Message from Interim State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Good afternoon. I hope you are enjoying the nice spring weather.

The Illinois State Board of Education released its annual look at the financial status of the states’ school districts, which shows their financial health continuing to make improvements. The results show nearly 60% of the states’ districts are in the highest category, receiving financial recognition, while only 6% are on the financial watch list. The School District Financial Profile was designed in 2001 with the input from IASBO, IASA, Ed Red, LUDA, Scope/Lend, district superintendents and business managers, bond brokers, CPAs, Bond raters, etc. and first utilized in March of 2002 based upon 2001 school district financial data to better illustrate information on school district finances and to establish financial designation lists for all school districts. The Financial Profile is based on the State Board’s analysis of school districts’ June 30, 2006 Annual Financial Reports. Each district in the state receives a designation in one of the following four categories (highest to lowest): Financial Recognition; Financial Review; Financial Early Warning; and Financial Watch.

The Financial Profile designation is just one piece of information that school districts and communities should use to judge the financial management and condition of their school district. Other sources of information that are important to consider are the number of years the district has been realizing negative fund balances, the amount of funds borrowed on future revenue sources for use to meet today’s operational expenditures and ongoing financial concerns.

The list is created by using five indicators of financial performance:

- Fund Balance to Revenue Ratio (FBRR)
- Expenditures to Revenues Ratio (EXRV)
- Days Cash on Hand (DCOH)
- Percent of Short-term Borrowing Available (STB)
- Percent of Long-term Debt Remaining (LTD)

In addition to making gains over the FY06 Financial Profile (based on FY05 data), Illinois districts have made significant improvements since the 2004 Financial Profile (based on FY03 data).

- 59% in 2007 get financial recognition, up from 40% in 2004
- 22% on financial review, compared to 27% in 2004
- 13% on financial early warning compared to 16% in 2004
- 6% on financial watch compared to 17% in 2004

Previous Boards and the current State Board of Education have expressed an interest in combining the financial risk indicators with program risk indicators to ascertain an overall picture of risk. Such a strategy allows the state to prioritize interventions with limited human resources and establishes a methodology that the U.S. Department of Education may accept. While it is not a certainty, it is not uncommon to find various non-compliance issues when
districts are having significant financial problems. Of course, serious non-compliance issues with various federal and state laws exist in the absence of financial difficulty as well, so any method of risk determination must take this into consideration. The ability to combine risk indicators from program and financial variables provides both state and local educators the potential to more effectively address the broader systemic character of school improvement.

I hope that you all have a great week.

Chris Koch

Upcoming Deadlines

- **Non-Certified Staff Salary Study** - March 31, 2007
- **American Stars of Teaching** – April 1, 2007
- **Preschool for All Children Ages 3 to 5 years RFP** – May 3, 2007
- **Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Young Scholars Program** – May 7, 2007
- **Those Who Excel/Illinois Teacher of the Year nominations** – May 7, 2007
- **Waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly in Fall 2007** – August 10, 2007

Data Analysis & Progress Reporting

**2006-2007 Dental Data Collection**

The Dental Data Collection system will be opened for data entry from **May 16, 2007 through June 30, 2007**. The data must be submitted online using IWAS. Urls for important forms and other information are listed below:

- **School Dental Examinations- Information Sheet**
  [http://www.isbe.net/research/pdfs/dental_information.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/research/pdfs/dental_information.pdf)

- **IDPH Proof of School Dental Examination Form**
  [http://www.idph.state.il.us/HealthWellness/oralhlth/DentalExamProof.pdf](http://www.idph.state.il.us/HealthWellness/oralhlth/DentalExamProof.pdf)

- **IDPH Dental Examination Waiver Form**
  [http://www.idph.state.il.us/forms/ohpm/Dental%20Exam%20Waiver.pdf](http://www.idph.state.il.us/forms/ohpm/Dental%20Exam%20Waiver.pdf)

- **Dental Information-Data Entry Worksheet**
  [http://www.isbe.net/research/xls/dental_worksheet.xls](http://www.isbe.net/research/xls/dental_worksheet.xls)

Please share this information with the school nurse or health technician and those submitting the dental data to the Illinois State Board of Education. Questions may be addressed to **Mr. Shafiqul Azam** at 217-782-3950 or mazam@isbe.net.

Curriculum & Instruction

RFPs for Mathematics and Science Partnerships

The Request for Proposals for the new Mathematics and Science Partnerships program has been posted at: [http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/math_science/rfp.htm](http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/math_science/rfp.htm). This can be an exceptional opportunity for meaningful, long-term partnerships for mathematics and science teaching and learning.

The deadline for submitting proposals is **Monday, April 30, 2007**. For more information, contact **Gwen Pollock** at 217-557-7323 or gpollock@isbe.net.

Federal Grants & Programs

**Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) Program – Seventh Annual Safe School Symposium**

The Illinois State Board of Education, in conjunction with the Regional Office of Education #12/Safe Schools, invites districts across Illinois to participate in the 7th Annual Safe School Symposium from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. **Friday, May 4, 2007**, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, in Springfield, Ill.

More information and registration materials can be found online at: [http://www.isbe.net/pdf/safe_school_2007.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/pdf/safe_school_2007.pdf). For additional information, contact **Albert J. Holmes** at 312-814-3618, aholmes@isbe.net or **Diane Taylor** at 618-3395-8626, dtaylor@roe12.net.
**Nutrition**

**Nutrition Programs Newsletters Posted Online**

*The Outlook* and the *Mealtime Minutes* are two newsletter publications that Nutrition Programs publishes as links to the School Meals program and the Child and Adult Care Food Program respectively. *The Outlook*, is produced August through May while the *Mealtime Minutes* is a quarterly newsletter. Look for Mealtime Minutes postings the first of January, April, October and July. To view current issues, back issues and the 2006 index for *The Outlook* and *Mealtime Minutes*, visit [www.isbe.net/nutrition](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition) and click on NSLP OUTLOOK or CACFP Mealtime Minutes.

**Seamless Summer Option Applications Online**

Summer starts and students who relied on the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs for their primary source of nutrition are still hungry everyday. Schools already enrolled in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and/or National School Lunch Program (NSLP) may wish to participate in the Seamless Summer Option. Reimbursement rates for the Seamless Summer Option are the same as the SBP and NSLP rates during the school year. Schools that operate an academic summer school and serve meals to students in attendance must also open their doors to children in the community to participate in the Seamless Summer Option.

By enrolling in the Seamless Summer Option, schools will not only provide a service to children in their school but the community at large.

For more information about the Seamless Summer Option or to apply for the program visit our website at [www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/summer.htm#seamless](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/summer.htm#seamless).

**Grant Opportunities**

**IDOT’s Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program Grant applications due**

Applications for the Illinois Department of Transportation’s Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program Grant are due Tuesday, April 3, 2007.

The goal of the pedestrian and bicycle safety program is to reduce the incidence of crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists and the resulting fatalities and injuries. This program aims to accomplish this through support of research, education, encouragement, enforcement and marketing activities.

The primary focus of this program will be on areas experiencing disproportionately high pedestrian and bicycle crashes and surrounding facilities such as schools, parks, and senior centers.

Program information and grant application materials can be found online at: [http://www.dot.state.il.us/trafficsafety/pedbikegrants.htm](http://www.dot.state.il.us/trafficsafety/pedbikegrants.htm)

For additional information, contact Roseanne O’Laughlin at 312-384-6327 or rolaughlin@ekmail.com.

**Professional Development**

**Bilingual Transition to Teaching Program accepting applications**

Applications are now being accepted for the Bilingual Transition to Teaching program, which trains professionals and recent college graduates to become teachers.

The Bilingual Transition to Teaching program is a joint partnership between the Illinois State Board of Education, Northern Illinois University, the Chicago Public Schools and several suburban school districts.

The deadline to apply is **Friday, April 20, 2007**. For more information, visit the Bilingual Transition to Teaching website at [www.transitiontoteaching.com](http://www.transitiontoteaching.com) or call 224-366-8539.

**Student Opportunities**

**National WWII Museum’s art contest deadline is March 30**

The deadline for the National WWII Museum’s 2007 Middle School Art Contest is **Friday, March 30, 2007**.

The theme for the art contest is inspired by the museum’s special exhibit, ‘Anne Frank: A History for Today.’ The National WWII Museum, located in New Orleans, is dedicated to exploring the history and lessons of WWII with America’s youth.

Information about the contest is available online at: [www.nationalww2museum.org/education/artcontest.html](http://www.nationalww2museum.org/education/artcontest.html)

Questions can be directed to Ken Hoffman, Director of Education, at 504-527-6012, ext. 225 or educator@nationalww2museum.org.
FYI

Volunteers needed for Human Trafficking Awareness Outreach Day on May 5

The Illinois Rescue and Restore Coalition is currently seeking volunteers for Human Trafficking Awareness Outreach Day on Saturday, May 5, 2007 – when volunteers in Illinois and across the nation will canvas neighborhoods and streets to hang Rescue and Restore posters wherever possible.

Illinois Rescue and Restore is a coalition of organizations led by the Illinois Department of Human Services to structure the state's response to human trafficking. It was created in late spring 2005 under a mandate from Governor Rod R. Blagojevich.

For more information or to volunteer, call 312-793-2665 or go online at: www.dhs.state.il.us/projectsinitiatives/trafficking/signup.

Employment Opportunities

ISBE External Vacancy List

An External Vacancy List for the Illinois State Board of Education is available at: http://www.isbe.net/hr/Default.htm.

In the News

Weekly news clips