July 2, 2007

Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Independence Day is Wednesday which means a shortened work week for many of us. Our state lawmakers are no exception. They return to Springfield on Thursday to continue working on a state budget.

In the meantime, the 2008 fiscal year has already begun and there remain a lot more unanswered questions than answered ones. I know not having a completed 2008 budget makes it very difficult for planning purposes, so as we get news about the budget process, we will pass it along.

As they continue to work toward a 2008 state budget, the General Assembly did pass a one-month budget that will keep state operations functioning through the month of July. This interim budget is essentially an extension of the fiscal year 2007 budget. It is rather limited, in that it does not address general state aid, mandated categoricals or new initiatives from the State Board or Governor Blagojevich.

This limited budget, however, does include funding for summer and after school programs such as Summer Bridges. It also includes funding for ISBE’s agency operations, which will continue as normal with no interruptions.

Fiscal Year 2007 General State Aid payments are not impacted by the budget impasse, because Governor Blagojevich advanced the final two July GSA payments to June. These GSA payments and the mandated categoricals were all vouchered in mid-June by ISBE staff; and payments have been made over the past 10 days or so by the Comptroller’s office.

Because of the budget uncertainty, I would urge you all to be extremely cautious in your spending for the foreseeable future, until a more permanent budget is hammered out by lawmakers.

This is an anxious time for all of us, as we try to develop plans for next year without knowing what our funding levels may be. We can only put forth our best efforts and communicate with our lawmakers about the need to adequately fund education, and to work together toward that end now.

I hope you have a great week and a happy 4th of July

Chris

Upcoming Deadlines

- **Applications for Migrant Education Program funding** – July 31, 2007
- **Waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly in Fall 2007** – August 10, 2007
- **Applications for Illinois Mathematics and Science Partnership grant program** – August 21, 2007
Accountability

Illinois educators attend USDE Summit

On June 27 and 28, the United States Department of Education hosted representatives from each state to discuss issues related to the implementation of Choice and Supplementary Education Services.

Attending from Illinois were Patrick Lee, Illinois State Board of Education; David Ballard, District 89 Maywood; Barbara Howery, District 259 Pembroke; and Elliott Collazola, Chicago Public Schools.

Curriculum & Instruction

Illinois Mathematics and Science Partnerships grant program

The Division of Curriculum and Instruction at ISBE is proud to announce a special opportunity from the Illinois Mathematics and Science Partnerships (IMSP) projects, as a part of NCLB, Title II, Part B. ISBE is beginning the school recruitment phase for the new cycle of the IMSP for 2007-2008.

This grant program will provide opportunities to receive Masters’ degrees that include endorsements in specific mathematics and science fields for up to 750 teachers in schools that meet the eligibility requirements. Districts and buildings (local education agencies-LEAs) will compete for participation in multiple partnerships which will afford special focus toward creating and sustaining quality mathematics and science programs at the local level. Completed applications will be due by August 21, 2007.

Find out more in the School Recruitment Phase Questions and Answers at: http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/math_science/rfp.htm. Contact msp-rfp@isbe.net with additional questions after your review of these materials.

English Language Learning

Migrant Education Program Funding Available

The Illinois State Board of Education Division of English Language Learning is accepting applications for funding supplemental educational services during the 2007-08 school year for eligible migrant children under Title I, Part C of NCLB. The deadline for submission is July 31, 2007.

Students eligible for the program are mobile children of migratory workers residing in the area whose parents moved to find work in the agricultural production, fishing or food processing industries.

To request assistance in identifying eligible migrant children, districts may complete the survey found at http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/pdfs/migrant_survey.pdf.

To request an application for funding or more information, contact Beth Robinson at 312-814-3850 or berobins@isbe.net.

Funding & Disbursements

Driver Education and Truancy - Implementation of PA 94-916

On July 1, 2007, PA 94-916 went into effect and modified Section 26-3a of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/26-3a]. The intent of the new law is to cancel or deny driving privileges of all students who are certified as chronic or habitual truants or who are not enrolled in school for reasons other than economic or medical necessity or family hardship as determined by criteria established by a school district. Student truancy before July 1, 2007, should not be considered in regard to this law. The major components of the new law are as follows:

- The Secretary of State’s Office shall not issue an instruction permit or driver’s license to any student who is under the age of 18 and who has been certified to be a chronic or habitual truant or who is not enrolled in school.
- The Secretary of State’s Office shall cancel the instruction permit or driver’s license of any student under the age of 18, who has been certified to be a chronic or habitual truant or who is not enrolled in school.
- If the student has re-enrolled and/or resumed regular school attendance, then he or she will be eligible to receive an instruction permit, or to have his or her driver’s license
reinstated, providing there are no other sanctions which would prohibit issuance.

- If the student does not re-enroll and/or resume regular school attendance, the cancellation will be removed once the student reaches the age of 18.

The Illinois State Board of Education has developed a new Driver Education – Truancy reporting system in IWAS for Unit and High School Districts to transmit student truancy information and meet the requirements of the new law. Notification and detailed instructions on the use of the new system will be provided in the near future. Further information regarding the new law can be accessed at:

Illinois School Bus Drivers & DOT Medical Cards

The Illinois Department of Transportation has clarified which Illinois school bus drivers are required to carry a medical examiner’s certificate or what is more commonly referred to as a “DOT Medical Card”. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations, Part 391.41(a), require the driver of a commercial motor vehicle to be physically qualified and to carry proof of such physical qualification on their person.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations, Part 390.3(f) exempt (1) all school bus operations and (2) transportation provided by any political subdivision from most of the regulations, including Part 391.41(a). A school bus operation and political subdivision is subject to CDL requirements, accident reporting, drug and alcohol testing.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations define a school bus operation as the use of a school bus to transport school children from home to school or school to home. This definition does not include extracurricular school transportation. The Illinois Motor Carrier Safety Regulations define a school bus operation as being any school related transportation, including extracurricular activities.

Therefore, as simply as this issue can be stated, a school bus driver employed by any Illinois school district does not need a “DOT Medical Card” when operating a school bus for school related transportation in or outside of Illinois. A school bus driver employed by a school bus contractor operating a school bus in Illinois for any school related transportation does not need a “DOT Medical Card”, unless their employer specifically requires each driver to have one. A school bus driver employed by a school bus contractor providing school related transportation outside Illinois, other than from home to school or school to home, must have a “DOT Medical Card”.

If you have any questions, please contact Tony Klasing, Manager, Vehicle Inspection Unit, Illinois Department of Transportation at 217-782-1606.

Legal

Fall Criminal History Record Information Symposium – Sept. 19

In an effort to inform non-criminal justice users regarding the Illinois Criminal History Record Information program, the Illinois State Police, Bureau of Identification in conjunction with the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police will be holding their annual Fall Criminal History Record Information Symposium.

The symposium is scheduled for 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesday, September 19, 2007, at the Capitol City Center in Springfield, Ill.

In order to protect children, the elderly, and people with disabilities, it is important that CHRI users make good hiring and licensing decisions regarding potential child care providers, health care workers, local governmental, school, and retail employees, as well as general employment staff. We will educate attendees on the following matters:

- Role of ISP, BOI as the State Central Repository
- Uniform Conviction Information Act
- Name Check vs. Fingerprint Check
- Processing Procedures
- Sex Offender Registration Database
- Accessing FBI CHRI Records
- How to Interpret the Illinois Rap Sheet
- Inquiry & Response Methods
- Fiscal Procedures
- New Legislation
- The Adam Walsh Child Safety and Protection Act

More information, including the registration form, is available online at:
The registration deadline is Friday, Aug. 31, 2007. For additional questions, contact Tammi S. Kestel, Assistant Bureau Chief, Illinois State Police, Bureau of Identification, at: Tammi_Kestel@isp.state.il.us.

**Special Education**

**Update: Special Education Directors’ Conference 2007 – Focus on Best Practice**

The Illinois State Board of Education will sponsor the Special Education Directors’ Conference 2007 – Focus on Best Practice on July 31 and Aug. 1-2 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield. Strands for the conference have just been announced as follows:

♦ Transition
♦ Literacy
♦ Research-based Interventions
♦ Proportionality

Also, due to recent developments with Part 226 Special Education rules, two new conference sessions have been added. Following the regularly scheduled sessions which will end at noon on Thursday, August 2, participants will be given time for lunch on their own and will then have the option of attending the two sessions listed below:

1:15 – 2:15 Session on Major Changes to Part 226 (Response to Scientific, Research-Based Interventions, Class Size, Case Load and Age 22)

2:15 – 2:30 Break

2:30 – 3:30 Session on Collective Bargaining Issues Pertaining to Part 226

Following JCAR’s action on June 13 to lift the filing prohibition on all portions of Part 226 except Sections 226.130 and 226.730, and 226.731, Superintendent Koch convened a meeting with a number of interested parties to explore the issues that still remained with regard to those Sections. As a result of this discussion, technical revisions were made to these Sections and submitted to JCAR for review. Subsequently, on June 19, JCAR lifted the filing prohibition on remaining Sections of Part 226. We anticipate the Part 226 regulations will be finalized no later than July 1, 2007.

The registration deadline for the conference is Friday, July 13, 2007. The conference is limited to 1,000 registrants. Registration forms can be accessed under the “What’s New” section on the Special Education homepage at [www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net) or by selecting the following links:


For additional information or for special accommodations, contact Mary Long, Illinois State Board of Education, at 217-782-5589, or via e-mail at malong@isbe.net.

**Professional Development**

**Superintendents’ Conference Registration is now open**

The Illinois State Board of Education is pleased to announce the Thirtieth Annual Superintendents’ Conference to be held Thursday and Friday, Sept. 6 and 7, 2007, at the Hilton Springfield Hotel.

Registration for the annual conference is now open. The registration brochure is posted online at: [http://www.isbe.net/supts_conf/supts_conference_reg.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/supts_conf/supts_conference_reg.pdf)

Dr. Ronald F. Ferguson will serve as the keynote speaker. Dr. Ferguson, a lecturer in public policy, is an economist and senior research associate at the Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy and has taught at Harvard since 1983. Much of his research since the mid-1990s has focused on racial achievement gaps, appearing in publications of the National Research Council, the Brookings Institution, and the U.S. Department of Education, in addition to various books and scholarly journals. His teachings and publications cover a variety of issues related to education and economic development.

For conference questions, contact Leigh Ann Smith at 217-782-6434 or via e-mail at lsmith@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](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: