Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) named a new Illinois Teacher of the Year this weekend in Peoria. Linda Smerge, a second-grade teacher at Woodrow Wilson Elementary School in Cicero, was chosen from among nine finalists. She will spend calendar year 2009 as an education ambassador, speaking with you and other educators about her experiences. Linda also will represent Illinois in the National Teacher of the Year program and at NASA’s Space Camp® in Huntsville, Alabama.

Linda decided to leave a lucrative law practice after 13 years because she felt that something was missing. After what she refers to as a time of intensive self-reflection, she decided that she belonged in the classroom, joining the faculty at Wilson School in August 2001.

The foundation of her teaching is formed by the relationships with her students and parents, and the inability to accept failure. Linda helps her students in anyway she can, often convincing parents to allow their children to remain after school for additional help. She routinely uses data in making decisions about interventions for her students.

Her colleagues recognize her passion for teaching, noting that she goes out of her way to help not only the students, but also the staff and parents at Wilson.

Congratulations to Linda Smerge, our 2008 Teacher of the Year, and all of the teachers who were selected as finalists! You are an inspiration to your colleagues and a wonderful example of what our profession has to offer.

This week the State Board of Education is meeting in Springfield for its monthly meetings. Board members have received an analysis of the State Report Card, including the measures of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). As many of you would expect with increasing performance targets, the number of schools and districts failing to meet AYP increased again this year. Nearly 1,200 or 31 percent of schools failed to meet AYP, an increase of 7 percent. The number of districts failing to meet AYP also increased this year to 339, or 39 percent, from 28 percent last year.

There is good AYP news, however. Special congratulations to the 35 schools and 11 districts removed from academic watch status this year after making AYP two years in a row after hitting each of the higher performance targets. In addition, 101 schools and 23 districts in improvement status will not advance further because they made AYP this year. These are significant accomplishments for the staff and students in these districts and schools.

A full list of the 35 schools and 11 districts that were removed from improvement status can be found online at http://www.isbe.net/pdf/improvement_removed_2009.pdf.
A full list of the 101 schools and 23 districts in improvement status that will not advance to further sanctions because they made AYP this year can be accessed at [http://www.isbe.net/pdf/ayp_improvement_2008.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/pdf/ayp_improvement_2008.pdf).

Have a great week.

Chris

### Upcoming Dates & Deadlines

- **Annual Superintendents’ Conference** – October 23 – 24
- **SGSA Expenditure Plans due in IWAS** – October 30
- **Arts Education Week Poster Contest Entries** – October 31
- **School District Budgets** – October 31
- **Pupil Transportation Reimbursement Correction Period ends** – November 7
- **Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet Section 17-1.5** – November 14
- **Health and Immunization Data due in IWAS** – November 15
- **Part 130, Part 235, Part 245 and Part 525: Public comment ends** – November 17
- **School District Library grant applications** – November 26
- **NCLB Monitoring Instrument & NCLB Title I Comparability submissions** – November 30
- **Looking for Your Lincoln Hero submissions** – December 1
- **Waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly during Spring 2009 session** – January 9

### Legal

#### Retired Teachers Update

Public Act 95-0910, effective **August 28, 2008**, extends the sunset date of the current “subject shortage provision” which allows retired teachers to return to certain TRS employers in limited situations. The sunset date has been extended to **June 30, 2013**. Generally speaking, TRS annuitants may be employed in a TRS-covered position for a limited number of days/hours the school year following the year in which they last contributed to TRS.

Currently this limitation is 120 paid days or 600 paid hours and will revert to 100 paid days or 500 paid hours on **July 1, 2011** (unless extended by legislation). A TRS annuitant can return to work in a “subject shortage area” in limited circumstances which are fully described in the TRS Employer Guide, Chapter 10: [http://trs.illinois.gov/subsections/employers/pubs/employerguide/10PostRet.pdf](http://trs.illinois.gov/subsections/employers/pubs/employerguide/10PostRet.pdf)

For questions, TRS Employer Services can be contacted by e-mail at employer@trs.illinois.gov or call 888-877-0890.

#### Report Cards and Transcripts for Students with Disabilities

The Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education issued the attached guidance in order to provide state education agencies and local education agencies with information regarding disclosure of a disability on report cards and transcripts for students attending public elementary and secondary schools. The purpose of this guidance is to clarify how federal laws apply to statements on report cards and transcripts when these statements identify students with disabilities. We encourage you to share with your staff the information in this letter.

Select [this link](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/req6504.html) for the Dear Colleague Letter on Report Cards and Transcripts for Students with Disabilities.

### E-Bulletins

#### New NCLB Guidance Resource

The State Board of Education is adding a new section to the *Weekly Message* – E-Bulletins. These bulletins will be posted on the ISBE website and will contain guidance and technical assistance for districts to meet the
requirements of NCLB. They will address issues of concern for superintendents, Title I directors and other educators and professionals working with schools in Illinois.

When a new or updated E-Bulletin is posted, it will be announced in this section. Bulletins will be updated as needed and should be referenced when questions of NCLB compliance are raised. If you have a suggestion for an E-Bulletin topic, please e-mail it to NCLB@isbe.net.

To access E-Bulletins, go to http://www.isbe.net/e-bulletins/default.htm.

Funding & Disbursements

Revised Census Data Affects FY 10 Title I Low Income

Recently, the U.S. Department of Education notified the State Board of Education that they have revised Title I allocations nationwide. The total change for Illinois is an additional $169,748 in the total grant award. Poverty counts, which are used to determine annual Title I district allocations, did not change.

One of the options provided as guidance for allocation of the additional funds was to make the upward adjustments in the FY10 allocations. Accordingly, since districts have already started approved Title I programs at the time of notification, ISBE has decided not to make the change to current year FY09 funds, but to address the changes in the next FY10 year.

Many districts will not be affected by this small increase and for those that do experience an increase, additional allocations will be released with the projections for FY10. No district will experience a decrease in allocation, or a change in eligibility due to this adjustment. Again, there will be no change to the current year FY09 Title I grant.

For questions about the Title I allocation process or these revisions, contact Sally Cray in the Division of Funding and Disbursement Services by e-mail at scray@isbe.net or 217-782-5256.

The Division of Educator Certification oversees compliance with Illinois laws, rules, and regulations related to the issuance of educator credentials. Specific functions of the division include processing and issuing teacher certificates and endorsements, school service personnel and school administrator certificates, and paraprofessional letters of approval; providing training and support for educator certification to regional offices of education and universities and colleges; coordinating candidate testing for state certification; and administering the “Grow Your Own Teachers” initiative.

For more information on Educator Certification, go to: http://www.isbe.net/certification/default.htm or call 217-557-6763. For questions related to recertification, please contact the Educator and School Development Division at 217-782-2948.

Data Analysis & Progress Reporting

Health and Immunization Data Collection

The 2008-2009 Student Health Data - Immunization data collection system opened in IWAS starting Thursday, October 16. The deadline for submitting these data is Saturday, November 15.

URLs for important related documents are provided below.

- Immunization and Compliance with State Law: http://www.isbe.net/research/pdfs/immunization_requirements.pdf
- Data Entry Worksheet: http://www.isbe.net/research/xls/immunization_worksheet.xls
- How to Calculate Actual Unduplicated Count: http://www.isbe.net/research/pdfs/UnduplicatedCount.pdf

Please share this information with your school nurse or health technician and those responsible for submitting the Health/Immunization data to the State Board of Education. Questions may be addressed to Mr. Shafiqu
Azam in the ISBE Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division at 217-782-3950 or mazam@isbe.net.

Eye Examination Data Collection

The 2008-2009 Student Health Data — Vision data collection system opened in IWAS starting Thursday, October 16. The deadline for submitting these data is June 30, 2009.

URLs for two important related documents are provided below.

- Data Entry Worksheet: http://www.isbe.net/research/xls/eye_exam_wksht.xls

Please share this information with your school nurse or health technician and those responsible for submitting the Eye Examination data to the State Board of Education. Questions may be addressed to Mr. Shafiqul Azam in the ISBE Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division at 217-782-3950 or mazam@isbe.net.

External Assurance

NCLB Monitoring Instrument

The FY09 NCLB Monitoring Instrument is now available for completion and submission in the IWAS system. The due date is Sunday, November 30th.

All districts receiving NCLB funding are required to submit the document every year. This year a few additional questions have been added to ensure compliance with federal regulations. As before, the previous year’s information will be imported to the document and the district should ensure its accuracy before submitting.

An additional annual requirement is the NCLB Title I Comparability documentation. It is also due by Sunday, November 30th. All districts receiving Title I funds must complete the document. “Exempt” districts must at least fill out and submit the Information page and Section I. Failure to comply may result in program funds being frozen.

If you have questions concerning the Title I Comparability or the Monitoring Instrument, please contact Paul Williams, External Assurance, 217/782-7970 or pwilliam@isbe.net.

Curriculum & Instruction

Art & Foreign Language Grants

Through a joint initiative, the State Board of Education and the Illinois Arts Council are providing grants to public school districts and other eligible applicants to support arts and foreign language programs in Illinois schools.

Two separate Requests for Proposal (RFP) have been released. The Arts and Foreign Language Planning Assistance Grant provides financial support for districts during their planning phase. A separate Arts and Foreign Language Implementation Assistance Grant is available to support school efforts to implement new programs. Both RFPs are available under the “What’s New” section of the Curriculum & Instruction webpage located at http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/Default.htm.

School districts interested in applying for either grant should submit a letter of intent to ISBE by Thursday, November 6. Grant proposals are due on Monday, November 24.

Questions regarding the grants may be e-mailed to Ann Nonneman at anonnema@isbe.net.

Nutrition

Nutrition Grants Available

Is a garden in your school’s future? If so, apply for the Youth Gardening Grant, which is due Saturday, November 1. Visit www.kidsgardening.com/ygg.asp for an application.

Encouraging veggie consumption in an elementary school? Let a Love Your Veggies grant assist you. Visit http://loveyourveggiesgrants.org/_apply.php for an application, which is due by Friday, November 7.

Do you serve breakfast at school in a nontraditional way? If so, the Midwest Dairy Council and St. Louis District Dairy Council invite schools K through 12 to apply for the 2008 Expanding Breakfast Award at www.midwestdairycouncil.com or www.stldairycouncil.org/home.asp by Friday, November 14.
Commodity Training Available

Three half-day training sessions are scheduled for those of you who would like better management of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) commodities. These trainings will focus on the Illinois Commodity System, placing the annual commodity order, diversions to processors, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, and monthly processes.

Training Dates and Locations

Nov. 21—Fairview Heights, Four Points by Sheraton
Dec. 1—Springfield, Illinois Education Association
Dec. 16—Rolling Meadows, Holiday Inn

Registration for all trainings begins at noon with training from 12:30 to 4 p.m. Register for this free training at: http://webprod1.isbe.net/cnscalendar/asp/EventList.asp.

Reprocessed Commodity Taste Test

The annual reprocessed commodity taste test is scheduled for Wednesday, November 5, in Bloomington at the Interstate Center. If you have never diverted commodities to a processor or if you divert every year, we encourage you to attend this event to learn about options available when processing commodities.

The taste test will allow you to try the different commodities that will be available for the 2010 school year. There is no cost and you need not divert commodities to attend. A brief presentation will explain the commodity reprocessing before the taste tests begin.

The Illinois School Nutrition Association (ISNA) is sponsoring the event. For more information or to register, go to the ISNA’s website at http://www.ilsna.net/.

Lincoln Bicentennial

Signed, Sealed, Delivered

The Illinois Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission has launched a statewide envelope design contest with categories for kindergartners through adults. Winning designs will be featured on special limited-edition envelopes to be sold before and during February 2009.

The State Board of Education is a coordinating partner with the Commission by serving to enlist schools and students to participate in the envelope design contest. Contestants are not limited to students in Illinois schools, but anyone and everyone interested in participating in the Bicentennial art contest. Winners will be recognized in Springfield on February 12, 2009.

The U.S. Postal Service will offer a special Bicentennial cancellation on Lincoln’s 200th Birthday, February 12, 2009, at the Old State Capitol Historic Site in Springfield. Those who purchase the Bicentennial envelopes will have the opportunity to cancel them that day for a truly one-of-a-kind collectible. Funds raised from the sale of the envelopes will benefit the Tinsley Project, the effort to turn the Lincoln-Herndon Law Offices building in downtown Springfield into a living history site, complete with Post Office identical to the one that operated in the building from 1841-1849. Next February, the U.S. Postal Service will also issue a block of four stamps to commemorate Lincoln’s 200th Birthday.

The top 200 envelope designs submitted will be used to create an exhibit entitled "Lincoln: As We Know Him" in the Old State Capitol during February and July 2009.

Those interested in submitting artwork for consideration should follow the rules and requirements below:

1. The categories for design entries include students in grades K – 7 and grades 8 – high school; college students and adult amateur artists; and adult professional artists. Please designate the category you are entering.

2. If the entrant is under age 18, the artist release must be submitted by parent, legal guardian or teacher.

3. Entrants must submit artwork that is proportionate to fit on a standard number 10 envelope with enough space left for address and postage.

4. The contest is open to Illinois residents only.

5. Entrants must submit the original, color artwork as a 300dpi or larger jpeg file to lpa.bicentennial@illinois.gov.

6. Entrants will be judged on their representation and interpretation of an image of Abraham Lincoln.

7. Entrants must supply the following information upon submission of artwork: Name, Address, Telephone Number, and E-mail Address.

8. Entries must be received on or before Saturday, November 1.
International Education Week
Fostering Global Responsibility & Leadership

The ninth annual International Education Week is Monday, November 17, through Friday, November 21. This year’s theme recognizes that all nations must work together to develop future leaders who have an open-minded, comprehensive world view.

The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of State sponsor the initiative to highlight the importance of international education and exchange.

We encourage you to promote international education during this week and throughout the school year. For activities to commemorate this week, go to: http://iew.state.gov.

Awards & Grants
Use Donors Choose.org for Free Classroom Materials

DonorsChoose.org is a simple way to provide students in need with resources that our public schools often lack. Teachers can submit project proposals for materials or experiences their students need to learn at this not-for-profit web site. These ideas become classroom reality when concerned individuals, whom we call Citizen Philanthropists, choose projects to fund.

Proposals can range from "Magical Math Centers" to "Big Book Bonanza," to "Cooking Across the Curriculum." Any individual can search such proposals by area of interest, learn about classroom needs, and choose to fund the project(s) they find most interesting.

To take advantage of this grant opportunity, go to www.DonorsChoose.org and submit a project. DonorsChoose.org can be used by any public school teacher to help secure free materials for the classroom to help students learn.

National Excellence in Urban Education Award

The National Center for Urban School Transformation (NCUST) is accepting applications for the Excellence in Urban Education Award. The award recognizes the dedication and talent of urban school educators and students. Districts are encouraged to nominate schools for this award.

Ten schools will receive the 2009 Excellence in Urban Education Award. Winners will be announced at the NCUST Symposium in San Diego on May 7-8, 2009. They will receive travel costs and a check for $1,000 along with other prizes.

The application deadline is Friday, November 14. For eligibility criteria and application information go to http://www.ncust.org, e-mail ncust@mail.sdsu.edu or call 619-594-7905.

IVPA Youth-Led Mini Grants

The Illinois Violence Prevention Authority (IVPA) and its Youth Advisory Board (YAB) are pleased to announce the release of the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the FY 09 Youth-Led Violence Prevention Mini Grant. The RFP is available on IVPA’s website, www.ivpa.org. Community organizations and government agencies are eligible to apply for 12-month grants (1/1/09-12/31/09) for up to $5,000 to implement youth-led violence prevention projects.

The Youth Led Mini Grants will allow youth and community agencies to develop or enhance youth violence prevention programming. The purpose of this grant is to support youth efforts in identifying resources and community issues, and designing and implementing projects that address and prevent youth violence. Additionally, the grant encourages youth leadership, empowerment and peer recognition.

In partnership with the Illinois Center for Violence Prevention (ICVP), IVPA and YAB members will be hosting Bidders Conferences throughout the state. The Bidders Conferences are geared toward youth, and we strongly encourage youth attendance at the workshop in your area. Participants will be provided with an overview of the RFP and budget requirements in addition to a mini-training on positive youth development and violence prevention.

Please refer to the IVPA website at www.ivpa.org for the Bidders Conference schedule or to download the RFP.

For questions about IVPA or the RFP, contact Sara Moffitt at 312-814-8261 or sara.moffitt@illinois.gov.
For questions about ICVP or YAB, contact Brooke Tafoya at 312-986-9200 or btafoya@icvp.org.

**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: