June 24, 2008

Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

The window for making corrections to your ISAT and IAA demographic information closed late last week and I want to thank all of you for your assistance in getting this work done quickly. As you know, this helps us to ensure that you receive results back in a timely manner.

As we have been reviewing the ISAT results along with many of you, we have noticed some unanticipated results. There are some unexpected shifts, especially in reading in grades 3, 4, 6 and 8. There have been both noticeable increases and noticeable decreases in scores, depending on the grade being analyzed. These are not limited to a single district or set of districts, nor are they confined to a specific subgroup (e.g., ELL). Instead, we are seeing statewide trends.

We are working collaboratively with several local districts and our contractor, Pearson Education, to conduct a thorough analysis of the results. To date we have asked Pearson to review their scoring of the extended response items, their logistical processes and their psychometric methods. Additionally, we will be bringing in an independent 3rd party to work with us to find answers.

At their June meeting, our State Board members took action on a couple of items that I would like to bring to your attention. They approved transferring funds between mandated categorical line items. This was the first year that they have had the ability to authorize such transfers and directly benefit local districts. We had a shortfall in two categories, Special Education Personnel and Transportation, while at the same time there was a surplus in other line items. Without the Board’s exercising this authority, we would have had to prorate some payments to school districts.

The Board also approved moving forward with joining the American Diploma Project as part of our K-12 standards review process. The Board is committed to improving the rigor and relevance of the K-16 educational system. Through the College and Workforce Readiness Partnership, Achieve, Inc. reviewed the Illinois Learning Standards, which were adopted in 1997. This was the first time the ILS have been reviewed since their inception, and while the Illinois descriptors had some real strengths, there is significant work that can be done to improve our standards.

The review of our high school standards is the first step in the process that will lead to a review and alignment of our K-12 standards to post-secondary and career expectations. In order to join the American Diploma Project, each state must have signoff from the Governor, Board of Education and Board of Higher Education, as well as representatives of the business community. We will begin working in partnership with these groups immediately so that we can begin the standards revision process this fall.

Have a great week!

Chris
Upcoming Deadlines

- FY09 School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) deadline to submit letter of intent – June 27, 2008
- FY09 Consolidated Application to serve English Language Learners – June 30, 2008
- Deadline to submit ELL service-related information to ISBE – June 30, 2008
- Parent Choice & SES workshops – July 7, 8, 9, 2008
- FY09 School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) deadline to submit proposals – July 15, 2008
- FY08 Annual Performance Report for Reading Improvement Block Grant on IWAS deadline – July 15, 2008
- Reading Recovery RFP deadline – July 21, 2008
- Special Education Directors’ Conference – July 30-31 and August 1, 2008
- Waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly in Fall 2008 deadline – August 8, 2008
- Head Start reimbursement deadline to submit revised claims – September 30, 2008
- Annual Superintendents’ Conference – October 23 – 24, 2008
- FY09 School Budget Form – October 31, 2008

Rules & Waivers

Notice of Effectiveness of Rulemaking

Please be advised that two rulemaking items recently adopted by the State Board are now in effect. These rules have been posted on the agency’s website at: www.isbe.net/rules.

Choose “Rules Currently in Effect” and scroll to the relevant Part number. If you print the affected Sections, please be sure to include the table of contents, which changes each time a Part is revised.

Part 60 (The “Grow Your Own” Teacher Education Initiative)
Updates in response to statutory changes made by P.A. 95-476.
Affected Sections: 60.20, 60.50, and 60.100.
Effective Date: May 27, 2008

Part 575 (School Technology Program)
New provisions for partial early repayment of amounts borrowed under the revolving loan program.
Affected Section: 575.600.
Effective Date: May 27, 2008

Special Education

SEA determination

The Illinois State Board of Education received its determination letter on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) from the U.S. Department of Education. Illinois was placed in the “needs assistance” category along with the vast majority of other states. The Department’s determination is based on the totality of the State’s data and information including the State’s FFY 2006 Annual Performance Report (APR) and the revised State Performance Plan (SPP), other State-reported data, and other publicly available information.

Specific factors affecting the Office of Special Education Programs’ (OSEP) determination of needs assistance for Illinois included that the State:

1. Reported 92.4 percent compliance for Indicator 15 (timely correction of noncompliance), with progress from 86.22 percent;
2. Reported 90.5 percent compliance for Indicator 16 (complaint timelines), with slippage from 95.7 percent;
3. Reported 93.1 percent compliance for Indicator 17 (due process timelines), with progress from 90.0 percent; and
4. Indicator 4A (suspension/expulsion) did not complete the review required by 34 CFR 300.170(b) for all districts identified in FFY 2005, with significant discrepancies.

OSEP also concluded that the State did not provide valid and reliable data for Indicators 9 and 10 (disproportionately), but provided a plan to collect the data for reporting in next year’s APR/SPP submission. For these reasons, OSEP was unable to determine that Illinois met requirements under section 616(d). OSEP
noted high levels of compliance reported for Indicators 11 and 12, and the correction of noncompliance for Indicator 13.

Illinois’ determination for the FFY 2005 APR also was “needs assistance.” In accordance with section 616(e) of the IDEA and 34 CFR 300.604, if a State is determined to need assistance for two consecutive years, the Secretary must take one or more of the follow actions:

1. Advise the State of available sources of technical assistance that may help the State address the areas in which the State needs assistance;
2. Direct the use of State-level funds on the area or areas in which the State needs assistance; or
3. Identify the State as a high-risk grantee and impose special conditions on the State’s Part B grant award.

Pursuant to these requirements, the Secretary has advised Illinois of the technical assistance related to Indicator 4A (suspension/expulsion), Indicator 9 (disproportionate representation – child with a disability), Indicator 10 (disproportionate representation – specific disability category), Indicator 15 (timely correction of noncompliance), Indicator 16 (complaint timelines), and Indicator 17 (due process timelines). Illinois must report in its FFY 2007 APR submission on:

1. The technical assistance sources from which Illinois received assistance; and
2. What actions Illinois took as a result of the technical assistance.

Curriculum & Instruction

Reading Recovery RFP

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Reading Recovery® training and ongoing professional development.

Training site: School districts, charter schools, public university laboratory schools approved by ISBE, regional offices of education, postsecondary institutions, and Reading Recovery® consortia are eligible to apply for funds to establish a training site if they employ a registered Reading Recovery® teacher-leader.

Teacher training: School districts, charter schools, and public university laboratory schools approved by ISBE may apply for assistance for their Reading Recovery® teachers to attend an accredited university training center for teacher-leader training.

Reading Recovery®, first implemented by New Zealand psychologist and researcher Dr. Marie Clay, is a short-term, one-to-one intervention taught by specifically trained teachers. Teachers tutor the lowest achieving first-grade students for 30 minutes daily. The tutoring typically is provided within the school day as a pull-out program and consists of a 12- to 20-week set of customized lessons that supplement the regular education program provided by classroom teachers. The goal is to accelerate progress for children in first grade who are having the greatest difficulty learning to read and write.

Those who wish to submit proposals by mail or in person should provide an original and four copies to the Illinois State Board of Education, Curriculum and Instruction Division, 100 North First Street, C-215, Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001. To ensure receipt, proposals should be submitted no later than 4 p.m., Monday, July 21.

Proposals also may be hand-delivered to the following locations:

- **Springfield Office**
  Information Center
  First Floor
  100 N. First St.

- **Chicago Office**
  Reception Area
  Suite 14-300
  100 W. Randolph St.

For more information on the RFP, contact Sarah McCusker, Curriculum and Instruction Division, at 217-557-7323 or by e-mail at smccuske@isbe.net.

EETT Competitive Grant Winners Announced

The Illinois State Board of Education is pleased to announce the recipients for the 2009 Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) Competitive Grant. The EETT competitive grant is part of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001.
This one-year grant requires that 25 percent of funding be used for professional development and 75 percent may be used for hardware. Congratulations to all the winners.

- Hoover Schrum Memorial SD 157
- Meridian CUSD 223
- United CUSD 304
- Carterville CUSD 5
- East Maine SD 63
- Canton Union SD 66
- Prairie-Hills ESD 144
- Unity Point CCSD 140
- Elverado CUSD 196
- Carrollton CUSD 1
- Marshall CUSD C-2
- Morris SD 54
- Effingham CUSD 40
- Charleston CUSD 1
- Sunnybrook SD 171
- Harlem CSD 122

Nutrition

Join Action for Healthy Kids Today

Action for Healthy Kids® is a nonprofit organization that addresses the epidemic of overweight, undernourished and sedentary youth by focusing on changes within schools. Members work inclusively at the national, state and local levels in all 50 states and the District of Columbia to improve children's nutrition and increase physical activity which will in turn improve their readiness to learn.

Below are the top five reasons to join the growing network of more than 9,000 volunteers to create a healthy school environment for children:

1. The opportunity to network with other schools in your state to learn about “best practice” models for improving the health of the school environment.
2. Access to a database of resources and tools available to Teams through the Action for Healthy Kids website.
3. The ability to share tools with educators, parents, school administrators and health professionals.
4. Resources and trainings to assist you with Wellness Policy implementation.
5. Template presentations that can be tailored for your specific audience and state.

Examples include:

Healthy Foods and Healthy Finances: How to Create a Win-Win Proposition in Your School District; The Need for Physical Education and Physical Activity in Our Schools; Working Effectively with School Boards and School Administrators; The Learning Connection: The Value of Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity in Our Schools.

Visit [www.ActionForHealthyKids.org](http://www.ActionForHealthyKids.org) and sign up to join the Illinois Team today.

Federal Grants & Programs

FY 2009 School Improvement Grant

The Grants and Programs division is announcing a new competitive grant, the School Improvement Grant - Section 1003(g), that will provide funding to eligible schools for their school improvement efforts.

This grant is being provided through the Title I, Part A, Section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (NCLB) to schools that have been identified as being in need of improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.

