Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Last week, the National Association for Education Progress (NAEP) released its results for 2007 NAEP mathematics and reading assessments given to students in grades 4 and 8. Scores for Illinois students increased in nearly all categories, and the state was singled out for the progress it is making in closing the achievement gap.

Illinois was recognized in the report as being one of the top four states in making progress to close the achievement gap, along with Delaware, Florida and New Jersey. We were one of only two states in which the gap between lower and higher income students decreased between 2003 and 2007 in fourth-grade math. We were one of only three states where the gap was decreased between the low and high income category for fourth-grade reading.

Overall Illinois’ averages mirrored the nation. We saw slight increases in results for fourth-grade reading and math and eighth-grade math, with a slight drop in eighth-grade reading. We will continue to look at NAEP results, as we also are reviewing the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) results. As you know our students made gains across the board on ISAT; however, our PSAE averages are cause for concern. We will certainly be scrutinizing the results of these tests, especially the PSAE. If, in your own analysis, you identify patterns as to why your PSAE scores may have decreased, then we would be interested in hearing from you.

On another matter, the General Assembly has returned to Springfield to begin its fall Veto Session. Please inform your legislators regarding your district’s needs. It is imperative that the General Assembly pass legislation setting the General State Aid (GSA) Foundation and Special Education Personnel Reimbursement Levels by passing the Budget Implementation Bill (BIMP) prior to November 1, as I outlined in my special message sent last Friday.

Beginning with the first GSA payment in November, we will have all the data necessary to make the final GSA calculations. It is our hope that a new Foundation Level will have been passed by the General Assembly by late October. Regardless of whether the General Assembly acts, we are required to recalculate GSA with the final data.

If lawmakers approve the BIMP during the Veto Session, the Foundation Level will increase by $400 per student to $5,734. This will result in 816 districts/lab schools/safe schools realizing an increase in their GSA payments from what they are currently receiving. However, if the General Assembly does not enact the new Foundation Level in the BIMP during the veto session, 726 districts/lab schools/safe schools, starting in November, will receive less GSA than they are currently receiving. These losses will be due to changes in local Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV), Average Daily Attendance (ADA) and/or Corporate Personal Property Replacement Taxes (CPPRT) that will not be offset by a higher Foundation Level.

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In addition, the Senate has passed a Capital Construction Bill that would include nearly $2 billion for school construction and maintenance over the next three years, including $150 million to immediately fund the 24 districts initially entitled to receive funds in FY 2002. The Senate has also passed a $260 million increase for General State Aid which, with House concurrence, would bring the Foundation level to $5,900. The Senate also included an additional $44 million for Early Childhood Education which would bring the FY 2008 total increase to $69 million.

Members of the State Board, agency staff and I have been reaching out to members of the General Assembly advocating on your behalf, but nothing carries more weight than concerns from constituents. I strongly urge you to reach out to your local legislators and express your concerns.

Have a great week.

Chris

Upcoming Deadlines

- 46th Annual United States Senate Youth Program – Student Applications – October 3, 2007
- Thomas Lay Burroughs Award Nominations – October 12, 2007
- Application for Recognition of Schools (ARS) – Applications to ISBE from ROE offices – October 15, 2007
- 2007-08 Teacher Salary Study data – October 18, 2007
- FY07 NCLB Performance Report – October 19, 2007
- Supplemental General State Aid Expenditure Plans – October 30, 2007
- Adopted School District Budgets Due Electronically – October 30, 2007
- 2007-08 Fall Housing/Enrollment Report (87-03) – October 31, 2007
- Unfilled Positions Survey (87-07) – November 15, 2007
- NCLB FY08 Title I Comparability analysis – November 30, 2007
- NCLB FY08 Monitoring Instrument – November 30, 2007
- Nonpublic Registration, Enrollment and Staff Report (87-01) – December 31, 2007
- Waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly in Spring 2008 – January 11, 2008

School Business & Support Services

Adopted budgets due by October 30

This is a reminder that all school district’s adopted budgets are due electronically at ISBE no later than October 30, 2007. The deadline for districts to adopt their budget is September 30, 2007. Once adopted, the budget is to be submitted to ISBE and their county clerk no later than October 30, 2007.

In accordance with PA 94-0234, and beginning October 31, 2007, our office will send notifications to school districts that are not in compliance. If you have questions you may call Christine Kolaz, School Business and Support Services at 217-785-8779.

For requirements of PA 94-0234 information and instructions on how to submit the school district’s budget, please see the following link: http://www.isbe.net/sfms/budget/2008/budget.htm. The submission instructions are at the bottom of the webpage.

Data Analysis & Progress Reporting

Teacher Salary Study Form for 2007-08 Now Available Through IWAS

The 2007-08 Teacher Salary Study data form is now available online. The deadline to submit data is October 18, 2007. This form must be submitted by all districts (including special education cooperatives and area vocational centers) that hire teachers for the current school year.
If you do not have a contract for the current school year at this time (still in negotiations), click on the "No Contract" button and save, then log off; you will be asked to submit your data again in January 2008. The law also requires that you provide a copy of your district’s salary schedule and negotiation agreement.

Please send them to: Illinois State Board of Education, Data Analysis and Progress Reporting, 100 North First Street, S-284, Springfield, Illinois 62777.

**Nonpublic Registration, Enrollment and Staff Report Now Available Through IWAS**

The 2007-08 Nonpublic Registration, Enrollment and Staff Report (87-01) is available via IWAS at https://sec1.isbe.net/iwas and must be received by ISBE by December 31, 2007.

Nonpublic schools that have registered with ISBE at least once in the past must submit the data online using the ISBE web portal IWAS. Nonpublic schools that have never registered with ISBE must submit their data by using the paper form 87-01 that is available at the following address: http://www.isbe.net/research/pdfs/87-01_np_report.pdf.

Public district administrators should communicate with administrators of nonpublic schools within their district boundary and encourage them to submit registration, enrollment and staff data. A portion of the public district funding allocation calculated for the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) utilizes nonpublic enrollment data that is voluntarily reported from nonprofit elementary and secondary schools.

**Funding & Disbursements**

**Final FY 08 Allocations Available for NCLB Consolidated Application**

Final FY 08 Title I, IIA, IID, IV and V allocations for all eligible local education agencies are complete and can be accessed at http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/08_projected_nclb_allo.pdf. They are also reflected on the NCLB Consolidated Grant Application allotment page for each LEA in the electronic Grants Management System.

The final FY 08 Title I allocations for all local education agencies (LEA) are complete and can be accessed at http://www.isbe.net/funding/excel/title1_allocations.xls. Title I funding is based upon LEA eligibility for the four statutory formulas—Basic, Concentration, Targeted and Education Finance Incentive Grants; and upon a variable hold harmless. These figures replace the earlier projected allocations.

Title IIA has experienced an increase from projections. Titles IV and V allocations have not changed from their projected amounts.

If you have already received ISBE approval for your NCLB Consolidated Application, you can amend your application for the changes in Title I, IIA and IID funds. Carryover funds may also be available to your district if your final FY07 expenditure reports have been submitted. If you have not applied yet, or your application is still within the approval process at the district level, you may apply for your additional funds.

Questions regarding the Title I, IIA, IV and V programs should be directed to staff in the Federal Grants and Programs Division at 217-524-4832.

If you have any questions about the Title IID Technology – Enhancing Education formula grant, please contact Kathy Barnhart, Curriculum & Instruction, at 217-557-7323 or kbarnhar@isbe.net.

**Accountability**

**Supplemental General State Aid Expenditure Plans due October 30**

The majority of Illinois school districts receive the Supplemental General State Aid (SGSA) Grant due to the percentage and number of disadvantaged, low income, students attending the district. Districts receive SGSA funding through the Poverty Grant Calculation which is part three of the GSA claim. The SGSA payments are included as a portion of the GSA payments. School districts with average daily attendance over 1,000 are required by the school code to file an SGSA Expenditure Plan. The required SGSA Expenditure Plan is now to be filed electronically utilizing the ISBE IWAS system.

The IWAS system may be accessed through ISBE’s web page at www.isbe.net. All pertinent SGSA information is contained on your district’s screen. A brief narrative is required on the first page and a budget breakdown must
be listed on the second page. SGSA funding may be expended in numerous ways but must primarily benefit the disadvantaged, low income, students which generate the funding for the district. If you have questions please contact Richard Loman, Accountability Division, at 217-782-2948 or via e-mail at rloman@isbe.net.

Regional Superintendent’s Summary Report on Recognition for 2007-2008 now available

The Regional Superintendent’s Summary Report on Recognition for 2007-2008 is now available for your use. This form is used to report the recommended recognition status for each school and district in your region.

If districts or schools are recommended for less than full recognition for any reason, it should be recorded on this form. Please supply a specific reason for the downgraded recognition status in the space provided. The information from the ROE Summary Report along with the 2007-2008 Applications for Recognition, compliance visit information, and information supplied by other divisions within ISBE will be used in determining the final recognition status for each school district.

This form is due to the Accountability Division by October 15, 2007, and can be found on the Accountability Division’s web pages under the Public School Compliance link at www.isbe.net/accountability. This form can be completed online but will need to be printed, signed and mailed to ISBE. The mailing address is on the top of the form.

Please contact Lynne Robinson or Henri Fonville, Accountability Division, at 217-782-2948 should you have any questions or concerns.

Educator Preparation & Recertification

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)

New “FALL WINDOW is open” from September 4, 2007 – December 31, 2007

The Illinois State Board of Education has opened the fall window for new NBPTS candidates and will provide assistance with the NBPTS Candidate Subsidy federal funds, and as available, state funds to support candidates. Candidates must meet NBPTS eligibility guidelines. Priority will be given to Illinois certified teachers and school counselors who meet the ISBE established criteria as outlined on the 2007-2008 Illinois National Board Candidate Fee Subsidy Application. The application (Form 77-32) is available online at http://www.isbe.net/certification/pdf/77-32_subsidy.pdf.

More information on becoming a NBPTS candidate is available online at http://nbpts.org/become_a_candidate.

Funding Available for Advanced (Retake) Candidates

We are pleased to announce that the Illinois State Board of Education has state funding available for 2007-2008 advanced (retake) candidates. The funding will pay for one retake entry for second and third year Advanced Candidates. If you are a current candidate awaiting scores, you will not be able to apply until after your scores have been released. To submit a retake application, access My Profile at: http://www.nbpts.org/for_candidates/my_profile. Once you are logged on, select View My Scores. If you apply for only one entry/exercise, it will be necessary to submit $350 for each additional entry/exercise. You will have until January 31, 2008 to apply for retakes.

Educators seeking information on Illinois NBPTS support may contact Vicki Hensley, Assistant Regional Superintendent, of the Iroquois/Kankakee Regional Office of Education #32 by e-mail at vhensley@i-kan.org.


School Districts May Now Implement New Principal Mentoring Program

State Superintendent Christopher Koch has determined that the appropriation for the Illinois New Principal Mentoring program is sufficient to fully implement the program for the 2007-2008 school year. Local school district superintendents must decide which approved provider (and program) will best serve their new principal(s). A list of the 43 approved providers and contact information can be found at http://www.isbe.net/pdf/Certified_Providers.pdf. Some providers may charge additional fees above the appropriation for mentoring. If you have any questions,
please check with your provider. Providers will begin assigning mentors to new principals and services will begin immediately.

Each school district must now provide ISBE with a list of the names and administrative certificate numbers of new principals who will be mentored for the 2007-2008 school year. Forward that information to:

Attn: Dennis Williams
E-310
Illinois State Board of Education
100 N. First Street
Springfield, IL
62777-0001

It can also be sent via e-mail to Dennis Williams at dwilliam@isbe.net. The deadline for identifying the new principals is Monday, October 15, 2007.

Please remember that the Illinois New Principals Mentoring Program is mandatory for every person who is working as a principal for the first time. However, this requirement does not apply to any individual who has previously served as an assistant principal for five or more years and who is hired as a principal by the district in which the individual last served as an assistant principal.

Legal

PA95-0241 Third Party Contractual Services

Public Act 095–0241, signed by Governor Blagojevich on August 17, 2007, outlines additional requirements for school districts that choose to contract with a third party for non-instructional services. If your school district employs staff to perform various services such as, but not limited to, school meal service-related tasks, custodial services, and/or pupil transportation services, and the school district wishes to consider contracting those services out to a third party contractor, the school district is required to implement a number of new procedures as part of the contract solicitation and award process.


Federal Grants & Programs

FY07 NCLB Performance Report

The FY07 NCLB Performance Report is now ready to receive data. Every district that receives funds for Titles I, IIA, and IVA must complete this report prior to October 19, 2007. The information that districts supply through this report must be forwarded to the United States Department of Education for funds to continue to flow to these NCLB Programs.

The FY07 NCLB Performance Report is located in the IWAS system on the ISBE web site. If you have questions or need help, please call Gail Buoy, Federal Grants and Programs Division, at 217-524-4832.

Nutrition

Announcement of School Food Service Forum

The Illinois State Board of Education’s Nutrition Programs Division would like to invite you and your staff to a forum to gather comments from the community (including school personnel, health organizations, and others) about the Illinois School Food Service Rules Part 305, the Illinois School Wellness Policy Task Force Nutrition Standards, and the upcoming revision as required in the current Rules.

Staff from the Nutrition Programs Division will be in attendance and will make a presentation regarding the materials and then allow time for attendees to provide comments. Staff will be happy to answer questions regarding the materials and may ask for clarification on comments received. All comments from the public are welcome.

The School Food Service Forum will be held at the following three locations beginning at 9:30 a.m.:

- **October 29, 2007**
  DuPage ROE Professional Development Center
  1519 South Grace Street
  Lombard, IL 60148

- **November 5, 2007**
  St. Clair County ROE Office
  1000 South Illinois Street
  Belleville, IL 62220

- **November 7, 2007**
  Illinois State Board of Education, Board Room
Conference call capabilities are available on November 7, 2007. If you would like to reserve a conference call line, please contact our office at 800-545-7892 no later than November 2, 2007, and staff will provide the necessary call in information.

If you are unable to attend a forum, written comments may be provided via electronic mail to cnp@isbe.net or via regular mail to the following address no later than November 9, 2007:

Illinois State Board of Education
Nutrition Programs Division
ATTN: Part 305 Discussion Forums
100 North First Street (W-270)
Springfield, IL 62777-0001

If you have any questions about this upcoming event please feel free to contact the Nutrition Programs Division staff at 800-545-7892 or 217-782-2491.

Links to related materials are provided below.

- School Food Service Rules Part 305 is available at http://www.isbe.net/rules/archive/pdfs/305ark.pdf.

Illinois Awarded Team Nutrition Training Grant

The USDA has notified ISBE of the fiscal year 2007 Team Nutrition Training Grant award to provide training and resources to assist school food service staff to obtain the knowledge and skills necessary to prepare meals that meet nutrition recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPyramid. The proposed Illinois School Meals in Step Up to the Plate! Initiative has three components:

1. Statewide awareness campaign
2. Online training course
3. Webpage for food service staff focused on improving the nutritional quality of Illinois school meals.

For further information on Illinois Schools Step Up to the Plate! initiative, visit www.kidseatwell.org.

External Assurance

NCLB F08 Title I Comparability analysis

In FY 2008, districts will be using the electronic resource for the annual NCLB Title I Comparability analysis. The submittal deadline is November 30, 2007. The form can be submitted electronically and is available through the IWAS system. Instructions on completing and filing your comparability analysis are available on our web page and in the IWAS system. There are changes to the FY08 directions you will want to pay particular attention to. Direct your questions to Paul Williams, External Assurance at 217-782-7970 or e-mail at pwilliam@isbe.net.

NCLB FY08 Monitoring Instrument

In FY08 districts will also be required to complete a self-monitoring review for NCLB programs through the IWAS system. There will be links to the federal guidelines, rules and regulations that govern the grants. A crosswalk between the NCLB required policies/procedures and those provided by the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) on a subscription basis is provided online at: http://www.isbe.net/ea/htm/NCLB_monitoring_instrument.htm. A sample of a completed Monitoring Instrument is available online at: http://www.isbe.net/ea/htm/Sample%20Monitoring%20Instrument.htm.

The previous year's data will load for those of you who have completed this last year. You can then update only those portions that have changed. The submission deadline is November 30, 2007. Direct your questions to Paul Williams, External Assurance at 217-782-7970 or e-mail at pwilliam@isbe.net.

Professional Development

Presentation from Superintendents’ Conference now available online

Dr. Ronald Ferguson’s keynote presentation at the 30th Annual Superintendents’ Conference is now available online.

The presentation – entitled Understanding the Achievement Gap Challenge – Reasons for Cautious
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.

**Developing Excellence and Ethics Success in School, Work and Beyond**

The University of Illinois Extension will be presenting a two-day training November 8-9 in Springfield entitled *Smart and Good High Schools: Developing Excellence and Ethics for Success in School Work and Beyond.*

The presentation and training by Dr. Matthew Davidson, president and director of the Institute of Excellence & Ethics, will cover current research about practices of character development and social/emotional development. The training session is open to all secondary school faculty, administrators and community organizations who work with schools.

For more information, including fees and registration materials, visit [http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/character/](http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/character/) or contact Judith M. Taylor at 217-782-6515 or jmtaylor@uiuc.edu. The registration deadline is Monday, October 8.

**School Safety & Crisis Prevention Seminar**

The Illinois State Board of Education, the Archdiocese of Chicago Office of Catholic Schools, and Critical Incident Consulting invite you to heighten your safety awareness by attending a gathering of experts in the field of school safety and crisis prevention on November 8, 2007 in Mount Prospect.

At no cost, school and district personnel can learn how to enhance the safety and security of a school facility on a day-to-day basis and long term. This vital information will be practical and easy to apply, and there will be ample time for you to ask specific questions.

District administrators, school administrators and school resource officers are encouraged to attend. School safety subject matters and speakers for the event include:
- Derek E. Randel – Stopping School Violence LLC
- Paul Timm – RETA Security Inc.
- Ron Ellis – Retired Inspector Illinois State Police
- Ryan E. Moore – Special Agent Secret Service
- Judith Coughenour – Special Agent FBI
- Larry Drish – Cook County Sheriff’s Police Bomb Squad
- Martha Meegan – Director of Campus Safety and Security at Columbia College
- George Wick and Randy Braverman – Critical Incident Consulting

The event is from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Bristol Court Banquets & Catering, 828 E. Rand Road in Mount Prospect. A free continental breakfast and lunch will be served.

Reservations are required, which are due by October 20. For more information, or to reserve a seat, contact Randy Braverman, Critical Incident Consulting, at 224-578-0484 or via e-mail at rbman@wowway.com. Please provide the name of your school or police department, your name, your phone number, your email address, and the number of people attending.

**Student Opportunities**

**Illinois Arts Council invites Illinois High Schools to participate in 2008 Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest**

The Illinois Arts Council is encouraging all Illinois high schools to participate in the 2008 *Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest*, a free national program sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation. *Poetry Out Loud* encourages youth to learn about great poetry through memorization and performance, which help students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about literary heritage.

Starting at the classroom level in November, participating teachers will receive free multimedia curriculum materials – a poetry anthology, audio guide, teachers’ guide, posters, and comprehensive website, [www.poetryoutloud.org](http://www.poetryoutloud.org), all aligned to national standards – augmenting their regular poetry curriculum with poetry recitation and a classroom-level competition.
School-level recitation champions compete to advance to the state and then national levels. In 2007, *Poetry Out Loud* awarded more than $100,000 in prizes to students and schools at the state and national levels.

For more details and contact information, please see the press release announcing the event at [http://www.state.il.us/agency/iac/NEWS/08%20POL%20Announcement.htm](http://www.state.il.us/agency/iac/NEWS/08%20POL%20Announcement.htm).

**Third Annual Illinois Work Zone Safety Calendar Contest**

In an effort to reduce work zone-related crashes in Illinois, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Illinois State Board of Education, the American Traffic Safety Services Foundation (ATSSF) and the Illinois Chapter of the American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA) are sponsoring the 3rd Annual Illinois Work Zone Safety Calendar Contest for elementary students.

This year’s theme is “Keep Us Alive. Stay Alive. Drive 45.” Poster entries should reflect the student’s view of a work zone and what he or she may find in a work zone. The contest categories are K-1st Grade, 2nd-3rd Grade and 4th-6th Grade.

Each school must select the top four posters from each category (12 posters total) and submit them to IDOT by December 14, 2007.

For more information on the contest, please visit the contest website at [http://www.dot.il.gov/trafficsafety/WZS/WZScontest.html](http://www.dot.il.gov/trafficsafety/WZS/WZScontest.html) or contact Jessica Baker, IDOT’s contest coordinator 217-782-6518 or Jessica.baker@illinois.gov.

**Prudential Spirit of Community Awards**

Nominations for the annual Prudential Spirit of Community Awards are now being accepted through October 31, 2007.

The award recognizes young Illinois residents who have made meaningful contributions to their communities over the past 12 months. In the past 12 years, the honor has been given to nearly 2,800 middle and high school students in Illinois. It is open to students who are in grades 5 through 12.

The award is presented nationwide by Prudential Financial, Inc., in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

For more information, call 1-877-525-8491. Applications are available online at [www.prudential.com/spirit](http://www.prudential.com/spirit) or [www.principals.org/prudential](http://www.principals.org/prudential).

**Illinois Department of Public Health**

**FY 08 Heartsaver AED Grant Applications**

The Illinois Department of Public Health will release the FY 08 Heartsaver AED grant application on Friday, October 12. This is a matching grant program designed to provide funding assistance to certain organizations required by law to have an Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

The grant application and guidance has been posted on the IDPH website at [http://www.idph.state.il.us/ems/](http://www.idph.state.il.us/ems/). For more information, contact Brandy Lane, IDPH, at 217-558-0560 or brandy.lane@illinois.gov.

**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**