Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

We sent out a special message last week but I think it is worth repeating. Governor Blagojevich has requested the 23rd and 24th General State Aid payments be advanced to June. I know there was a great deal of concern from many of you that these would not be advanced. Governor Blagojevich made the formal request last week and Comptroller Hynes has indicated that making these payments will be a priority for his office.

This week is the final scheduled week of the General Assembly’s spring session. We will be monitoring what happens in the Capitol and provide you updates as warranted.

Last week the Illinois State Board of Education held their May meeting in Springfield. As you know one of the Board’s priorities is to improve the readiness of our students for success after graduation. Whether our students plan to move on to a post-secondary institution to further their education or go directly into the workforce, we want to make sure that every student has the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be successful.

Improving the rigor and relevance of the K-16 educational system is the reason that our Board has joined the College and Workforce Readiness Partnership with the Governor’s office and the Gates Foundation.

Achieve, Inc. is a bipartisan, non-profit organization created by the nation’s governors and corporate leaders to help states raise their academic standards, improve their assessments and strengthen accountability to prepare all young people for post-secondary education, work and citizenship. An important part of Achieve’s mission is to provide state policymakers with an independent, expert review of the quality of their standards and assessments. The Board reviewed the results of Achieve’s analysis of our high school standards at the May meeting.

As many of you may remember, the Illinois Learning Standards (ILS) were created by Illinois educators with input from the broader, private sector community. Illinois adopted the ILS in 1997, and this is the first time we have done a careful review and analysis of our standards benchmarked against exemplar standards in English language arts, mathematics and science.

The Achieve report provided responses to the following questions:

1. How do Illinois Learning Performance Descriptors compare with the rigor of standards set by Achieve’s exemplars in English language arts, science and mathematics?
2. How well do the Illinois Learning Performance Descriptors in the three content areas measure up against the criteria of coherence, progression, focus, specificity, clarify and measurability?
While the Illinois descriptors were found to have some real strengths, Achieve found significant gaps in our expectations when compared to the exemplar standards, especially in English language arts and science. In all three content areas, the Illinois descriptors lack the clarity and specificity necessary to convey the level of performance expected of students. And to varying degrees, the progression of expectations from early high school to late high school is not clearly developed.

It is appropriate that we review and revise our standards so that we best prepare every student for success. The review of the high school standards is the first step in a process which will include the review and alignment of our learning standards, K-12 and finally, alignment to post-secondary expectations and careers.

The Board will have a full discussion on the Achieve study during our June board meeting and will discuss next steps to improve our standards, possibly moving toward joining the American Diploma Project 33 state network and convening a state team to participate in an Achieve Alignment Institute. I encourage you to review the full report and all of the materials at [http://www.isbe.net/reports.htm](http://www.isbe.net/reports.htm).

I hope you had a great holiday weekend and I wish you the best as you bring closure to the school year.

Chris

**Upcoming Deadlines**

- **Deadline to submit letter to serve on Committee of Practitioners for NCLB** – May 30, 2008
- **Summer food service commodity order deadline** – June 1, 2008
- **Deadline to appeal non-approval of 2008 Technology Plans** – June 4, 2008
- **FY09 Reading Improvement Block Grant application** – June 15, 2008
- **Deadline to submit 2008-09 Proposed Public School Calendar** – June 15, 2008
- **Advanced Placement fee reduction deadline** – June 15, 2008
- **Deadline for commenting on proposed rules – Part 100** – June 16, 2008
- **Deadline for commenting on proposed rules – Part 375** – June 23, 2008
- **FY09 Consolidated Application to serve English Language Learners** – June 30, 2008
- **Deadline to submit ELL service-related information to ISBE** – June 30, 2008
- **FY08 Annual Performance Report for the Reading Improvement Block Grant on IWAS deadline** – July 15, 2008
- **Special Education Directors’ Conference** – July 30-31 and August 1, 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
- **FY09 School Budget Form** – October 31, 2008

**Legal**

**Health & Vision Examination Updates**

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has been receiving many questions regarding health and vision examinations for the upcoming year.

**Health Examinations:** Public Act 95-0422, effective August 24, 2007, revised the School Code such that a health examination was required before entering the sixth grade of any public, private or parochial school, as opposed to entering the fifth grade of any public, private or parochial school (the Public Act did not change any of the other instances when a health examination is required). ISBE has been asked whether students who had received a health examination prior to entering the fifth grade in the 2007-08 school year will, because of the
new law, again have to receive a health examination before entering the sixth grade in the 2008-2009 school year.

ISBE will not take any regulatory action against a school district that does not require such an examination or a student who does not have such an examination. In fact, it is ISBE’s understanding that Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH)—the state agency with rulemaking authority in this area—expects very shortly to file an emergency rule so that, more formally, such an examination would not be required. ISBE will continue to include this item in this Weekly Message with any updates regarding the IDPH rulemaking.

The General Assembly recently passed HB 5717, which states that a student that received a health exam within one year prior to starting the fifth grade in the 2007-2008 school year is not required to receive an additional health exam when the student attends school for the 2008-2009 school year, unless the student is starting school for the first time. The State Board has been in support of this legislation and as soon as it is acted upon by the Governor, we will inform districts.


Vision Examinations: Public Act 95-671, effective Tuesday, January 1, 2008, requires that all children enrolling in kindergarten in a public, private or parochial school and any student enrolling for the first time in a public, private or parochial school shall have an eye examination.

- Each such child is to present proof of having been examined by a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches or a licensed optometrist within the previous year before October 15 of the school year. If the child fails to present proof by October 15, the school may hold the child’s report card until either (a) the child presents proof of a completed eye examination or (ii) the child presents proof that any eye examination will take place within 60 days after October 15.
- This requirement may be waived for children who show an undue burden or a lack of access to a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches who provides eye examinations or to a licensed optometrist. Moreover, parents or legal guardians who object to eye examinations on religious grounds shall not be required to submit their children to the examination if such parents or legal guardians present to the appropriate local school authority a signed statement of objection, detailing the grounds for the objection.

- Each public, private and parochial school is required to give notice of this eye examination requirement to the parents and guardians of students. Every school shall report to the State Board of Education by June 30 the number of children who have received the required eye examination, indicating, of those who have not received the required eye examination, the number of children who are exempt from the eye examination on religious grounds, the number of children who have received a waiver, and the total number of children in noncompliance with the eye examination requirement.
- It is our understanding that IDPH expects very shortly to issue an emergency rule that will further define the documentation required as proof of having received an eye examination, the criteria for a child to receive a waiver, and the type of notice schools must provide to parents and guardians of students. Notwithstanding the forthcoming rule, ISBE is attaching a proof of examination and a waiver form that can be used for this coming school year.

- A copy of the Eye Examination Waiver can be accessed at: http://www.isbe.net/pdf/eye_exam_waiver.pdf.

Please note that both of these forms could potentially change depending on action taken by IDPH.

If you have any questions regarding these requirements, please contact Mr. Shafiqul Azam, Data Analysis and Progress Reporting, at 217-782-3950 or e-mail at mazam@isbe.net.
Curriculum & Instruction

Reading Improvement Block Grant available on IWAS

The FY08 Annual Performance Report for the Reading Improvement Block Grant is now available on IWAS. Previously, this report was submitted on paper, but it is now available online along with the grant application.

The report is due Tuesday, July 15. Districts using ISAT as their assessment tool should submit their performance reports within 30 days after receiving ISAT scores. The assessment data to be recorded should match the assessment tool indicated on the FY08 application.

Questions regarding the Reading Improvement Block Grant should go to Sarah McCusker, 217-557-7323 or by e-mail to smccuske@isbe.net. For technical assistance with IWAS, contact the helpdesk at 217-558-3600.

Window of Opportunity Closing for Districts Needing 2008 Technology Plan Approvals

The approval process for 2008 Technology Plans by Independent Peer Review is drawing to a close. The deadline for submitting plans for approval in 2008 was Saturday, March 1. Requests for extensions and late submissions will not be accepted after Monday, May 26. Any plan reviewed under a request for late submission has no guarantee of a review date or of a Tuesday, July 1 start date for E-Rate Services or state or federal technology funding. Peer review for 2008 Technology Plans will close on Sunday, June 15. A late summer/early fall date will be announced for districts to begin online entry of technology plans needing approval in 2009.

Monitor this site for updates: http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/elearning/default.htm

Plans previously submitted and peer reviewed plans that did not receive approval after a second peer review reading may be appealed directly to the Illinois State Board of Education. Superintendents have until Wednesday, June 4 to submit an appeal for non-approval decisions by e-mailing Marica Cullen at mcullen@isbe.net.

Final peer review sessions are currently underway and are being organized by the Learning Technology Centers (LTCs). Districts should contact their local LTC director for more information. All school districts that have submitted a plan for approval will find the status of the approval on District Dashboard at: http://iirc.niu.edu/.

Anna Plan Workshop

The “Anna Plan” Workshop is scheduled for Tuesday, June 3 – Thursday, June 5 and Monday, June 16 – Wednesday, June 18 at Anna Jr. High in Anna, Illinois.

The “Anna Plan” is a whole class, differentiated reading instruction model. Three reading specialists or three individuals representing a combination of reading specialists, reading teachers or reading paraprofessionals, work within one classroom known as the “Reading Room.”

Within the Reading Room, four learning areas are created for three to seven children. For 30 minutes per classroom, a teacher will walk into the Reading Room with her class and will teach a small group of students, while the three other reading personnel will instruct other small groups of students. At the end of the session, the group leaves and another classroom teacher enters with her class and repeats the process. The five-day lesson plan consists of the teacher:

1. introducing a new book, which involves reading the book, making predictions, and identifying unfamiliar words;
2. re-reading and discussing the book, presenting comprehension strategies, and monitoring the progress of individual students;
3. focusing on word attack skills;
4. teaching a mini, writing lesson that presents exactly what a child should do when writing; and
5. meeting with two of the reading teachers for planning while the third reading teacher gives a lesson for the entire class.

For more information on the “Anna Plan” Workshop, including hotel accommodations and registration go to: www.anna37.union.k12.il.us.

Contact Tina Waller at 618-833-6851, ext. 0, or by e-mail at tdwaller@anna37.union.k12.il.us for additional information.
Continuing Grant Applications Now Available

If your school district was awarded a grant in FY2007 for the programs listed below, it is time to submit a continuing application. The first three grant applications are due by **Sunday, June 15**.

- FY09 Class Size Reduction Pilot Project for students in grades K-3;
- FY 09 Reading Improvement Block Grant;
- FY09 Reading Intervention Professional Development to Support Response to Intervention K-6 Reading Improvement Block Grant (also known as the Anna Plan);
- FY09 Learn and Serve due **Tuesday, July 1**; and
- **NEW** FY09 School Technology Revolving Loan Program for grades 9-12. Applications are available **Sunday, June 1 through Monday, December 1, 2008**. Awards will be made on **Monday, December 15, 2008**, and are given on a first come, first serve basis contingent on available appropriations.

To learn more go to: [http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/elearning/html/revolving_loan.htm](http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/elearning/html/revolving_loan.htm).

Data Analysis & Progress Reporting

**2008 Bilingual Education Program Delivery Report (PDR) System Available on IWAS**

The 2008 Bilingual Education Program Delivery Report (PDR) system is now available on IWAS. Each school district and educational agency enrolling limited English proficient (LEP) students is required to submit program or ELL service-related information to ISBE using this report (23 Illinois Administrative Code 228.40(c)(2)). The deadline for submitting the report is **Monday, June 30**. (The PDR system on IWAS will close **Tuesday, July 1**.) The user guide for submitting the PDR on IWAS is available on the Bilingual Education Program Delivery Report webpage. Click on the following link to download the guide:


For questions about the PDR system, contact the ISBE Help Desk at 217/558-3600; for questions about completing the PDR, contact Dr. Lilibeth Q. Gumia, Data Analysis & Progress Reporting, at 217-782-3950 or by e-mail at lgumia@isbe.net.

Special Education

**LEA Determinations**

Illinois is required, under Section 616(a)(1)(C)(i) and 300.600(a) of IDEA 2004, to make annual determinations on the performance of each Local Education Agency (LEA) with regard to the provision of special education and related services. Essentially, these determinations are a way of designating the status of local districts into one of the following four categories, as outlined in Section 616 (d) of IDEA 2004:

- Meets Requirements
- Needs Assistance
- Needs Intervention
- Needs Substantial Intervention

In order to develop Illinois’ determinations process, ISBE convened a small stakeholder group comprised of representatives from the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA), Illinois State Advisory Council for Children with Disabilities (ISAC), Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education (IAASE), Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT), and Illinois Education Association (IEA) to select key indicators and to set criteria for determining the status of local districts in relation to the mandated requirements as outlined in IDEA. Through this process, criteria were established for local determinations based on IDEA requirements for the 2006-2007 school year. These determinations criteria were unanimously approved by a large stakeholder group, ISAC.

ISBE will be mailing LEA determination letters to districts during the last week of May. ISBE has scheduled an optional conference call for districts to explain the LEA determinations process and answer questions. This call will be on **Friday, June 6** from 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. Please call 1-888-862-6557 (Alternate # 1-630-691-2748) and use confirmation #21661740 to enter. Participants will be required to give their name and school district to the operator. The line will be open
approximately 15 minutes prior to the beginning of the call.

- A PowerPoint presentation will be posted under the LEA Determinations link prior to the call at: http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed

- The conference call will be recorded and will be available under the LEA Determinations link for individuals who are unable to participate in the June 6 conference call at: http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed

**Special Education Directors’ Conference 2008**

ISBE will sponsor the Special Education Directors’ Conference 2008 on July 30-31 and August 1 at the Peoria Civic Center in Peoria, Ill. The keynote speaker this year will be Kay Toliver. Another featured speaker will be Rick J. Kaufman.

Directors and members of their staff are invited to take advantage of this statewide opportunity for the advancement of all children. Tentative strands for the conference sessions include data for improvement, technical assistance projects, general supervision, grants and conflict resolution.

This year, all registration for the Special Education Directors’ Conference will be done on-line at the ISBE website at: http://webapps.isbe.net/ISBEConference/. The registration deadline is Friday, July 11.

The following documents are also available online:
- Registration Information: http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/directors_registration.pdf

If you require an interpreter or other special accommodations, contact Mary Long, ISBE, at 217-782-5589 or by e-mail at DirConf@isbe.net by Thursday, July 3. Mary is also available to answer general conference questions.

**Funding & Disbursements**

**Attendance for Graduating Seniors**

Please be advised that seniors who may graduate early and do not attend school through the end of the regular school year cannot be counted present for attendance. Please see the following general attendance guidelines as they pertain to the General State Aid claim.

Claimable attendance may only be recorded for students in Kindergarten - Grade 12. Regular education preschool attendance is non-claimable.

**Kindergarten – First Grade**

a. A full day of instruction is considered to be 240 minutes (4 clock hours) or more.
b. Lunch periods are not considered instruction. However, separate morning and afternoon recesses that are not linked directly to lunch are allowed.
c. A student who is present zero to 119 minutes for instruction each day is not claimable for attendance. No value is recorded.
d. A student who is present 120 – 239 minutes for instruction each day is claimable for one half-day attendance. A value of .5 is recorded.
e. A student who is present 240 minutes or more for instruction each day is claimable for a full-day of attendance. A value of 1.0 is recorded.

**Second Grade – Grade Twelve**

a. A full day of instruction is considered to be 300 minutes (5 clock hours) or more.
b. Student passing and lunch periods are not considered instruction. However, supervised study halls as well as separate morning and afternoon recesses that are not linked directly to lunch are allowed.
c. A student who is present zero to 149 minutes for instruction each day is not claimable for attendance. No value is recorded.
d. A student who is present 150 – 299 minutes for instruction each day is claimable for one half-day of attendance. A value of .5 is recorded.
e. A student who is present 300 minutes or more for instruction each day is
claimable for a full-day of attendance. A value of 1.0 is recorded.


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 and Disbursement Services Division, at 217-782-5256 or by e-mail at jmathes@isbe.net.

2007-08 General State Aid Claim Deadlines

Please be advised that per Section 18-12 of the School Code, the 2007-08 General State Aid Claim must be received by each respective Regional Office of Education by Saturday, June 21 for districts with an official school calendar end date before June 15 or within 2 weeks following the official school calendar end date for districts with a school year end date of June 15 or later. The regional superintendent shall certify and file with the State Superintendent of Education district State aid claims by Tuesday, July 1 for districts with an official school calendar end date before June 15 or no later than July 15 for districts with an official school calendar end date of June 15 or later. Failure to so file by these deadlines constitutes a forfeiture of the right to receive payment by the State until such claim is filed and vouchered for payment.

A final school calendar must be transmitted and approved before the General State Aid claim can be transmitted. If you need technical assistance with completing the final school calendar, you may contact your Regional Office of Education or Marj Beck, Funding & Disbursements, at mbeck@isbe.net. Questions related to completing the General State Aid Claim can be directed to Jim Mathes, Funding & Disbursements, at jmathes@isbe.net. Marj and Jim can also be reached in the Division of Funding and Disbursement Services at 217-782-5256.

Driver Education Instruction Permit Update

Section 6-103(1) of the Illinois Vehicle Code (625 ILCS 5/6-103(1)) provides that an instruction permit may be issued to a child “who is not less than 15 years of age if the child is enrolled in an approved driver education course.”

Effective January 2, 2008, the Secretary of State (SOS) promulgated emergency rules to define “enrollment” for the purposes of issuing instruction permits. Those rules became permanent Friday, April 4, and prohibit issuing a permit to a student more than 30 days before the student begins participation in an approved driver education course. To review the SOS’s rule, please see Sections 1030.65(a) and (f) of rules governing the Issuance of Licenses (92 Ill. Adm. Code 1030.65(a) and (f) – http://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/092/092010300000650R.html).

In addition, the restriction on when a permit may be provided to a student will be reinforced in State Board of Education rules (Part 252) that are expected to take effect later this summer (see) http://www.isbe.net/rules/proposed/default.htm.

While State Board of Education rules are not yet in effect, school districts and others offering approved driver education courses have been prohibited since January 2 from issuing permits to students participating in such programs sooner than 30 days before the start of the course. As a reminder:

- Some school districts may be exploring methods to get instruction permits to students earlier to allow for completion of the nine-month practice driving period before a driver’s license can be issued.
- School officials should keep in mind that an approved driver education course must include a minimum of 30 hours of classroom and six hours of behind-the-wheel instruction as set forth in the law.
- Other shortened or abbreviated instruction provided to students in order to issue the permit before the 30-day period will not substitute for the approved driver education course.
- School officials are advised to carefully review the law and Part 252, as well as work with staff in the Funding and Disbursements Services Division, before implementing any alternative instructional programs to ensure those programs constitute an approved driver education course.
Requirements for driver education courses can be found in Sections 27-23 and 27-24 through 27-24.8 of the School Code and in rules governing Driver Education (Part 252). For questions contact Lisa Willhoit, Division of Funding and Disbursement Services, at 217-782-5256 or by e-mail at lwillhoi@isbe.net.

**Accountability**

**PE Exemptions Report**

Section 105 ILCS 5/2-3.97 of the School Code requires the State Board of Education to submit a physical education exemption report to the Illinois General Assembly and Governor on or before January 30th of every odd-numbered year for the immediately preceding school year ending on June 30. This report is to include the general nature and manner of operation of the individual physical education exemptions granted by each local board of education for public school students as stated in 105 ILCS 5/27-6.

These allowable exemptions include:

- Ongoing participation in an interscholastic athletic program (grades 11 and 12);
- enrollment in academic classes which are required for admission to an institution of higher learning, provided that failure to take such classes will result in the pupil being denied admission to the institution of his or her choice (grades 11 and 12);
- enrollment in academic classes that are required for graduation from high school, provided that failure to take such classes will result in the pupil being unable to graduate (grades 11 and 12);
- enrollment in an ongoing marching band program for credit (grades 9-12);
- enrollment in a Reserve Officer’s Training Corps (ROTC) Program sponsored by the school district (grades 9-12); and
- utilization of the time set aside for physical education for special education support and services if the student’s parent or guardian agrees this is needed (grades 3-12).

Please Note: The utilization of PE time for special education support and services is a new allowable individual exemption as per 105 ILCS 5/27-6 (b)(3), which took effect on February 2, 2007.

ISBE will distribute a form on IWAS for district use to document this information for the current school year that ends Monday, June 30. If you have questions regarding this report, contact Lynne Robinson in the Accountability Division at 217-782-2948 or by e-mail at mrobinso@isbe.net.

**Nutrition**

**Summer Food Order Deadline**

The deadline for placing the Summer Food Service Program commodity order is Sunday, June 1. If you have not already done so, fax your order to 217-782-4550.

The order form is available at: http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/sfsp_commodities.htm.

If you have any questions regarding the Summer Food Service Program or commodities for the summer program, call Amy Bianco or Angie Hancock at 217-782-2491.

**Food Distribution Program School Year 2009 Commodity Purchasing Update**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has alerted states that due to higher prices, districts will have significantly less purchasing capability for the first half of the 2009 school year. ISBE does not know the full impact this may have on our state at this time, but to assist districts with SY09 planning the Nutrition Programs Division wants to make districts aware that there may be a slow start to the new school year.

Historically, August and September allocations have been fairly small. ISBE anticipates August through December will be affected for SY09. Watch the Weekly Message for updates as more information becomes available.

**Disclosure of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Lunches**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which funds the National School Lunch Program, has had inquiries about disclosing individual children’s eligibility status for receiving free and reduced-price lunches and sharing this information with auditors conducting reviews on behalf of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC). The FCC, through USAC, administers the E-Rate Program and in turn,
contracts with private firms to actually conduct the audits.

Auditors are requesting documentation of the discount calculation to support the discount rate for telecommunications and internet access to schools through the E-Rate grant. Specifically, auditors have asked for a list of eligible students for selected schools along with the applications for those students.

Until such time as the USDA can determine if the requested information can be released under section 9(b)(6) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, local educational agencies cannot release individual children’s eligibility status or their applications to these auditors. However, school-wide eligibility data is available for auditors on the State Board of Education’s website at: http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/eligibility_listings.htm.

Grant Opportunities

Toshiba America Foundation accepting Science and Math Education Project proposals

Toshiba American Foundation promotes quality science and mathematics education in U.S. schools. Grants are made for programs and activities that improve teaching and learning in science and mathematics in grades K-12. The foundation is currently accepting applications for projects for grades 7-12. The grants program is national in scope. Proposals are welcome from public and private (nonprofit) schools.

Grants of up to $5,000 will be awarded to public and private schools working to improve instruction and learning in science and mathematics in grades 7-12. The deadline to apply is Friday, August 1.

For more information, visit http://www.toshiba.com/tafpub/jsp/home/default.jsp

Samsung’s Hope for Education Technology Program invites essay entries

Hope for Education was created by Samsung in 2004 to provide U.S. K-12 schools with the latest technology products. Each year the program challenges students, teachers, parents, or anyone who knows of a school in need to write an essay regarding the importance of technology in education, and how it can benefit a school in their community.

Students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members can enter the contest by going to the program's website and submitting a 100-word essay about their school, answering the question: "How has technology educated you on helping the environment, and how or why has it changed your behavior to be more environmentally friendly?" Essay entries may be written in either Spanish or English.

Schools that submit essays are entered for the opportunity to win the grand prize of more than $200,000 in technology, software, a cash grant, as well as the School Choice educational television programming package. In addition, 30 first prize schools will each be awarded more than $60,000 in technology, software, a cash grant, as well as the School Choice package.

The deadline to apply is Sunday, August 31. For more information, visit http://foundationcenter.org/pnd/rgp/rgp_item.jhtml?id=214200020.

Professional Development

Teen CERT Train-the-Trainer Program Offered

A Teen Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) train-the-trainer course will be offered Saturday, June 21 - Monday, June 23 in Springfield to individuals who provide emergency services to the community and have completed CERT training.

This train-the-trainer program is a 20-hour course that will focus on disaster preparedness. The program has slots for 25-30 individuals and will be offered at no cost. The Teen CERT program educates students about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. With this training, Teen CERT members can assist others in their schools, neighborhoods or the workplace when professional responders are not immediately available to help.

The Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) will sponsor the training through its Citizen’s Corps
grant. The CERT project was developed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Registration for the Teen CERT training is on a first come, first serve basis by calling Michelle Hanneken at the Illinois Citizen Corps Council at 217-558-1334.

Teacher Resources

BP Awards $750,000 in Grants and Scholarships to Chicagoland Teachers

BP, through its successful A+ for Energy® program, will award $750,000 in grants and scholarships to Chicagoland teachers for creative classroom, after-school, extra-curricular or summer activities involving energy education and conservation. In all, 70 projects from Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will counties will be awarded cash grants of $5,000 or $10,000. These projects will involve 152 educators and benefit more than 30,000 students during the 2008-2009 school year.

In addition to the grant award, BP will provide winning teachers with a scholarship to attend a three-day energy training conference. The all-inclusive scholarship will cover the cost of travel, meals, lodging and a kit of instructional materials that includes tools and resources for teaching energy activities valued at $500.

Winning teachers will be honored at a special ceremony on Wednesday, June 18 at 6 p.m. at the Symphony Center in Chicago.

For additional information on the BP Awards and a list of winning teachers by county, school, project and city, go to: www.aplusforenergy.org.

Student Opportunities

Poetry Out Loud Looks for Participating Schools

The Illinois Arts Council invites all Illinois high schools to participate in the 2009 Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest, a free national program created by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation.

Poetry Out Loud encourages youth to learn about great poetry through memorization and performance. Teachers from throughout the country have found this program helps students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about literary heritage. In 2008, an estimated 200,000 high school students competed in classrooms nationwide with more than $100,000 in prizes awarded to students and schools at the state and national levels.

Poetry Out Loud curriculum materials include print and online poetry anthologies, a teacher’s guide to help instructors teach recitation and performance, an audio CD featuring distinguished actors and writers, promotional and media guides, and a comprehensive website. Hard copies of all materials are free for schools participating in the official program. All curriculum materials and further detail regarding the program are available for download on the Poetry Out Loud website: www.poetryoutloud.org.

Poetry Out Loud materials will be sent to high schools in early fall of 2008, and participating schools will run the program through late fall or early winter. (The program requires only two or three weeks of class time.)

Illinois will hold the state final by March 17, 2009. Following the state finals, the national finals and semifinals will be held in Washington, D.C., toward the end of April 2009.


2008-2009 Student Advisory Council now accepting applications – deadline extended

The application deadline for the Illinois State Board of Education’s Student Advisory Council (SAC) for the 2008-2009 school year has been extended to Friday, May 30.

The students who comprise the Student Advisory Council are very diverse, as they come from different geographic locations, ethnic backgrounds, and types of schools. However, they possess similar qualities, which include a strong work ethic, ability to think “outside-the-box,” the willingness to set aside time from their busy schedules for SAC work and the skill of working well in groups. Members are invited to attend Board meetings and
sessions of the General Assembly. As SAC members, students also may review and critique ISBE’s existing or proposed programs, policies and regulations, as well as inform Illinois students of SAC activities.

Eligibility to apply for the 2008-2009 SAC is limited to public high school students who will be either a sophomore, junior or senior during the 2008-2009 school year. Given the need to hear from students on some of the more complicated issues faced by our state, special consideration will be given to applicants from low-performing schools or districts.

An application is now available online at: http://www.isbe.net/SAC/sac_application.pdf.
The application must be returned to the State Board of Education by 5 p.m., Friday, May 30.

The mailing address is:
Illinois State Board of Education
Student Advisory Council
S-202
100 N. First St.
Springfield, IL 62777

Activities of the Student Advisory Council in 2008-2009 are contingent upon final State budget allocation.
For more information, contact Andrea S. Wingo at 217-782-6434 or by e-mail at: awingo@isbe.net.

**Miscellaneous**

**IDOL halts operation of Yo-Yo amusement rides across state**

The Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL) has directed all owners and operators of Yo-Yo amusement devices manufactured by Chance Rides Manufacturing Inc. (Chance), a Kansas-based company, to immediately cease operation of all Yo-Yo devices in Illinois until further notice from IDOL. This directive comes in response to published reports of an incident on Friday, May 16 at the Calaveras County Fair in California, where a “Chance Yo-Yo” collapsed while in operation, injuring all riders aboard. The cause of the California incident is still under investigation.

Two Illinois operators currently have 2008 permits, issued by IDOL, to operate “Yo-Yo” rides in Illinois. Another six owners had permits last year to operate such rides, and are expected to seek 2008 permits in the very near future.

On Saturday, May 17, upon receiving word of the accident in California, IDOL safety inspectors contacted the two permitted carnivals and directed them to immediately halt operation of the ride until further notice from IDOL.

Since then IDOL has been actively engaged in due diligence, designed to ensure the safe operation of the ride in Illinois. On Wednesday, May 21, following consideration of all available information, IDOL issued a written, emergency directive, instructing owners and operators that no Yo-Yo ride may be operated in Illinois until the ride has been inspected or re-inspected by IDOL carnival safety staff.

This emergency directive is consistent with IDOL’s mandate under the Carnival and Amusement Rides Safety Act (CARSA), 430 ILCS 85, to ensure the safe operation of amusement rides and attractions in Illinois.

For questions regarding this issue, owners may contact IDOL at 217-782-9347.

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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.

**In the News**

**Weekly news clips**

ISBE has posted highlights from last week’s education news clips at: http://www.isbe.net/news/2008/newsclips/080523.htm