August 18, 2008

Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Late last week Governor Blagojevich signed a piece of legislation that may have little significance to the general public but is extremely important for schools. Public Act 95-835 amends the School Code to reduce the General State Aid (GSA) payment cycle from 24 to 22 payments per year.

This change will end the speculation every year of whether the last two GSA payments will be advanced from July to June. The 22 payments will be made twice a month from August to June, on the 10th and 20th of each month. Since your first GSA payment was calculated on a 24-payment cycle, we will begin calculations on the 22-payment cycle on the next payment, which is due August 20. The 22-payment cycle will assist you in making more accurate budget projections and reduce the uncertainty that always came with wondering whether those last payments would be advanced.

The Illinois State Board of Education will be holding its annual retreat, as well as a short business meeting, in Chicago on August 19 through 21. This year board members will be re-examining the agency’s strategic plan, first submitted to the Governor and General Assembly in June 2005. Section 2-3.47a of the School Code, enacted in 2004, requires the agency to develop a continuing, 5-year strategic plan and to provide updates to that plan each year to the Governor and General Assembly.

Members of the Board will be taking a critical look at our current plan to determine whether its goals and initiatives drive the actions of the agency each day. ISBE isn’t the same agency as it was when the current strategic plan was developed. Moreover, we have just a little more than half the employees today than we had prior to the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act. Like those of you working in districts and schools, that landmark legislation means that we have many more requirements to meet with fewer employees to get the job done. We must ask ourselves: What are we doing now that is not an essential ingredient to student achievement, and how can we work more efficiently to support educators as they work tirelessly to prepare all students for success?

I look forward to having an interesting dialogue with members of the Board and others. The strategic plan and the plan’s most recent progress report can be viewed at http://www.isbe.net/pdf/strategic_plan_2005.pdf and http://www.isbe.net/pdf/strategic_plan08.pdf, respectively.

Finally, ISBE will be joining our colleagues at the Illinois Department of Transportation and Springfield School District 186 to remind drivers that students are heading back to school. Drivers, like students, benefit from getting into a routine at the beginning of the school year, particularly refreshing themselves about the laws for driving near buses and in school zones. I would urge you to reach out to your local police department and ask them to increase its presence in and around your school zones during the first few weeks of the school year. Seeing an officer or a speed board in a school zone is sometimes all it takes to remind drivers to slow down for the rest of the year.
Thanks and have a great week!

Chris

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**Upcoming Deadlines**

- Rules Part 35 Mentoring Program for New Principals deadline for public comment – August 25
- Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program applications – August 29
- Head Start reimbursement deadline to submit revised claims – September 30
- Annual Superintendents’ Conference online registration – October 1
- Thomas Lay Burroughs award nominations – October 17
- Annual Superintendents’ Conference – October 23 – 24
- FY09 School Budget Form – October 31

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**No Child Left Behind**

**AYP Appeals Process**

Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) scores and Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) Status Reports have been released and districts are in the process of reviewing the results. AYP status for high school is to be considered final unless a data change or rescoring is requested.

Once the PSAE correction window closes on **Monday, August 18**, and the ISAT scores have been reissued, the final 2008 AYP results for elementary and middle schools and districts will be posted on IWAS. These reports are the basis for designating schools or districts needing improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under federal law.

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law and the State Accountability statute and rules allow schools and districts to appeal their AYP status if the district has questions regarding the accuracy of the determination. ISBE developed materials regarding how a school or district appeals its designation. Each appeal will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by ISBE staff and by the Appeals Advisory Committee.

Once a school or district status report has been posted on IWAS, an appeal must be filed within 30 days or by **Monday, September 1**, whichever is later. For 2008, the September 1 date is actually **Tuesday, September 2**, because of Labor Day.

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More information – including a revised procedural guidance, a sample timeline and new forms to begin the appeal process – is available online at: [http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/appeals_status.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/appeals_status.pdf).

Please direct any questions or concerns to **Melina Wright**, NCLB Liaison, at 217-782-7362; fax: 217-782-5333; or e-mail at: [mewright@isbe.net](mailto:mewright@isbe.net).

**IAA Score Reports to be Mailed**

The Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) district, school or Chicago District 299 school score reports for the IAA Spring 2008 Operational Assessment for Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Writing will be arriving on or before the week of **August 25th**.

These reports include district-level and school-level performance profiles, disaggregated reports and rosters, as well as Individual Student Reports for each student in the respective district and/or school.

If you have questions about these IAA score reports or are missing reports, contact Pearson’s Illinois Customer Support Center at 800-627-7990, state code 814, Monday through Friday, 7a.m. to 7 p.m. CST.

Information to assist Illinois administrators, educators, and parents interpret score results is included in the Individual Student Report. If you have questions about **scores or results**, contact ISBE’s Student Assessment Division at 217-782-4823.
Board Services

Annual Superintendents’ Conference Registration Open

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is pleased to announce that the Annual Superintendents’ Conference will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield on Thursday, October 23, and Friday, October 24.

Superintendents and their staff are encouraged to participate in the conference, which will cover a variety of topics that will assist districts in preparing students for success. These include Response to Intervention (RtI), No Child Left Behind, English Language Learning and improving student achievement.

Please note that the registration process has changed this year. All registration will be done online through the ISBE website at: http://webapps.isbe.net/ISBEConference/.

Complete registration information can be found at: http://www.isbe.net/supts_conf/Registration_08.pdf.

If you require an interpreter, other special accommodations or have further questions regarding the conference, please contact Leigh Ann Smith at ISBE, 217-782-5589 or e-mail at lsmith@isbe.net, by Wednesday, October 1.

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.

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.

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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**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 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/](http://www.usac.org/sl/).

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

### Nutrition

**Reprocessed Commodity Taste Tests**

Be sure to mark your calendars and come hungry for the annual taste test sponsored by the Illinois School Nutrition Association (ILSNA) on **Wednesday, November 5, in Bloomington at the Interstate Center.**

Taste tests are a great place to try different commodities that will be offered for the 2010 school year. There is no cost to participants and you do not have to divert commodities to a processor to attend. ISBE staff will give a brief presentation before the taste tests begin to explain the commodity divert process. Please plan on attending this information-filled taste test.

More information can be found on the ILSNA’s website in the near future at: [http://www.ilsna.net/](http://www.ilsna.net/).

### 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](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](http://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.html](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/eligibility_listings.html).

**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).

**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.

**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.

**Student Opportunities**

**Missing Children’s Day Poster Contest**

Each year, the U.S. Department of Justice sponsors the “Bring Our Missing Children Home” national poster contest. This year, the event is directed to students in the 5th grade.

The Missing Children Clearinghouse will coordinate the contest in each state, with each school conducting its own competition. For 2009 contest information, go to the Missing Children’s Clearinghouse website at: http://ojdp.ncjrs.gov/programs/postercontest.

A national competition will be held in April 2009 to select the poster contest winner. This student will be brought to Washington, D.C. with his or her teacher and parents to participate in the annual ceremony and receive an award. The national winning poster will be used in 2010 as the pictorial theme for Missing Children’s Day.

The goal of the poster contest is to raise public awareness across the country about missing children and to
recognize the importance of working together to respond to this national problem.

**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.

**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/080815.htm