Recently, there has been a lot of media focus on the need to change how schools in Illinois are funded and I welcome the dialogue once again. Governor Rod Blagojevich has called a special session for today so that lawmakers can begin this discussion. He has done this in response to a request from legislators, and I certainly hope that this serves as a catalyst for continuing talks.

Senator James T. Meeks (D-Calumet City) also has made education funding reform a priority. He most recently has put that priority into action by asking for students attending schools in City of Chicago School District 299 to miss their first day of school by attempting to instead enroll in schools located in wealthier, suburban districts. While calling attention to the funding inequities that exist in our state is admirable and I applaud the Senator's passion for continuing his crusade to reform school funding, I cannot support the call to keep students out of school even for one day. The first day of school sets the tone for the rest of the year and we need to afford students with every opportunity and advantage to start the year with a full orientation. It is my hope that we will see education funding reform in the near future; however, we cannot spur this change by encouraging a student to boycott school.

On another note, the Illinois State Board of Education has developed several communications for schools and districts to use when discussing the change in testing for our English language learners (ELL). We have posted four documents to our website:

- A letter from me to the parents of our ELL students that has been translated into the top 10 languages spoken in Illinois schools.
- A letter districts can adapt for their local audiences and send out to community members.
- A letter districts can adapt to address local issues and send to community newspapers.
- Talking points that school and district personnel can use when discussing the change in testing.

It is my hope that these documents will assist you in communicating the change to your communities. They are posted on our website on the Assessment Division’s and English Language Learning Division’s pages and also at the following address: [http://www.isbe.net/htmls/rpt_card_info.htm](http://www.isbe.net/htmls/rpt_card_info.htm).

Thanks and have a great week.

Chris

### Upcoming Deadlines

- **Regular/Vocational/Special Education Transportation Claims** – August 15
- **Survey for Safe & Drug Free School** – August 15
- **PE Exemption Report survey** – August 15
- **Special Education Personnel Claims** – August 15

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Board Services

Thomas Lay Burroughs Award Nominations

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) invites you to nominate your local board president for the Thomas Lay Burroughs Award for the State's Outstanding School Board President.

This award was created in 1991 in memory of the late ISBE chairman and is presented each November at the IASB/IASA/IASBO conference in Chicago. This year the conference will be held November 21-23, and the award will be presented Sunday morning, November 23. Nominations should be submitted as indicated below by 5 p.m. on Friday, October 17.

You may e-mail your nomination to Jean Ladage at jladage@isbe.net. Please indicate in the subject line of the e-mail: Burroughs Nomination. If you have questions, call Jean Ladage or Marsha Moffett at 217-557-6626.

For nomination information and format please go to: http://www.isbe.net/pdf/burroughs_award.pdf.

Recognizing Achievement

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) wishes to recognize the exemplary achievements of students, teachers, school administrators and local board members in Illinois. If you know of an individual whose accomplishments are truly outstanding, please use the form below to nominate the person.

You should provide a description of the reasons why you are recommending this individual. Be sure to include the challenges they have faced. Upon review and acceptance, ISBE will pass a resolution in the person’s honor describing the particulars of their success.

The signed resolution will be presented in one of the following three ways:

- Mailed to the recipient;
- Personally awarded to the recipient at their respective school; or
- Presented to recipient during the State Board meeting at which their resolution is approved.

Thank you for your assistance in providing the State Board with opportunities to praise the hard work of students and educators throughout the state of Illinois.

A nomination form can be downloaded at the following link: http://isbe.state.il.us/board/word/recognizing_achievements.doc.

Education is a Civil Right

NABSE Seeks Best Practices

The National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE) is asking Illinois schools and districts to share intervention strategies that have helped reduce the educational disparities among African American and other minority students and underachieving students.

NABSE is a 38-year-old membership organization of more than 5,000 African American educators. The organization contends that quality education for all children is an entitlement and thus has declared “Education is a Civil Right” (ECR).

After collecting these best practices from various states, NABSE will present them at its annual conference in November in a report on the “State of Public Education in Black America.”

If your school or district has success stories it would like to share, please e-mail them to Marilyn Leveque at mleveque@isbe.net.
Legal

Registration Guidance: Residency, Immigrant Pupils, Homeless Pupils and School Fees & Waivers

The summer is once again drawing to a close and as we prepare to register pupils for a new school year, we want to identify four areas that traditionally have generated confusion: residency, immigrant pupils, homeless pupils and school fees and waivers.

Below are brief introductions to the four topics. To access the complete document, click here: Residency, Immigrant Pupils, Homeless Pupils and School Fees & Waivers.

I. Residency (for non-special education pupils)
School districts are concerned about registering or enrolling pupils that cannot produce documented proof of residency in the school district. ISBE encourages districts to “enroll first, ask questions later.”

II. Immigrant Pupils
Please review your district’s enrollment policy to ensure it is consistent with applicable laws, including the guidance outlined here.

III. Homeless Pupils
ISBE considers the school enrollment, attendance and success of homeless children and youth throughout Illinois to be a high priority.

IV. School Fees and Fee Waivers
During registration and throughout the school year, school districts must be aware of families who believe they are unable to afford school fees.

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

Nonresident Tuition Guidance

The State Board recently has received a number of questions 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 district, this can only occur if the school district has applied for and received a waiver from the General Assembly to allow it 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 or contact the Rules & Waivers division at 217-782-5270.

**Special Education**

**2006-2007 District Special Education Profiles Available for District Review**

In a continuing effort to disseminate data to local education agencies and to the public, the Illinois State Board of Education will again post District Special Education Profiles on its website.

District Special Education Profiles allow a reader to access all special education performance information in one location. The reader has the ability to view a district’s progress toward improving results on critical performance indicators in the areas of student performance, educational environment and school completion.

Through **Friday, August 22**, school district superintendents may preview their Profile using their ISBE Web Application Security (IWAS) District Admin user login name at https://sec1.isbe.net/iwas/.

The District Special Education Profiles system can be found under the category of Reporting on the IWAS “My Systems” page.

The 2006-2007 Profiles will be open to the public after the initial district superintendent review period and can be found via the ISBE eReport Card Public Site at: http://webprod1.isbe.net/ereportcard/publicsite/getSearchCriteria.aspx

After **Friday, August 22**, go to the ISBE Special Education Profiles site at: http://webprod1.isbe.net/LEAPProfile/Searchcriteria1.aspx

Questions regarding the District Special Education Profiles may be directed to Scott Beever or Gwen Williams at 217-782-5589. For technical assistance accessing the reports, please call the Helpdesk at 217-558-3600.

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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**

**47th Annual U.S. Senate Youth Program**

Local school administrators are invited to assist in identifying student candidates for the 47th Annual U.S. Senate Youth Program sponsored by the William Randolph Hearst Foundation.

Illinois public and nonpublic secondary schools were recently sent a brochure that contains a description of the program, rules, process and an application form. Please share this information with the juniors and seniors in your district’s high schools. Applications are due at the Illinois State Board of Education’s Springfield office by 5 p.m. **Friday, October 3**.

The first phase of the U.S. Senate Youth Program will send two students from each state to Washington, D.C. from **March 7-14, 2009**. Delegates will participate in
Washington activities including visits to the Senate, House of Representatives, Supreme Court, Pentagon and various Smithsonian museums. Delegates will hear major policy addresses by senators, cabinet members, officials of various executive departments and others. The Hearst Foundation will pay all expenses, including transportation, hotel, and meals.

The second phase will award a Hearst Scholarship of $5,000 to the two selected students. The Hearst Foundation requires that to obtain scholarship funds, a student must, within two years after high school graduation, enroll at an accredited U.S. college or university. The student is encouraged to include courses in government or related subjects in his or her undergraduate program.

For more details, contact Carol McCue at 217-524-4832 or visit the ISBE website at: www.isbe.net/sos/htmls/hearst.htm.

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.

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Curriculum & Instruction

Technology Integration Plan

The Technology Integration Plan (TIP) template will be available online Tuesday, September 2, at http://iirc.niu.edu/.

This service is available to all Illinois public school districts and educational entities that need to create or update an existing three-year plan for activities and services for the period July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2012. Public school districts and other educational entities must have an approved technology plan in order to receive state and federal funding for programs or services under No Child Left Behind, as well as E-Rate.

All districts holding technology plans that will expire June 30, 2009, should begin steps to complete and submit their three-year technology plan online by February 27, 2009. Other educational entities may use the online template to create, complete and print a PDF of the plan to submit to the appropriate Technology Plan Approver (TPA) for their school type. More information about the approval process for such entities can be found at: http://www.usac.org/sl/tools/search-tools/tech-plan-approver-locator.aspx.

For additional information about technology plans, contact your local Learning Technology Center Director. A directory is available online at: http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/elearning/html/ltc.htm or contact Faith Bishop, Division of Curriculum and Instruction, 217-557-7323 or fbishop@isbe.net.

E-Rate: All districts and educational entities filing for E-Rate in 2009 without an approved technology plan are encouraged to complete The Basic Technology Plan (also known as The Draft Plan) by October 1, 2008. There may be some flexibility regarding this date, but having a written plan is a USAC requirement prior to completing Form 470 for eligible services to begin July 1, 2009.

The applying district or educational entity is accountable for complying with E-Rate rules and document retention. The Basic Technology Plan can be created online after Tuesday, September 2. Applicants must keep a printed copy of The Basic Technology Plan bearing the date stamp showing when it was completed and filed per USAC’s document retention rules for five years after the last date of service cited in the completed three-year plan or approximately eight years. USAC does not require this.
service by the TPA. ISBE will no longer provide the creation date stamp for districts applying for E-Rate.

E-Rate information is available at: 
http://www.usac.org/sl/.

For additional information, contact Kathleen Barnhart, Division of Curriculum and Instruction, 217-557-7323 or kbarnhar@isbe.net.

Nutrition

School Year 2008-2009 Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Programs

For 2008-2009 school year, Illinois will be participating in two fresh fruit and vegetable programs. One of the programs is the traditional Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program and the other is a new grant-based Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP).

The DoD program is in conjunction with the Food Distribution Program (Commodities) and schools can elect to participate by making the selection in the Illinois Commodity System (ICS). In ICS, schools should select Annual Order Forms from the main menu and select Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Participation. If a school is large enough to have a minimum allocation ($500), the amount will be displayed on the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Participation screen within ICS.

Schools participating in the DoD program can place their orders through the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Order Receipt System (FFAVORS) website at: https://www.ffavorsweb.dscp.dla.mil.

The FFAVORS system is administered by the DoD. If help is needed with the system, contact Pam Hamlett at 215-737-3676. For questions relating to the DoD program, contact Jim Copp, Illinois State Board of Education, 800-545-7892.

The FFVP is a grant-based program that requires schools to complete a grant application, which is located on the nutrition webpage at www.isbe.net/nutrition under the “What’s new” section.

The due date for FFVP grant applications is Friday, August 29. The overall goal of the FFVP is to provide all children in participating schools with access to a variety of free fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the day. Additionally the goal is to create healthier school environments by providing healthier food choices, expanding the variety of fruits and vegetables children eat, increasing a child’s intake of fruits and vegetables, and making a difference in a child’s current diet and future health.

If you have questions relating to the FFVP, contact Lindsay Blough, Illinois State Board of Education, 800-545-7892.

UPDATE: Disclosure of a Student’s Free and Reduced-Price Eligibility

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which funds the National School Lunch Program, has received inquiries about disclosing individual children’s eligibility status and sharing applications with auditors conducting reviews on behalf of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC). The FCC, through USAC, administers the E-Rate Program and in turn, contracts with private firms to actually conduct the audits.

To support the discount rate for telecommunications and internet access to schools through the E-Rate grant, auditors are requesting documentation of the discount calculation. Specifically, auditors have asked for a list of eligible students for selected schools along with the applications for those students.

The USDA has determined that release of information is permitted under section 9(b)(6) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA), as long as the following audit protocols are followed:

- compare aggregate enrollment data with aggregate free and reduced price eligibility data;
- request the applications for a small sample of eligible students, which could include direct certification records;
- confirm that an application or other documentation exists for each selected student;
- prohibit auditors from retaining personal student information;
- auditors cannot verify the accuracy of the LEA’s determinations for free or reduced-price meal eligibility and cannot contact the household; and
- auditors cannot share or otherwise release individual information.

School-wide eligibility data is always readily available for auditors on the State Board of Education’s website at:
http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/eligibility_listings.htm

**Free Allergy Program Resources**

Illinois schools and districts can order a free School Food Allergy Program (SFAP) from the Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN). The program, valued at $75, includes a SFAP, a video, EpiPen® trainer, poster, and an informational binder with standardized forms.

To order this program, go to: [http://www.foodallergy.org/school/sfap.html](http://www.foodallergy.org/school/sfap.html).

In addition, FAAN also provides a free Food Allergy Back to School Toolkit. The toolkit has items for both elementary and secondary schools, including a 25-slide Food Allergy 101 presentation.

To download the toolkit, go to: [http://www.foodallergy.org/school/toolkit.html](http://www.foodallergy.org/school/toolkit.html).

**Go for the Bronze, Silver or Gold HealthierUS School Challenge**

With nutrition standards, wellness policies, and increased emphasis on physical education and activity, we know more schools are approaching the HealthierUS School Challenge criteria. New to this special recognition for schools is a bronze level.

Elementary schools must maintain an Average Daily Participation (ADP) of school enrollment for reimbursable lunches of at least 62 percent for Bronze or 70 percent for Silver and Gold Schools.


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**Funding & Disbursements**

**Additional Requirements for School Bus Drivers Approaching RR Crossings**

Senate Bill 2182 (P.A. 95-0756) was signed into law on **Friday, July 25**, by Governor Blagojevich. This law amends Section 11-1202 of the Illinois Vehicle Code, which requires all school bus drivers who approach a railroad crossing to stop within 50 feet but not less than 15 feet from the nearest rail. Drivers are then required to listen and look for the approach of a train and in addition to turning off all noise producing accessories, including heater blowers, defroster fans, auxiliary fans and radios, to also “open the service door and driver’s window” before crossing. The amended language is effective January 1, 2009.

**Interrupted School Days/Heat**

The health and safety of students are primary concerns for every school superintendent. Section 18-12 of the School Code allows for the use of Interrupted School Days for “adverse weather conditions,” including extreme heat as well as extreme cold. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) allows four options with regard to extreme heat at the beginning of the school year:

- Amend the public school calendar to start school at a later date
- Dismiss after 5-clock-hours of instruction
- Use an Emergency Day
- Use an Interrupted Day

If an Emergency Day is used, it is strongly recommended that an Amended Calendar be submitted electronically through IWAS to the Regional Office of Education (ROE) for approval. This will assure that the most up-to-date Public School Calendar is available online via the School Calendar Inquiry.

If an Interrupted Day is used, an Amended Calendar must be submitted electronically through IWAS within 30 days of occurrence to the ROE, who will forward it to ISBE for approval as required by statute.

The Calendar Code for Emergency Day is ED. The Calendar Code for an Interrupted Day is XID. When amending the calendar code to XID, Student Attendance Time is required to verify that a minimum of 1 instructional clock hour was conducted, as well as a brief explanation of why the day was interrupted.

ISBE’s policy further states that if the announcement is made in advance (i.e., on the previous day) that school will be closing on any day or days after less than 5-clock-hours because of heat, districts must use an Emergency Day(s). Districts cannot count a shortened day as a full-day of attendance under those circumstances.

As a reminder, all 2008-09 Public School Calendars should now have ROE approval, making the calendar available for interested parties to view on the ISBE’s
School Calendar Inquiry. Per Section 10-19 of the School Code, any changes to the calendar must be approved by completing and submitting an amended calendar via IWAS prior to the change taking effect.

It is our hope that this information is helpful for the upcoming school year. For technical assistance or additional questions regarding the Public School Calendar, contact your ROE or Marj Beck at mbeck@isbe.net or 217-782-5256.

**FY 2009 General State Aid**

The first General State Aid payment for FY 2009 has been calculated. The voucher was cut last 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 are 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.

**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/080808.htm