessments will be used during the 2015-16 school year.

More information about the field test can be found here. Educators can contact Pearson’s PARCC Diagnostic Help Center from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday at (888) 493-9888 and select option #2 or email parccdiagnostic@support.pearson.com. You may also contact Jim Palmer, ISBE Student Assessment Division, at (217) 782-4823.

PARCC Infrastructure Trial Walkthrough Webinar Scheduled for Dec. 16

ISBE is holding a webinar at 10 a.m. Dec. 16 to walk through the PARCC Infrastructure Trial process.

Technology coordinators and test coordinators are encouraged to participate. There will be time dedicated to viewers’ questions.

For more information and to register, go to https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6526437502623021825.

Rules and Waivers

Notice of Completed Rulemaking

Please be advised that five sets of amendments recently adopted by ISBE are now in effect. Changes have been posted at www.isbe.net/rules/archive/default.htm. Please choose “Rules Currently in Effect” and scroll to Parts 25, 50, 51, 305 and 650.

Part 25 (Educator Licensure): In response to P.A. 98-610, effective Dec. 27, 2013, sets forth requirements for renewal of professional educator licenses and educator licenses with stipulations endorsed for career and technical educator; other technical changes also are being proposed. 
Effective Date: Nov. 3, 2014

Part 50 (Evaluation of Educator Licensed Employees under Articles 24A and 34 of the School Code): Establishes the components of the State Performance Evaluation Model for Teachers to which a school district would default should its joint committee fail to come to agreement on one or more of the components within 180 days.
Affected Sections: 50.30, 50.200, 50.210, 50.220, 50.230
Effective Date: Nov. 19, 2014

Part 51 (Dismissal of Tenured Teachers under Article 24 and Dismissal of Tenured Teachers and Principals under Article 34 of the School Code): Establishes a process for the agency's approval of entities to offer training for school board members about performance evaluations required under Article 24A of the School Code (i.e., “PERA evaluations”).
Affected Sections: 51.10, 51.235, 51.290
Effective Date: Nov. 3, 2014

Part 305 (School Food Service): Aligns the rules to federal nutrition standards and sets a limit on the number of “exempted fundraising days” (i.e., those selling food or beverages items not meeting the standards to students) that a participating school may have on the school campus during the school day.
Affected Sections: 305.5, 305.15
Effective Date: Nov. 19, 2014

Part 650 (Charter Schools): Lists requirements for biennial reporting by charter school authorizers; sets forth the process for monitoring authorizers and withdrawing their power to authorize in certain circumstances; establishes standards for high-quality charter school authorizing; and identifies the forms to be provided when a school board submits reports of approved applications for, revisions of or renewals for charter schools to the State Board.
Affected Sections: 650.10, 650.20, 650.30, 650.55, 650.65, 650.Appendix A
Effective Date: Nov. 3, 2014
Data Analysis and Accountability

Employment Information Services Timeline Update

Given the valuable feedback we've received from districts, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is simplifying and refocusing data collection in the Employment Information System (EIS).

David Smalley, division administrator for Data Analysis and Accountability, is working closely with the EIS team and the Information Technology (IT) staff to simplify and clarify the data entry requirements for EIS. In order to apply these helpful adjustments, we have rescheduled EIS to open for data submissions on Jan. 26, 2015. ISBE will contact districts soon with further information regarding training for the 2015 collection. Also, a webinar and referential EIS documentation will be released prior to the opening date to serve as an aid to districts.

If your school district is a 5Essentials participant, you have until March 15 to enter your positions data. For the U.S. Department of Education (C059-Staff FTE) Report, positions data will be due for all districts by April 15. We are refocusing the salary portion of the collection to after April 15, as was done with the Teacher Service Record (TSR), the data collection system that EIS replaced.

Finally, in hopes to improve future communication, EIS is creating a contact list to be able to stay in touch with our constituents. Vendors and others wishing for technical details are encouraged to send a contact email to datahelp@isbe.net. We will send out updates via this email in the new year to help keep districts current on EIS news.

Please send any questions you may have about these changes to datahelp@isbe.net.

Office of the Governor

Elementary Students Invited to Participate in Holiday Cards to Troops Program

Gov. Pat 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, Gov. 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. Gov. Quinn welcomes your students to share in this holiday tradition.

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

Cards can be sent to:

Office of Governor Pat Quinn
Attn: Holiday Cards to Troops Program
James R. Thompson Center
100 West Randolph St., 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.

U.S. Department of Education

Office for Civil Rights Releases Guidance to Schools for Offering Single-Sex Classes

The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has released guidance for K-12 schools that offer or want to offer single-sex classes.

In response to numerous inquiries about the legality of single-sex classes, OCR issued guidance that charts a path for schools on how they can provide boys-only or girls-only instruction while remaining in compliance with civil rights laws.

To offer single-sex classes or extracurricular activities, schools must:
• Identify an important objective that they seek to achieve by offering a single-sex class (such as improving academic achievement);
• Demonstrate that the single-sex nature of the class is substantially related to achieving that objective;
• Ensure that enrollment in the single-sex class is completely voluntary (through an opt-in, rather than an opt-out, process);
• Offer a substantially equal coed class in the same subject;
• Offer single-sex classes evenhandedly to male and female students;
• Conduct periodic evaluations at least every two years to ensure that the classes continue to comply with Title IX;
• Avoid relying on gender stereotypes;
• Provide equitable access to single-sex classes to students with disabilities and English language learners; and
• Avoid discriminating against faculty members based on gender when assigning educators to single-sex classrooms.

The guidance document is presented in a question-and-answer format, offering common scenarios aimed at assisting schools and educators in designing single-sex programs that comply with Title IX.

For more information about OCR, please click here.

In Brief

In the News
• Through the Agricultural Education programs in Illinois schools, the National FFA Organization provides leadership, personal growth and career success training to more than 600,000 student members in grades 7 through 12 who belong to one of the 7,570-plus local FFA chapters throughout the United States, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Local Agricultural Education programs/FFA chapters and their students excelled at the recent National FFA Convention & Expo. Illinois boasts of several national winners and top ten national rankings. Please click on the following links for the results:
  American Degree Recipients
  National Proficiency Results - All Finalists
  National Chapter Award Programs/Chapters

Professional Development
• The 20th Annual Illinois Association for Gifted Children Convention will be held Feb. 8-10, 2015, in Naperville. Participants will have the opportunity to gather with classroom teachers, gifted coordinators, administrators, parents and exhibitors for a variety of sessions on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. For complete information – including the registration form, schedule and online hotel reservations – go to http://www.iagegifted.org/committees/twentieth-iage-convention.html.

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.

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.cotner@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).