A list of Illinois’ qualifying schools is available at: [http://www.isbe.net/sos/excel/school_status.xls](http://www.isbe.net/sos/excel/school_status.xls)

Individual grants of $50,000 to a maximum of $500,000, with an average of $50,000 to $250,000, will be awarded to 25-35 eligible schools. Based on appropriations and demonstrated progress, the schools may receive level funding for two additional one-year periods. These grants will be awarded equitably by the system of support regions.

A map of the state’s ten regions is available at: [http://www.isbe.net/sos/pdf/respro_map.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/sos/pdf/respro_map.pdf)

To be considered for the grant, school districts must submit a letter of intent to apply on behalf of their eligible school(s) by 4 p.m. on **Friday, June 27**. Separate proposals for each eligible school are due no later than 4 p.m. on **Tuesday, July 15**, with awards to be announced in mid to late August. Fax copies will not be accepted.

To be considered, the eligible school must demonstrate through its proposal that it has the greatest need and strongest commitment to implement research-based strategies and practices that will improve student
achievement and move the school out of improvement status.

Each funded school must make every effort to achieve the following goals:

- Increase the number and percentage of students scoring as proficient on the state assessments;
- Make adequate yearly progress and move out of improvement status; and
- Make decisions regarding the use of the funds based on data and create a system that provides continuous feedback and improvement.

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Martha (Marti) Woelfle, Federal Grants and Programs, at 217-524-4832 or by e-mail at mwoelfle@isbe.net

**Choice and SES workshops**

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has prepared a technical assistance workshop to help districts with the basics of Parent Choice and Supplemental Educational Services (SES) and provide an opportunity to ask questions of ISBE staff coordinating these programs.

Three workshops will be offered on **Monday, July 7, Tuesday, July 8, and Wednesday, July 9**. Workshops are free to participants, but each district must register in order to ensure that sufficient materials will be available at each workshop. All interested districts are invited regardless of their school improvement status.

The provision of Parent Choice and Supplemental Educational Services, both a part of Title I of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, is complicated and challenging for local districts. Choice requires districts to notify parents of the option to enroll their children in schools that are not in improvement status and to provide any required student transportation associated with such a change in building enrollment. Funds for the transportation costs come through Title I, Part A, and districts need to be aware of compliance requirements when receiving NCLB funds.

SES requires districts to provide additional academic support, typically in the form of tutoring, which is free to low-income students at Title I schools identified to participate in SES. Issues for districts include parent notification materials, contracts with SES providers, billing and payment issues with those providers, and compliance concerns with state and federal law. The number of SES schools across the nation increases each year due to the number of schools not making Annual Yearly Progress (AYP), which results in an increase in the number of districts implementing SES.

Districts are encouraged to attend the Choice and SES workshops. For more information, please visit: [http://www.isbe.net/ses/pdf/ses_workshop_0708.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/ses/pdf/ses_workshop_0708.pdf).

**Fiscal & Procurement**

**Illinois Textbook Relocation program**

According to the Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/18-17), after secular textbooks have been on loan from the Illinois Textbook Loan Program for a period of five years or more, such textbooks may be disposed of by schools in such a manner as their respective school boards shall determine, following a written notification to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

To assist with this requirement, ISBE administers a Textbook Relocation Program to exchange, trade, or transfer textbooks and instructional materials between schools. The Textbook Relocation Program website provides a listing of available used textbooks and instructional materials. Schools can also list textbooks and instructional materials that they want to make available to other schools on the website. Textbooks and instructional materials purchased with funds other than the Illinois Textbook Loan Program may also be listed on the website.

Schools are encouraged to use the Illinois Textbook Relocation Program. Specific details are contained on the website. If you have questions, please contact the Illinois Textbook Loan Program staff at 217-782-0734.

The website is listed on the ISBE home page or can be directly accessed at: [http://isbe.net/htmls/textbook_relocation.htm](http://isbe.net/htmls/textbook_relocation.htm).

**Accountability**

**PE Exemption Report update**

The Physical Education Exemption Report as required by 105 ILCS 5/2-3.97 will be submitted as a web-based application for the school year (2007-2008) that ends **Monday, June 30**. This report is now available through
IWAS for public school district administrators, school document authors, and Regional Office of Education personnel to submit the survey reports electronically. Paper copies of surveys will not be accepted.

Please note each public school district must submit a completed survey on or before Friday, August 15 of the individual physical education exemption policies (as per 105 ILCS 5/27-6) the district allows and the corresponding number of students exempted per policy. The completed district survey report will be forwarded through IWAS to the respective ROE office and they will submit the report to ISBE on or before Friday, August 15.

A User Guide is accessible for your reference once you login to the Physical Education Exemption Report. To access the Report through IWAS, login to your account and click on System Listing (located in the menu on the left-hand side of the page). The survey report is located under “Reporting.”

If you have questions regarding the components of this survey as it relates to individual allowable exemptions, please contact Lynne Robinson in the Accountability Division at 217-782-2948. If you have technical questions regarding IWAS, please contact the Help Desk at 217-558-3600.

Teacher Certification

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 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.

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/080620.htm