I know that most of you are enjoying the end of another school year. I hope it’s been a safe and rewarding year for you, your staff and students. Members of the General Assembly also finished their spring session this week, adjourning on Saturday.

The General Assembly passed a budget on Saturday and it also enacted a Budget Implementation Bill. Included is an increase of $225 per student in General State Aid, raising the foundation level to $5,959 per student. Governor Blagojevich has expressed concerns that the budget increases expenditures beyond projected FY 09 revenues yet does not contain additional means of generating revenue.

The Governor has said that he will try to bring the four legislative leaders together this month to resume work and balance the budget. He also is still urging them to work together for a capital bill, something that our schools definitely need.

In addition, the Senate unanimously confirmed Lanita Koster to the Illinois State Board of Education; her term runs through January 2011. She has more than 35 years of experience in education and will bring a new perspective to our Board. She started her career as a social worker in East Aurora School District 131 and retired in 2006 as the educational issues director for the Illinois Federation of Teachers. Many of you probably know Lanita since she has served on a number of boards and committees throughout her career, including the Governor’s Early Learning Council, Illinois State Working Group on Improving Teacher Quality of Illinois’ Neediest Students and Schools, the Committee of Practitioners, Illinois Learning Partnership, and the Teacher Certification Board. Please join me in welcoming Lanita as our new State Board member.

The ISAT and IAA scores were posted via IWAS on the Student Information System on June 2. Please review your school data for any errors or omissions. In order to get individual school scores completed and back to the schools on schedule, all corrections must be submitted no later than 5 p.m. on Thursday, June 19, 2008. We are not able to grant extensions beyond this date. Thank you for your prompt review of this data.

I also wanted to remind you that Friday, June 6, is the final day to register for the Third Annual High School Challenge conference on Monday, June 16, and Tuesday, June 17, at the Doubletree Hotel in Bloomington. Conference participants will leave with practical and research-based strategies that support improved outcomes for high school students and tools that can be used for data analysis and decision-making. Please go to http://www.isbe.net/pdf/HS_conference2008.pdf for conference registration and http://www.isbe.net/pdf/HS_session_descriptions.pdf for session descriptions.
As your students head out the door to begin their summer vacations, please take a few moments to remind them and their parents that the safe practices they’ve learned in school need to carry over into the break. Whether students are biking, swimming, camping or participating in any other summer activity, safety must be first in the minds of students and the adults who are supervising them in order to prevent accidents and tragedies.

I hope you, your staff and students all have a safe and fun summer with your family and friends.

Chris

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**Upcoming Deadlines**

- **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 to submit ROE ELL Professional Development grant applications** – June 16, 2008
- **Deadline for making corrections in IWAS SIS for ISAT and IAA** – June 19, 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
- **Deadline to submit revised claims for Head Start reimbursements** – September 30, 2008
- **Annual Superintendents’ Conference** – October 23 – 24, 2008
- **FY09 School Budget Form** – October 31, 2008

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**Legal**

**Health Examinations – Update**

**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. Just last week, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) filed emergency rules which make clear that such students **would not** have to receive another health examination.

(Additionally, as noted last week, 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. While the need for this legislation has effectually been mooted by the emergency rules, the State Board has been in support of this legislation and as soon as it is acted upon by the Governor, will inform districts.)

Vision Examinations – Update

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.

Because of recent emergency rulemaking by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), updated final forms for the Eye Examination Waiver and the State of Illinois Eye Examination Report are now posted on the IDPH’s website. To the extent possible, both ISBE and IDPH ask that the final forms, as opposed to the draft forms we had previously posted in this message be used. That said, for purposes of school district’s compliance for the 2008-2009 school year, ISBE will accept use of the draft forms.

- The Eye Examination Waiver can be accessed online at: http://www.idph.state.il.us/HealthWellness/EyeExamWaiver.pdf.


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

Student Assessment

2008 ISAT and IAA Scores Posted in IWAS SIS

The ISAT and IAA scores were posted in IWAS SIS on Monday, June 2. All corrections need to be made and submitted by 5 p.m. on Thursday, June 19. There will be no extensions.

Please review your data for any errors or omissions and make sure you examine both Summary and Detail Assessment Score Reports for errors and missing students.

If you require technical assistance, please contact the Call Center at 217-558-3600 during business hours: Monday-Friday 7 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Data Analysis & Progress Reporting

AYP status reports for elementary and middles schools are now available in IWAS
The 2008 School AYP Status Report is now available in IWAS for those elementary and middle schools that have completed their E-Report Card data. This report should be considered final unless schools request rescoring or make further corrections related to AYP data elements. These Reports will be generated on a daily basis as schools complete their E-Report Card data.

Curriculum & Instruction

ISBE Receives Award for Scaling up Response to Intervention

Illinois applied for recognition and assistance from the U.S. Department of Education on Wednesday, March 5, in the “Scaling up of Evidence-based Practices” competition. In April, ISBE was notified that we were a finalist and over the weekend we were notified of the award.

Illinois was selected to participate in the “Active Scaling States” category, which is for those states that are fully engaged in capacity building for scaling up.

The proposal can be found at: http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/Default.htm.

Anna Plan Workshop

The second session of the “Anna Plan” Workshop is scheduled for Monday, June 16 – Wednesday, June 18 at Anna Jr. High in Anna, Illinois. The first session was held June 3-5.

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.
Governmental Services

Legislative Update

The General Assembly adjourned on Saturday, May 31. A number of education-related bills passed both chambers and have been sent to the Governor for action.

Please refer to [http://isbe.net/gov_relations/default.htm](http://isbe.net/gov_relations/default.htm) for an updated list of legislation that ISBE tracked and that passed both chambers. The link will be updated as the Governor acts upon legislation.

Please contact Nicole Wills, Governmental Relations at 217-782-6510 or by e-mail at nwills@isbe.net if you have any questions.

English Language Learning

ROE ELL Professional Development Initiative Grant

The Division of English Language Learning is announcing an opportunity for eligible Regional Offices of Education (ROEs) to apply for grants for FY09 to provide professional development to local rural or other small districts with state and federal laws related to serving English Language Learner (ELL) students, including the identification, assessment and provision of academic instruction to ELL students.

The ROE ELL Professional Development Initiative Grant (July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009) provides $6,000 in FY09 Title III SEA Professional Development funds per eligible ROE with small and rural school populations to:

- update ROE knowledge of laws related to English Language Learners and required services for ELL students; and
- provide professional development to rural or other small local school districts that either are experiencing the enrollment of ELL students for the first time or are now experiencing a major influx of ELL students.

Funds are available for ROEs that received FY08 grants as well as eligible ROEs that did not apply in FY08. The criteria for ROE eligibility are identified in the application. The application can be accessed on the Division of English Language Learning ROE professional development webpage at: [http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/pdfs/initiative_grant.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/pdfs/initiative_grant.pdf)

ROEs may apply for this grant individually or in consortia. Completed applications must be postmarked no later than Monday, June 16. All proposals must be submitted to:

Robin M. Lisboa, Division Administrator
Illinois State Board of Education
English Language Learning Division
100 W. Randolph Street, Suite 14-300
Chicago, IL 60601-3268-3169

For more information, please contact Sherry Johnson at 312-814-3850.

Federal Grants & Programs

Title I Private School Consultation

Each district that receives Title I funds must participate in on-going consultations with officials of the private schools located within the district to determine the private school’s needs. In addition, each district must consult with officials of a private school located outside the district that enrolls students who live within the district. Consultation normally must be in a meeting of some type and not done just by telephone.

For FY09 there is a new consulting sheet that must be signed by the private school and public school district. The sheet, “LEA Affirmation of Consultation with Private School Officials,” must be signed by each individual private school prior to approval of the NCLB grant. This sheet was mailed to each district at the time the allocation sheets were sent.

The U.S. Department of Education has released a Title I Resource Tool Kit entitled “Ensuring Equitable Services to Private School Children.” This tool kit may be found at the following website: [http://www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/ps/titleitoolkit.pdf](http://www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/ps/titleitoolkit.pdf)

If you did not receive the consulting sheet, please contact Pam Bokamp, at 217-524-4832 or by e-mail at pbokamp@isbe.net to request a copy.

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 mailed 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:**

- **Schedule at a Glance:**

If you require an interpreter or other special accommodations, contact Mary Long, Special Education, 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**

**Driver Education Changes Effective July 1**

Effective July 1, all driver education programs will experience significant changes per PA 95-0310. The most important change per the new law requires that all six hours of behind-the-wheel instruction must be taught in a dual-control vehicle under the direct instruction by an ISBE-certified driving instructor on public roadways.

The use of driving simulators, multiple-car instruction and range practice can only be used in addition to the required hours of instruction; therefore, those practice methods cannot be counted toward the required six hours of behind-the-wheel instruction.
PLEASE NOTE: Students who complete behind-the-wheel instruction prior to July 1 will still be allowed to count simulator, multiple-car instruction and range practice as part of the required six hours of instruction. Students who complete behind-the-wheel instruction after July 1 -- even if that instruction began before July 1 -- must demonstrate that all six hours were completed in a dual-control vehicle under the direct individual instruction by a certified driving instructor on public roadways.

Another significant change of the new law is the elimination of district policies that allowed students to take a proficiency test after three hours of behind-the-wheel instruction in order to not complete the remaining three hours. All students must complete a minimum of 30 hours of classroom and six hours of behind-the-wheel instruction as set forth in Section 27-23 of the School Code.

As a reminder, the Secretary of State (SOS) promulgated a rule that defines “enrollment” for the purposes of issuing instruction permits. Those rules became permanent Friday, April 4, 2008, 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.

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).

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 30 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, Accountability Division, at 217-782-2948 or by e-mail at mrobinso@isbe.net.

Nutrition

Schools Compete in Move & Crunch Challenge

Three elementary schools submitted winning applications in the “Move & Crunch Challenge for Principals” and were awarded $800 each toward the purchase of nutrition education curriculum. Winners include Woodrow Wilson School and Principal Susie Beyer in East Peoria; Dieterich Elementary School and Principal Kathy Pattenaude in Dieterich; and Prairie Hill School and Principal Ann Baker in Cary.

These three schools achieved the highest total combined scores for:

- student, school staff and parent participation in the Challenge;
- the principal’s success in meeting daily fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity recommendations; and
- additional activities planned to support Challenge goals.

In all, students in 32 elementary and middle schools participated in the Challenge for one week in March. The contest was designed to help elementary school staff create an environment that supports student wellness and to encourage community members to model healthy food choices and physical activity for students.

The Move & Crunch Challenge for Principals was coordinated by the Illinois Nutrition Education and Training Program, in partnership with the State Board of Education, Department of Human Services and the Illinois Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. Project funding was provided by a 2006 USDA Team Nutrition Training Grant.

To view ISBE’s press release on the Challenge, which includes the names of the winning and participating schools, go to: http://www.isbe.net/news/2008/june2.htm

If you would like to plan a similar event in your community, download Move & Crunch resources at: www.KidsEatWell.org/IllinoisSchoolsCan.html.

Head Start – meals

The recent passage of the “Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007” (Public Law 110-134) included changes to the eligibility criteria used in Child Nutrition Programs. Effective December 12, 2007, all children participating in Head Start are automatically eligible for free meals without further application or eligibility determination.
In the past, only those children who were income eligible for Head Start were considered automatically eligible for free meals in the Child Nutrition Programs. School food authorities (SFAs) may submit revised Claims for Reimbursements for all reimbursable meals served to Head Start enrollees not previously claimed at the free rate served on December 12, 2007, and beyond.

If such a revision is requested, the SFA must refund any money received from the households of such children. For this reason, revised claims for reimbursements are due to ISBE no later than September 30.

**Emergency Care for Choking Poster**

The *Emergency Care for Choking* poster must be displayed in all food establishments, including school cafeterias. This poster was recently updated and is still available at no cost from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH).

To order free copies for your schools, please contact:

Illinois Department of Public Health
Division of Emergency Medical Services & Highway Safety
500 East Monroe Street, Floor 8
Springfield, Illinois 62701

You can also call 217-785-2080 to order the poster.

**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.

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**Education Certification System Available**

On Tuesday, July 1, the State Board of Education will make the Educator Certification System (ECS) available to the public. ECS was designed to assist educators in reviewing their certification files and reporting NCLB highly qualified data and other information. ECS also allows districts to review certification information for educators employed in their districts. The public search portal will provide the public with easy access to limited information about the teachers employed in their children’s district.

The new portal will be accessed by visiting the main ISBE website at [www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net) and clicking on “ECS.” The additional search portal is separate from the individual/district portal. Educators will still have a separate log-in to access their personal information and complete file information on ECS. Districts will also continue to have access to more complete information about educators through the administrator portal.

For additional information on ECS, contact Patrick Murphy, Educator Preparation & Recertification, at 217-782-2447 or by e-mail at pmurphy@isbe.net.

**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.


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/080530.htm.