Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

August 7, 2008

As was explained in prior messages, we noticed unexpected results, both increases and decreases, in the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) scores during the data review period this year. These findings were confirmed by several district administrators analyzing their own results. After a thorough review by my staff, Pearson Education and third party reviewers with substantial experience in testing, we have determined that we could obtain more accurate results. As a result, I have asked Pearson to move forward with re-equating and rescoring using a more appropriate process.

This process will delay the release of scores for several weeks. While I am not happy with any delay, as an agency we have an obligation to ensure that the assessment results you receive are an accurate representation of student performance.

I know many of you are concerned about having Adequate Yearly Progress status information for planning purposes prior to the start of school. We are working to get these scores to you as soon as possible. In the past when these determinations have been late, the advice given to districts was to err on the side of caution and begin making plans to provide school choice and/or supplemental education services in situations where there was a chance that the test scores would trigger these actions.

Thank you for your patience and understanding regarding ISAT scoring. I will keep you informed as we move forward in the process.

The Prairie State Achievement Examination scores have been posted in the “Assessment Correction” files on the Student Information System for your review. Districts have until Monday, August 18, to make additional corrections or to request a rescore.

I would also like to commend those districts working to reestablish facilities and services damaged or disrupted by this spring’s extensive flooding.

One question that has surfaced relates to the transportation of students who may currently be living outside of your district due to the flooding and whose parents or guardians wish to have them continue attending school in your district. This may include students living across state borders.

Consistent with federal guidance relative to the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act, whether or not to enroll students displaced by a natural disaster and transporting such students to their school of origin (i.e., the school where the student had been attending prior to the natural disaster) must be determined on a case-by-case basis and that determination must be consistent with the requirements of the Act. A link to federal non-regulatory guidance on McKinney-Vento, which addresses the question on responding to natural disasters and transportation of eligible students, follows: www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/guidance.pdf (see Question G-11).

In those instances where displaced students are found to lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime abode, as defined by McKinney-Vento, transportation to the school of origin is appropriate, even where that requires inter-district travel. If inter-district travel is required, then the resident school district should contact the district in which the student is temporarily located in order to coordinate transportation services and apportion costs incurred.
In the event your district is in the position where inter-district transportation is necessary in order to serve your displaced students who are currently homeless, appropriate transportation costs incurred in meeting that need will be eligible for reimbursement under Section 29-5 of the School Code.

Please feel free to continue to reach out to our School Business Services Division at 217-785-8779 with your questions and concerns arising from these natural disasters.

Thanks,

Chris

**Upcoming Deadlines**

- Waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly for Fall 2008 deadline – August 8
- Regular/Vocational/Special Education Transportation Claims – August 15
- Survey for Safe & Drug Free School due – August 15
- PE Exemption Report survey due – August 15
- Special Education Personnel Claims – August 15
- Special Education Private Facility Claims – August 15
- Rules Part 35 Mentoring Program for New Principals deadline for public comment – August 25
- Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program applications due – August 29
- Head Start reimbursement deadline to submit revised claims – September 30
- Annual Superintendents’ Conference – October 23 – 24
- FY09 School Budget Form – October 31

**Professional Development**

**Amistad Summer Weekend Conference**

The State of Illinois Amistad Commission invites you to join them at their Summer Weekend Conference, August 14-16, in Springfield at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

The conference theme is Education of the African-American: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow. This topic is part of Amistad’s mission to survey, design, encourage and promote the implementation of education and awareness programs in Illinois that are concerned with the African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery and the contributions of African Americans in building our country. Participants will receive six CPDUs for attending.

For additional information, contact JoAnne Kyle at 773-445-5560 or jokyle@sbcglobal.net.

**Rules & Waivers**

**Notice of Effectiveness of Rulemaking**

Please be advised that three 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 25 (Certification)**

Renewal requirements for provisional vocational certificates and school service personnel certificates; renewal requirements when two or more types of certificates are used concurrently; elimination of requirement for program, agenda, or schedule of professional development event as part of evidence of completion; “teaching experience” relative to the early childhood certificate; application for annual stipend for holders of master certificates; addition of content-area test in Arabic; repeal of obsolete Sections; various technical corrections and updates.

**Effective Date:** July 25, 2008

**Part 180 (Health/Life Safety Code for Public Schools)**
Updating to include the new school facility occupation tax as a source of revenue.

**Affected Section:** 180.500.
**Effective Date:** July 25, 2008

**Part 235 (Early Childhood Block Grant)**
Updating to include all possible types of early childhood certificates.

**Affected Section:** 235.20.
**Effective Date:** July 25, 2008

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### Nonresident Tuition Guidance

The State Board has received a number of questions recently about a school district’s ability to waive tuition for students who reside out of the district when a parent is employed by the school district. This is a reminder that out-of-district tuition must be charged for all students attending a public school district outside of the resident district in accordance with Section 10-20.12a of the School Code.

In the case of students attending the school district without paying the nonresident tuition because the parent(s) is employed by the school district, this can only happen if the school district has applied for and received a waiver from the General Assembly to allow a school district to waive the nonresident tuition requirement for these students. [See Section 2-3.25g regarding applying for waivers of School Code requirements.] There is no state law that generally allows the nonresident tuition to be waived for children of employees who reside outside the district.

If you would like more information on the waiver process, go to [http://isbe.net/isbewaivers/default.htm](http://isbe.net/isbewaivers/default.htm) or contact the Rules & Waivers division at 217/782-5270.

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### Student Health

#### Healthy Smiles – Healthy Growth Assessment

During the 2008-2009 school year, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) will be assessing third grade students through an oral screening and a height/weight measurement. The “Healthy Smiles/Healthy Growth” assessment will be used to evaluate the state’s preventive health programs, determine the need for additional programs, and monitor the oral health and obesity trends of students.

The first assessment in 2003-2004, found that 55 percent of third graders had dental decay, 30 percent had untreated cavities and 27 percent had preventive dental sealants. In addition, 21 percent of third graders were overweight and 18 percent were at risk.

**School Participation:** IDPH will contact schools at random to request their participation in the assessment. Students in the selected schools will need a signed consent form for the screenings. Each student will receive a letter noting the results of the oral screening plus a toothbrush, toothpaste and dental floss.

Problems with oral health in school-age children can result in increased absenteeism, poor concentration, lack of sleep, an inability to eat properly, decreased school performance and social relationship issues. Obesity is one of the leading causes of chronic disease and can be prevented with proper food habits and physical activity. For additional information about the assessment, contact [Julie Janssen, IDPH, 217-785-4899 or by e-mail at julie.janssen@illinois.gov](mailto:julie.janssen@illinois.gov).

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### Early Childhood

#### Nominate a Champion

Do you know of a deserving organization that is making a difference in the lives of children? Here is an opportunity to honor that organization by nominating it for the National City Children's Champion Award.

The award is offered by Voices for Illinois Children and National City Bank, who are teaming up for the fifth year to recognize excellence in programs and services for children in Illinois.

Sixteen finalists will be selected for consideration for the statewide Children's Champion Award. Each finalist will receive $1,000 and the 2008 Children's Champion will receive a $10,000 grant.

The deadline for submitting nominations is **Friday, August 22.** Winners will be announced at the Voices for Illinois Children **Kids Count Awards Dinner** on **Thursday, November 6.**
Visit www.NationalCity.com/ChildrensChampion to learn more about how you can nominate an organization that you feel is making a difference in the lives of our kids.

The Children's Champion Award is made possible by National City Bank.

Grants & Programs

Survey for Safe and Drug Free Schools due August 15

In support of the President’s Drug Control Strategy, the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) is requesting information regarding drug control funds disbursed from the Department of Education’s Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program. This program is also known as Title IV in the state of Illinois.

The Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) is seeking to gain a better understanding of state and local level knowledge of Student Drug Testing (SDT) programs. Therefore, your response will assist ONDCP’s effort in sustaining Random Student Drug Testing program development and in our collective efforts to reduce drug use.

We value your privacy and assure that all responses will be kept confidential and used for informational purposes only. Taking this online survey is quick and easy. Due to the short notice from the USDOE, a quick turnaround time is necessary.

Please fill out the survey on or before Friday, August 15. We appreciate your time and thank you for the feedback. If you have any additional questions, please contact Dr. Albert Holmes at 312-814-3618. Please click the link below to start the survey.
http://www.surveymonkey.com/Student_Drug_Testing

Curriculum & Instruction

Illinois WWII Veterans’ Memorial Board Classroom Project

More than 30 students and teachers from across Illinois converged on the Illinois State Library in Springfield July 21-25 to participate in the statewide WWII project designed to digitally capture the stories of Illinois WWII veterans. The project is funded by the Illinois World War II Veteran’s Memorial Board and administered by the Illinois Learning Technology Centers and its partners.

During the training, the teams received a laptop, video/audio equipment and training in digital story telling techniques. They then interviewed and recorded WWII veterans’ stories and experiences and produced documentaries on their veterans. Students also digitally recorded their own reactions to the experiences and connections made with the WWII veterans interviewed. Final products were presented to the veterans on the last day of the training.

The combination of the authentic interview and digital storytelling of Illinois WWII era experiences motivated the students and introduced them and their instructors to new avenues of study. In addition, they acquired an appreciation for the contributions and dedication of the “Greatest Generation” to the common cause of maintaining democracy and freedom worldwide.

During the next school year, teams of students and teachers across the state will interview at least ten WWII veterans and create digital documentaries based on their interviews. The documentaries will be posted on-line as part of the Illinois WWII Veteran’s Memorial Project. They will also be submitted to The Library of Congress Veterans History Project (http://www.loc.gov/vets).

Nutrition

Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program Grant

The State Board is pleased to announce that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has increased funding for the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program (FFVP). We are now able to award more money to more schools for participation in the FFVP program for the 2008-2009 school year.

To be considered for this program for the 2008-2009 school year, you must complete and submit the application to the State Board no later than Friday, August 29.

Visit our website at www.isbe.net/nutrition for additional information about this program, including school selection criteria and the FFVP application.

The FFVP is a separate program from the Department of Defense (DoD) Fruit and Vegetable Program. Its purpose is to increase the consumption of fresh fruits and
vegetables among students. Priority will be given to elementary schools with 50 percent or greater free and reduced eligibility.

If you have questions, contact Lindsay Blough or Roxanne Ramage at cnp@isbe.net or call 800-545-7892 or 217-782-2491. We hope you will consider taking part in the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program as another way to help your students develop lifelong healthful eating habits.

Take Action to Prevent an Allergic Reaction

September is National Food Safety Education Month. The theme is “Take Action to Prevent an Allergic Reaction.”

For additional information on National Food Safety Education Month (NFSEM), go to the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF) website at www.nraef.org/nfsem. To get involved in NFSEM, contact 312/715-1010, ext. 712.

Upcoming weekly messages will offer important information on the following topics each week.

- **August 25**—Know the common food allergens
- **Sept. 2**—Communication with the customer
- **Sept. 8**—Avoiding cross-contamination
- **Sept. 15**—When mistakes happen
- **Sept. 22**—Symptoms of an allergic reaction

Online Child Nutrition Courses Available Soon

Need training, but have a minimal travel budget or can’t take time away from the cafeteria or office? A solution will soon be available.

The National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) will soon be offering continuing education courses online, at low or no cost, to support the professional development and training of child nutrition program personnel. The continuing education units (CEU) may be used for certification and credentialing requirements with the School Nutrition Association. For more information on certification and credentialing requirements, go to http://www.schoolnutrition.org.

Topics include:

- Meeting the Wellness Challenge
- Procurement Training for Child Nutrition Programs
- Serving It Safe
- Implementing and Evaluating School Wellness Policies
- Culinary Techniques for Healthy School Meals
- Foundations in Child Nutrition Program Management
- Financial Management.

These advanced online courses can be accessed through the Internet from your work, school or home. For more information on these upcoming online courses and other training opportunities, go to http://www.nfsmi.org.

2007-2008 Outlook Newsletter Index Posted

If you are looking for a nutrition article in a previous Outlook newsletter, the Outlook indexes can make finding it easier. The articles are sorted alphabetically by topic area. Go to http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/newsletters.htm and click on the year desired.

Funding & Disbursements

**FY 2009 General State Aid**

The first General State Aid payment for FY 2009 has been calculated. The voucher will be cut later this week and sent to the Office of the Comptroller for payment.

The new foundation level of $5,959 was utilized, as well as the continuing 100 percent hold harmless for poverty. The balance of the payments have yet to be calculated due to the fact that ISBE has not received final 2006 equalized assessed valuation data from the Illinois Department of Revenue. After final data is received, the rest of the General State Aid payments will be calculated and loaded along with the final calculation for Hold Harmless.

If you have questions regarding General State Aid, contact Jim Mathes at 217-782-5256 or jmathes@isbe.net.

Student Opportunities

**16th Annual First Freedom Student Competition**
The Council for America's First Freedom announces the 16th annual First Freedom Student Competition. This national essay contest offers 9th through 12th grade students an opportunity to compete for $3,000, $1,500 and $750 awards, as they examine the First Amendment and the history and relevance of religious freedom in America and the world today.

This year’s topic introduces students to George Washington’s famous statement about “mere” toleration in his 1790 letter to the Jewish congregation of Newport, Rhode Island. Students will identify the basic principles of religious liberty espoused in this primary document and will further research and assess how well the United States has lived up to Washington’s ideal. In addition to the monetary award, the first-place winner and his or her teacher (or other adult chaperone) will receive an all-expense-paid trip to Newport, Rhode Island, in mid-August 2009 for the annual VIP reading of President Washington’s historic letter.

For guidelines and registration information, visit www.firstfreedom.org. Click on the red button under Council News. Student online registration is due by Monday, November 24 with the postmark entry deadline on Friday, November 28.

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/080801.htm