Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

July 2, 2008

I hope you all are enjoying this shortened holiday week, which is turning out to be quite busy. The U.S. Department of Education announced yesterday that Illinois has been selected for its Differentiated Accountability pilot project. This project will allow us to provide more flexibility to schools under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Illinois was one of six states chosen for the pilot project. Under Illinois’ approved plan, schools will be able to reverse the order in which school choice and supplemental education services are provided. The plan also will allow the agency to differentiate between schools that miss making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for only one or two subgroups and those that miss making AYP for all of their students.

This is an exciting initiative. I am very proud that Illinois was among the states that garnered approval out of 17 states’ submitting applications. More details about this project will be provided in my message next week.

On Monday, Governor Blagojevich signed into law a measure that will extend the state’s Preschool for All program for an additional two years. This nationally recognized program, which began in 2006, was scheduled to “sunset” on June 30, 2008, but will now continue through June 30, 2010. Since FY 2003 funding for early childhood programs has nearly doubled, and the number of students served by all of the early childhood programs has increased by more than 30,000.

National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) of Rutgers University ranked Illinois’ Preschool for All first nationally earlier this year for enrolling 19 percent of the state’s 3-year-olds. Illinois was also ranked twelfth for the percentage of 4-year-olds enrolled – 27 percent according to The State of Preschool 2007: State Preschool Yearbook. The state’s prekindergarten initiatives (Preschool for All and the prekindergarten at-risk program) also meet nine of ten quality benchmarks cited by the report.

Late last week, I attended the National Symposium on Early Childhood Science and Policy at Harvard University. It was a very useful event, emphasizing the critical role of both pre- and post-natal brain development. The neuron-science work presented confirms what many of us know from experience and science now has indisputably proven: later remediation will be less efficient and will provide less favorable outcomes than prevention. Also, while all children encounter normal stress and what was termed as “tolerable stress,” only children with proper supports and nurturance will not be negatively or perhaps permanently affected by “tolerable stress” (e.g., losing a parent) or worse yet, “toxic stress” (e.g., continued abuse from a parent or guardian) which can lead to disrupted neural circuits and weakened brain architecture. The presenters indicated that it is essential that the work conducted by personnel serving infants, preschoolers and young children be informed by neuron science.

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Finally, Governor Blagojevich on Monday signed legislation that provides $21 million in supplemental funding for the 255 districts that received less funding in FY 2008 than in FY 2007 for the Special Education Funding for Children Requiring Special Education Services program. The vouchers are being processed and will be sent to the Office of the Comptroller for payment in the near future.

Have a safe and happy holiday weekend!

Chris

Upcoming Deadlines

- Parent Choice & SES workshops – July 7 – 9, 2008
- Special Education Directors’ Conference registration deadline – July 11, 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
- Migrant Education application deadline – July 31, 2008
- Waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly for 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

Special Education Directors’ Conference

The registration deadline for the annual Special Education Directors’ Conference is quickly approaching. Online registration must be completed by the close of business on Friday, July 11, 2008. There will be no on-site registration.

Questions are still being taken for Session #26 – Proportionate Share. Questions must be submitted in advance to DirConf@isbe.net.

An updated ‘schedule at a glance’ has been posted on the ISBE website, as well as session presentation information. Complete details can be found at: http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/default.htm.

Annual Special Education Directors’ Conference Registration (Registration Deadline Friday, July 11)

Schedule at a Glance 2008
Session Handouts 2008
Conference dates are **Wednesday, July 30 -- Friday, August 1.**

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**Curriculum & Instruction**

**Reading Recovery RFP**

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has released a Request for Proposals (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.

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**Nutrition**

**Free MyPyramid for Kids poster available**

Schools can remind their students to eat right with the *MyPyramid for Kids* poster provided free by Teachfree.

Teachfree provides preschool through 12th grade educators with high-quality educational materials that supplement the curriculum. Resources can also be downloaded for use in the classroom.


**Healthier School Challenge update**

As you enhance and improve your school lunch menus, you may consider applying for the Healthier US School Challenge. The criteria have been modified to reflect the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Schools submitting applications effective January 1, 2009, must use these new criteria. If you submit your application before January 1, 2009, you can use the current criteria.

For additional information, go to: [http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/HealthierUS/Index.html](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/HealthierUS/Index.html)

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**Federal Grants & Programs**

**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.

**Funding & Disbursements**

**Electronic Grants Management System – new ‘print all’ enhancement**

Based on requests from our clients, a new Print All feature has been added for all grants within the eGMS. The new “PRINT ALL” button can be found on the Application Select Screen in all programs in eGMS through IWAS.

**Instructions:**
- **IMPORTANT:** The Print All function operates **OVERNIGHT**. If you need a copy immediately, you will need to use the existing printer friendly link on each page.
- Select an application document (left side of screen/radio button).
- Click on the PRINT ALL button on the far right side of the screen. Please note that the button may only be clicked once per application document per day.
- In the morning, a link to the PDF document will be available under the “PRINT ALL” button.
  - The PDF document can be opened and all (or some of the) pages can be printed at your convenience.
  - The link will stay active for 7 days after which it will be removed.

**Suggestions for best results:**
- Do NOT print a blank document. Many grant pages have show/hide features that are not open in a blank document (example: were any students expelled during the school year for bringing firearms to school? Yes/No…if yes, more information is required and this information will not be shown on a blank document). Please print completed documents to get the best results from this new feature.
- Single pages of any document can be printed at any time using the printer-friendly link on all pages of the document.
- If you operate as an administrative agent with sub-grants, please note that the PRINT ALL button on the administrative agent application will print only the main grant pages and will NOT include sub-grants. Each sub-grant must be printed off separately, which can be done by using the member list link, selecting the sub-grantee and application to be printed, and selecting the PRINT ALL button.

**English Language Learning**

**Migrant Education Program application**

The Migrant Education Program application for the 2008-09 regular school year is available on the Division of English Language Learning webpage at: http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/migrant.htm.
Funding is available under Title I, Part C of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) for supplemental academic and support services in school districts with qualifying migrant children and youth. The deadline for submitting the application is Thursday, July 31.

Children ages 0-21 who have not graduated from high school may be eligible for the program if they have moved within the past three years across state or school district lines with a parent or guardian or on their own to obtain temporary or seasonal work in agricultural production, fishing or food processing industries.

A certified recruiter must document that children qualify as migrant students. ISBE can assist districts with this process. For more information, contact Beth Robinson at 312-814-3850.

**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: [http://www.isbe.net/news/2008/newsclips/080627.htm](http://www.isbe.net/news/2008/newsclips/080627.htm).