Yesterday, I had the privilege to spend some time with students and staff at schools in the eastern Illinois communities of Hutsonville, Kansas and Paris. I was invited to present the 2007 Honor Roll Certificates to Hutsonville Elementary and Junior High School, Kansas Elementary School, and Carolyn Wenz Elementary School in Paris. The Kansas and Wenz elementary schools received Spotlight School awards and Hutsonville received Spotlight and Academic Improvement awards. I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to see the wonderful things these students and staff are achieving and I thank them for inviting me.

Getting out and seeing our students, teachers and administrators hard at work truly reminds me of the great things that are done in Illinois schools day in and day out. Just last week, the National Center for Educational Statistics released The Nation’s Report Card: Writing 2007. It included a look at how well eighth-graders across the country are performing. It was not surprising to see our students scoring among the best in the nation, with only three states and the Department of Defense schools scoring statistically significantly higher. Our education communities have long told us that writing was critical to student success, which is why we have tested this curricular area at the state level for so many years.

I want to let you know that we have decided to maintain the current testing window for the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) for next year to be held April 22-23, 2009, with makeup dates on May 6-7, 2009. We were exploring moving the testing dates earlier in the spring so that we would be able to get schools their data sooner to review and make corrections. This would enable us to provide Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) calculations in a more timely manner. However, your response urging us to maintain the current testing schedule for at least next year was overwhelming. You also advised that should we consider a change in testing dates anytime in the future, then we should give districts at least two years notice. While I would still like to be able to provide you with AYP determinations sooner, you had many good reasons for wanting to maintain the current timeframe for next year. We will work with ACT to see if there are some other options for future years.

I want to thank everyone who provided their input about the PSAE testing window. I value and want to incorporate your input into the decisions we make whenever possible. I will use this forum more often in the future to seek your feedback.

Thanks, and have a great week.

Chris
Upcoming Deadlines

- Truants’ Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP) RFP – April 14, 2008
- Migrant Education Program Summer 2008 Application – April 15, 2008
- Deadline for proposed amendments to rules regarding Driver Education (23 Ill. Adm. Code 252) – April 21, 2008
- Even Start Family Literacy RFP – April 25, 2008
- Student Advisory Council applications for 2008-2009 – April 30, 2008
- Charter Planning Grant applications & Charter Implementation Grant applications – April 30, 2008
- Enhancing Education through Technology RFP – May 1, 2008
- Prevention Initiative Birth to Age 3 Years RFP – May 6, 2008
- Deadline for commenting on proposed rules – Part 25; Part 180; Part 235; Part 305; and Part 401 – May 19, 2008
- Request for Proposals (RFP) for Advanced Placement Classes – May 22, 2008
- Regional Safe Schools Program (RSSP) FY 2009 application available and may be accessed through the State Board of Education webpage at http://www.isbe.net/accountability/html/regional_safeschools.htm. RSSP funds are distributed by formula established in the school code. Eligible entities are Regional Offices of Education, Intermediate Service Centers and Chicago Public Schools. Programs should use the FY 2008 award amount to complete the FY 2009 application. The due date is Friday, May 23.
- FY09 Consolidated Application to Serve English Language Learners – June 30, 2008
- Deadline for waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly in Fall 2008 – August 8, 2008
- Annual Superintendents’ Conference – October 23 – 24, 2008

Illinois Response to Intervention (RtI)

Training for the Illinois Response to Intervention (RtI) District Self-Assessment Template to be held Friday, April 11, 2008

ISBE will provide training on the Illinois Response to Intervention (RtI) District Self-Assessment from 9 – 11 a.m. on Friday, April 11. The training will be offered via a live webcast. The links to the webcast will be as follow (the links will not be live until the day of the training):

Real Player
http://www.state.il.us/video/streaming/isbe/response-to-intervention-041108.ram

Windows Player
http://www.state.il.us/video/streaming/isbe/response-to-intervention-041108.asx

The self-assessment template is available at http://www.isbe.net/RtI_plan/default.htm.

During the webcast, questions may be e-mailed to lsmith@isbe.net. The training coordinators will answer as many questions as possible at the end of the webcast. A question and answer document will be posted after the training at www.isbe.net. Please also visit our website prior to the training to view and download the training materials.

Accountability

FY09 Regional Safe Schools Program Application Available

The Regional Safe Schools Program (RSSP) FY 2009 application is available and may be accessed through the State Board of Education webpage at http://www.isbe.net/accountability/html/regional_safeschools.htm.

RSPP funds are distributed by formula established in the school code. Eligible entities are Regional Offices of Education, Intermediate Service Centers and Chicago Public Schools. Programs should use the FY 2008 award amount to complete the FY 2009 application. The due date is Friday, May 23.

For questions or more information, contact Sally Veach, Accountability Division, at 217-782-2948 or by e-mail at sveach@isbe.net.
Curriculum & Instruction

Request for Proposals (RFP) for Advanced Placement Classes – College Success for All Students Program

The purpose of this grant is to support and promote Advanced Placement (AP) and pre-Advanced Placement programs at schools serving populations with 40 percent or more students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. During the past several years, AP has been expanding to include a far greater number of students than ever before.

Grant funds can be utilized to begin or expand AP or pre-AP programs as well as provide professional development for teachers and other school personnel. Professional Development is a required part of the proposal process; at least 20 percent of all funds awarded will need to be invested in training with the College Board in such areas as vertical team training and content specific training.

The requirements for this RFP are posted online at http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/html/advanced_placement.htm. A listing of eligible schools and districts is also posted on the website. This list includes both high schools that will offer AP and middle schools that will offer pre-AP. Those districts believing they meet eligibility, but not the list, must provide a school report card with low income information to be eligible. Additionally, a question and answer forum will be available for those wishing to apply. The RFP is due Thursday, May 22.

For more details on the RFP, or other aspects of current AP programming, please visit http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/html/advanced_placement.htm. For questions, contact Mike Hatfill, Curriculum & Instruction, at 217-557-7323 or by e-mail at dhatfill@isbe.net.

2009 Enhancing Education through Technology (EETT) grant

The Illinois State Board of Education has released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the 2009 Enhancing Education through Technology (EETT) grant. Districts should view the instructions under eligible entity requirements found on the first page of the RFP to see if they are eligible to apply.

Data Analysis & Progress Reporting

2007-2008 Dental Data Collection

A revised Dental Information Sheet and a revised Data Entry Worksheet are posted on the Illinois State Board of Education’s website. The addresses are:

School Dental Examinations—Information Sheet: http://www.isbe.net/research/pdfs/dental_information.pdf

Dental Information--Data Entry Worksheet: http://www.isbe.net/research/xls/dental_worksheet.xls

Please share this information with your school nurses or health technicians and those submitting dental data to ISBE. Questions may be addressed to Md. Shafiqul Azam, Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division, at 217-782-3950 or by e-mail at mazam@isbe.net.

Title I Status Survey on IWAS

The Title I Status Survey is now available on IWAS. The purpose of this survey is to identify Title I schools for 2007-08 AYP calculations and School Report Cards. The deadline to complete this survey is Wednesday, May 7. If you have any questions, please call the Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division at 217-782-3950.

English Language Learning

FY09 Consolidated Application Update

Local school districts and Regional Offices of Education are advised that the FY09 Consolidated Application to Serve English Language Learners will be available for downloading at www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/consolidated_application.htm beginning of the week of April 17, 2008. Short video segments explaining how to complete the application forms for program approval and funding will also be found at this website.
To qualify for both state TBE/TPI and federal Title III funding, the completed application must be received or postmarked by **Monday, June 30**. Applications postmarked after the June 30 deadline will **not** be eligible for federal Title III funding. Please remember that the Consolidated Application is not yet part of the e-grant system and therefore, will only be available via downloading from the above website.

Additionally, on both May 1 and May 2, the Division of English Language Learning staff will host phone conferences to answer questions related to the application. To access the conference calls, you must RSVP to obtain a call-in number and code. The purpose of the RSVP is to assure that we have an adequate number of phone lines. To download the teleconference RSVP form, click on [www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/consolidated_application.htm](http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/consolidated_application.htm). You may submit written questions concerning the application to del@isbe.net before and after the phone conferences.

Please be advised that the conference calls will take the place of the regional application workshops held in previous years.

If you have further questions, contact the Division of English Language Learning at 312-814-3850.

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**Funding & Disbursements**

**Segregation of Driver Education Fees and Revenue**

Per PA 94-0426 that was enacted on January 1, 2006, all driver education fees and State reimbursement for driver education must be deposited into the school district’s driver education fund as a separate line item budget entry. The money in the district’s driver education fund can only be used for the funding of a high school driver education program approved by the State Board of Education that uses instructors certified by the State Board of Education.

**General State Aid – Frequently Asked Questions**

A revised version of the *General State Aid – Frequently Asked Questions* document can be accessed at [http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/gsa_faq.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/gsa_faq.pdf). This document contains important information to accurately report attendance for the General State Aid claim and includes topics pertaining to full and part-time attendance, home/hospital instruction, school calendar, alternative schools, special education as well as other related attendance issues. If you have questions regarding this document or the General State Aid claim, please contact **Jim Mathes**, Funding & Disbursements, at 217-782-5256 or by e-mail at jimathes@isbe.net.

**ESTIMATED FY 09 Special Education “Extraordinary” Distribution**

Estimated FY 09 district allocations have been calculated for the Funding For Children Requiring Special Education Services program authorized under Section 14-7.02b of the School Code, previously known as Special Education Extraordinary and can be accessed at [http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/extraordinary_estimate09.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/extraordinary_estimate09.pdf). The estimate assumes the FY 09 ISBE requested appropriation, 2007-08 estimated average daily attendance and preliminary poverty counts from the Department of Human Services. The final two columns compare the FY 07 allocation to the estimated allocation amount for FY 09.

HB 4148 was signed by the Governor on January 8, 2008 (P.A. 95-0705). The new law made changes to Section 14-7.02b stating that, for fiscal year 2008 and each fiscal year thereafter, individual school districts must not receive payments under that Section totaling less than they received for fiscal year 2007 (commonly referred to as a “hold harmless” provision). However, the language further states that any “hold harmless” funding is to be “computed last and shall be a separate calculation from any other calculation set forth in [Section 14-7.02b].”

The “other calculation” referenced in the new language is the existing split of the entire appropriation—85% based on each district’s average daily attendance and 15% on poverty which were used in General State Aid. Thus, under the new statutory scheme, the AGENCY in FY 09 would complete the 85-15 calculation for each district and, if the amount calculated for any district is less than what the district received in FY 2007.

Districts that are estimated to receive less funding in FY 09 than FY 07 would be eligible for the supplemental funds which is currently estimated at $18,836,023.

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**Rules & Waivers**

**Invitation to Comment on Rules**
Five sets of proposed rules recently reviewed by the State Board of Education are currently available for public comment. These items have been posted on the agency’s web site at [www.isbe.net/rules](http://www.isbe.net/rules); choose “Proposed Rules and Amendments.” Please submit any comments or suggestions you may have to rules@isbe.net.

**Part 25 (Certification)**
Renewal requirements for school service personnel certificate and provisional vocational certificate; redefine early childhood experience for standard certificate; application by National Board-certified teacher for annual stipend; extend validity of certification testing scores to ten years (from five); add content-area test in Arabic; repeal outdated provisions for institutional review; technical corrections and updates.

**Part 180 (Health/Life Safety Code for Public Schools)**
Update cross-reference and accommodate School Facility Occupation Tax Fund.

**Part 235 (Early Childhood Block Grant)**
Technical revision to extend eligibility for teaching positions to all those with valid types of certificates.

**Part 305 (School Food Service)**
Incorporating recommendations from the School Wellness Policy Task Force report regarding school nutrition standards.

**Part 401 (Special Education Facilities Under Section 14-7.02 of the School Code)**
Proposed amendments that will eventually replace the emergency amendments now in effect, as outlined below; updates in cross-references for consistency with revised Part 226.

**Deadline for Public Comment:** May 19, 2008

**Notice of Effectiveness of Rules**
Please be advised that four sets of amendments recently adopted by the State Board are now in effect. These rules have been posted on the agency’s web site at [www.isbe.net/rules](http://www.isbe.net/rules); choose “Rules Currently in Effect” and scroll to the relevant Part number. If you print the affected Sections, please remember to include the table of contents to the Part, since that changes each time a set of rules is amended.

**Emergency Amendments to Part 401**
(Special Education Facilities Under Section 14-7.02 of the School Code)
Provisions for immediate nonapproval of programs using aversive behavioral intervention techniques that rely on causing pain as a means of control. Requirement for policies stating that such means will not be used.

**Effective Date:** March 21, 2008, for a maximum of 150 days.

**Part 51 (Dismissal of Tenured Teachers Under Article 24 and Dismissal of Tenured Teachers and Principals Under Article 34 of the School Code)**
Exception for Chicago teachers under alternative evaluation plan pursuant to Section 34-85c of the School Code (P.A. 95-510).

**Affected Section:** 51.20
**Effective Date:** March 21, 2008

**Part 226 (Special Education)**
Additional requirements for IEPs of students with disabilities on the autism spectrum (P.A. 95-257); timeframe for requesting substitution of a hearing officer; student’s delegation of rights (P.A. 95-372).

**Affected Sections:** 226.220, 226.635, and 226.690
**Effective Date:** March 21, 2008

**Part 350 (Secular Textbook Loan)**
Updating to accommodate electronic means of communication.

**Affected Sections:** 350.15 and 350.25
**Effective Date:** March 21, 2008

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**Educator Preparation & Recertification**

**Alternative Route to an Administrative Certificate for National Board Certified Teachers**

Illinois institutions of higher education that have an approved principal preparation program may now apply to offer a course of study leading to an Administrator Certificate for National Board certified teachers who qualify to enter the program. The course of study must be approved by the Illinois State Board of Education in consultation with the State Teacher Certification Board. Any institutions interested should complete and return ISBE Form 77-22 which can be found on the web at [http://www.isbe.net/certification/pdf/77-22_admin_cert.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/certification/pdf/77-22_admin_cert.pdf). Instructions may be found at
Applicants for the Alternative Route to an Administrative Certificate for National Board Certified Teachers must meet four criteria:

1. National Board certification and a Teacher Leadership Endorsement;

2. A master's degree in an approved Teacher Leader program from an accredited institution of higher education;

3. 15 hours of coursework; and


If you have any questions, please contact Dennis Williams, Educator Preparation & Recertification Division, at 217-57-6763 or by e-mail at dwilliam@isbe.net.

Nutrition

Food Safety

Food safety and security are important aspects of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Nutrition Assistance Programs and the Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) Food Safety Unit. These two organizations coordinate food safety and security efforts for all Food Distribution Programs.

This unit works closely with the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) which is the public health agency in the U.S. Department of Agriculture responsible for ensuring the nation's commercial supply of meat, poultry, and egg products is safe, wholesome, and correctly labeled and packaged as required by the Federal Meat Inspection Act, the Poultry Products Inspection Act, and the Egg Products Inspection Act.

On the USDA website – http://www.commodityfoods.usda.gov/fd_safety.htm – you will find a great deal of food safety resources and a list of all holds and recalls of food products.

Westland Meat recall

By now, all schools affected by the Westland Meat Company recall should have disposed of any cases of beef subject to the recall. If you have done so already, please fill out the Destruction Verification and Reimbursement Form and fax it to the Food Distribution Program at 217-782-4550. If you have any questions regarding the recall or the reimbursement procedure, call Food Distribution Program staff at 217-782-2491 or access the information on the Food Distribution Program website at http://www.isbe.net/business.htm.

Are you considering starting a School Breakfast Program at your school?

If so, join the 42 schools who have thus far taken advantage of the $3,500 state-funded start-up grant for 2007-2008! Funds can be used toward any non-recurring costs (costs related to start-up of the program only), equipment (refrigeration equipment, serving equipment, warming trays, carts, menu boards, toasters, cereal dispensers, etc), outreach and materials (conference attendance, brochures, flyers, menus, etc). Any school that does not currently operate a School Breakfast Program, but agrees to operate a program for at least 20 serving days in the start-up year and 3 years beyond, is eligible to apply.

The application process is simple – go to http://www.isbe.net/nutrition and click on the box entitled “School Breakfast Program.” Funds are still available for the 2007-2008 school year. Application materials for the 2008-2009 school year will be available on-line in early July.

Summer Food Service Program – submitting applications

Now is the time to submit your application for the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). Visit the SFSP website at http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/summer.htm and click on the Application link or the New Sponsor link, whichever is applicable. Mandatory workshops for all new sponsors are also in full swing.

For more information and to register, access the website above and go to Workshop Information. If you have any questions, contact Amy Bianco, Nutrition Division, at 1-800-545-7892 or by e-mail at abianco@isbe.net.

Professional Development

Online Course for Improving Education Data
The National Forum on Education Statistics released the first of two online courses for local education agencies (LEA). These two courses, focused on improving education data, have been developed by the National Forum on Education Statistics, and in cooperation with the Schools Interoperability Framework Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers and the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit.

The first course, Improving Education Data Part 1- Creating a Foundation, presents concepts related to creating a culture of quality data. The four lessons in this course concentrate on establishing a culture of quality data, assessing your local education agency’s data quality, classifying education data, and examining security and confidentiality. The course is designed to be either instructor-let or self-paced and incorporates activities, discussions, presentations, and support materials.

The second course, Improving Education Data Part 2- Coordinating Data Quality will be available in the summer 2008.

These courses are available free of charge to LEAs or anyone interested in taking the courses through SIFA University. To access the courses, visit http://www.sifinfo.org/sfiau.asp.

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**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.

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**In the News**

**Weekly news clips**

ISBE has posted highlights from last week’s education news clips at: