Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Last week I had the opportunity to visit Mt. Sterling where I grew up. It was good to see relatives and friends and to catch up with old acquaintances. I have been back a number of times, but this was the first time since I’ve graduated that I have actually toured the schools. I want to thank Superintendent Merle Kenady and his staff for hosting me.

When I visit Illinois schools, I continue to be impressed by the interest and cooperation that schools receive from their communities. Whether it was Brown County high school, or its middle or grade schools, or even St. Mary’s Academy (where I attended elementary school), people were genuinely interested in what was happening and how they could help. Public and private schools work together, acknowledging that eventually students at St. Mary’s will be a part of the local public schools. I also increasingly hear about how high schools are working more closely with elementary and middle feeder schools to better address student needs, which I believe is a very important relationship.

One of the most important ingredients for success in our schools is the involvement of the community. Whether it is working together to pass a referendum, assisting with after-school programs and providing kids with positive activities like the Mundelein After-School Coalition, or working with the community to bring music back into the schools as happened in Beecher City, engaging our partners within our communities is an essential building block for student success. Mundelein and Beecher City were just recently recognized as 2008 Governor’s Home Town Award winners, in part due to these wonderful school-community partnerships.

Tomorrow, we’ll go to the polls and the long campaign season will finally come to a close. It’s important that we vote tomorrow, not just to exercise our rights, but also as an example to our students so that they will want to be a part of the process of self-governance.

Many of our schools will serve as polling places; some will close for the day while others remain open. If your school will be open while polling is occurring, then please take a few minutes to go over safety procedures. While it is certainly the responsibility of the schools to serve this important function, we also must make appropriate plans when we allow the general public into our buildings.

Finally, the U.S. Dept. of Education last week released the new regulations for Title I. We will be doing additional research about the impact these regulations will have on future policy decisions. One immediate concern I have is the apparent additional data and reporting requirements that will be placed on the agency and, in turn, Illinois school districts. We will be monitoring the impact of these regulations very closely.

Have a great week and don’t forget to vote!

Chris

Upcoming Dates & Deadlines

- 2008 Special Education Summer School State Aid Claim – November 3
- 2008 Special Education Summer Orphanage Claim – November 3
- 2007-08 Regular/Vocational/Special Education Transportation Claim Corrections – November 7
- 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
- Part 260 (Reading Improvement Block Grant): Public comment ends – December 22
- Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Worksheet submission – December 31
- Waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly during Spring 2009 session – January 9

Funding & Disbursements

**FY 09 Fast Growth Grant Calculations**

Calculations for districts eligible for the FY 09 Fast Growth Grant have been determined as provided in Section 18-8.10 of the School Code. A total of $7.5 million in fast growth grants will be distributed to 36 districts around the state for the 2008-09 school year.

Grants are directed toward helping districts meet their needs of quickly growing student populations. School districts are eligible if during the two most recent school years their average daily attendance has increased by greater than 1.5 percent for districts with more than 10,000 students or greater than 7.5 percent for districts with an average daily attendance under 10,000. The grants can be used to pay for salaries, books, supplies and classroom materials.


**FY 09 School Safety and Educational Improvement Block Grant**

Calculations for the FY 09 School Safety and Educational Improvement Block Grant, provided in Section 2-3.51.5 of the School Code, have been determined and can be accessed at http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/ADABlockGrantFY09.pdf. This year, the amount per ADA calculated to $36.01.

Funds are to be used to improve the level of education and safety of students from kindergarten through grade 12 in school districts and state-recognized, non-public schools. Funds are not intended to be used to supplement teacher salaries or salary increases.

School districts must utilize funding for school safety, textbooks and software, teacher training and curriculum development, school improvements, remediation programs under subsection (a) of Section 2-3.64, school report cards under Section 10-17a, and criminal history records checks under Sections 10-21.9 and 34-18.5. Expenditures should be linked to the School Improvement Plan.

State-recognized, non-public schools must utilize funding for secular textbooks and software, criminal history records checks, and health and safety mandates to the extent that the funds are expended for purely...
secular purposes. Costs for Automated External Defibrillators (AEDS) have been determined as an approvable health and safety expenditure.

**FY 09 General State Aid Hold Harmless**

General State Aid has been finalized using a $5,959 foundation level for FY 09. Districts receiving less gross General State Aid under the formula than they received in the 1997-98 school year qualify for a Hold Harmless amount. This year, 86 districts qualified for Hold Harmless funding. However, due to insufficient FY 09 appropriation, qualifying districts will only receive 98.7% of the amount calculated.

**Final Rule on School Bus Seat Belts**

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Mary E. Peters announced on **Wednesday, October 15**, a new federal rule on school bus seat belts. The full text of Secretary Peter’s announcement can be found at [http://www.dot.gov/affairs/dot15208.htm](http://www.dot.gov/affairs/dot15208.htm). The full text of the final rule can be found at [http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/E8-24755.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/E8-24755.pdf)

In summary, the final rule from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Department of Transportation (DOT) upgrades the school bus passenger crash protection requirements of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 222. This final rule requires new school buses of 10,000 pounds or less gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) (“small school buses”) to have lap/shoulder belts in lieu of the lap belts currently required. This final rule also sets performance standards for seat belts voluntarily installed on school buses with a GVWR greater than 10,000 pounds (“large school buses”).

In regard to requiring seat belts on large school buses, it is important to note that the final rule states, “This cannot and does not definitively conclude the debate as to whether a state or local jurisdiction should require seat belts on its large school buses.” Further, “After considering all available information, including the comments to the notice of proposed rulemaking, we cannot conclude that a requirement for seat belts on large school buses will protect against an unreasonable risk of accidents or an unreasonable risk of death or injury in an accident. That is, based on available information, a science-based, data-driven determination that there should be a federal requirement for the belts cannot be supported at this time. Whether the same conclusion can be made by a state or local jurisdiction is a matter for local decision-makers and we encourage them to make the decisions most appropriate for their individual needs to most safely transport their students to and from school.”

Other changes to school bus safety requirements include raising the height of seat backs from 20 to 24 inches on all new school buses and requiring a self-latching mechanism on seat bottom cushions that are designed to flip up or be removable without tools. Currently, Illinois already meets the seat back requirement as all large school buses (i.e. GVWR greater than 10,000 pounds) in the state manufactured after **June 30, 1987**, must have 28 inch seat backs.

The effective date of this final rule is **April 20, 2009**. The requirement for lap/shoulder belts on small school buses applies to small school buses manufactured on or after **October 21, 2011**. Likewise, the requirement that voluntarily-installed seat belts in large school buses must meet the performance and other requirements specified by this final rule applies to large school buses manufactured on or after **October 21, 2011**. The requirement for the 24-inch seat backs and the self-latching seat bottom cushions apply to school buses manufactured on or after **October 21, 2009**.

**Special Education**

**Maintenance of Effort Worksheets**

School districts and special education cooperatives that receive IDEA Part B Flow Through funds must meet Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirements in accordance with federal regulations.

ISBE sent an e-mail message recently to all Special Education Directors to inform them that it is necessary for ISBE to collect district and cooperative MOE Worksheets again this year. A plan is being developed to gather the MOE information electronically from expenditure data received annually from school districts. However, that process has not yet been finalized and it will be necessary this year for districts and cooperatives to complete the worksheet and submit a paper copy to ISBE.

Note that figures from the school district’s FY07 Annual Financial Report will be used to complete the worksheet. **A signed copy of the MOE Worksheet must be submitted to ISBE no later than Wednesday, December 31.**

Should you have any questions about this issue, please contact Bonnie Douglas at bdouglas@isbe.net or Penny Kelly at gkelly@isbe.net or by phone at 217-782-5589.

**School Business Services**

**Integrated Pest Management Reminder**

The Illinois Structural Pest Control Act requires all public schools to notify the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) every five years on the status of their integrated pest management program. On **September 1**, IDPH mailed the Integrated Pest Management Form to all public school districts in Illinois for return by **Wednesday, December 31**.

If you have not done so already, please return the form, which can be found and submitted online at: [http://www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/structuralpest.htm](http://www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/structuralpest.htm)

For questions on integrated pest management in public schools or about submitting the form, contact Derrick Pehlman at 217-782-5830 or dph.ipm@illinois.gov.

**Rules & Waivers**

**Invitation to Comment on Rules**

One set of proposed amendments recently reviewed by the State Board of Education is currently available for public comment. This item has been posted on the agency’s website at [www.isbe.net/rules](http://www.isbe.net/rules); choose “Proposed Rules and Amendments.” Please submit any comments or suggestions you may have to rules@isbe.net.

**Part 260 (Reading Improvement Block Grant Program)**

Section 2-3.51 of the School Code establishes the Reading Improvement Block Grant (RIBG) Program, a formula-based grant that is provided to school districts with schools serving kindergarten through grade 6 and is designed to help improve reading achievement and instruction. Under the law, the State Board is authorized to reserve up to 2 percent of the money allocated for the RIBG program for “teacher training and re-training in the teaching of reading.” Part 260 currently sets forth only the requirements for the formula-based programs.

Proposed Subpart B will identify the applicants eligible to apply for professional development grants under the Reading Improvement Block Grant 2 percent set-aside. The proposed amendments establish the procedures and requirements for both initial and continuation applications, and provide the criteria for review and awarding of grants. The proposed amendments contemplate two pools of applicants: school districts, charter schools and approved public university laboratory schools, which would apply on behalf of their teachers who would participate in the professional development activities, and these applicants and other entities, which would apply to establish the training programs. Additionally, the proposed amendments allow sufficient flexibility for the State Superintendent to identify in each RFP the training approaches that would best meet the needs of school staff or support statewide priorities for improvement of teaching and learning.

**Deadline for Public Comment: Monday, December 22**

**Notice of Completed Rulemaking**

Please also be advised that a rulemaking recently adopted by the State Board is now in effect. These rules have been posted on the agency’s website at [www.isbe.net/rules](http://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 305 (School Foods)**

Requires that participating schools publicize the availability of free meals under the Illinois Free Lunch and Breakfast Program; makes other nonsubstantive technical changes.

**Affected Sections:** 305.5, 305.10, 305.15

**Effective Date:** October 23, 2008
**Curriculum & Instruction**

**Schoolyard Habitat Action Grant**

The *Schoolyard Habitat Action Grant* program sponsored by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources is a competitive grant that funds up to $600 per educator. Teachers and youth group leaders are eligible to apply.

Applications and complete instructions are available at [http://dnr.state.il.us/lands/education/CLASSRM/grants.htm](http://dnr.state.il.us/lands/education/CLASSRM/grants.htm). Application deadline is **Sunday, November 30**.

**Invasive Plant Posters Available**

New Illinois Invasive Plant publications are available from the University of Illinois and the Illinois Natural History Survey. Five posters highlight the four major habitats of Illinois (grassland, woodland, wetland, and agriculture) and the top four invasive plants in those habitats.

For copies of these free publications, contact **Dawn Refsell** at drefsell@illinois.edu and include your name, shipping address and quantity and titles you are requesting.

**OutdoorIllinois Magazine Offer**

Discover Illinois’ great natural resources through the Department of Natural Resources’ monthly magazine *OutdoorIllinois*. This 12-issue magazine is a great tool for learning about Illinois’ natural, cultural and recreational resources. The magazine is $15 per year or $10 if you submit your order on school letterhead.

Visit [www.dnr.state.il.us/OI or call 1-800-720-3249](http://www.dnr.state.il.us/OI) to subscribe.

**Natural Illinois Tip Sheets**


Designed for the early learning educator and parents of early learning students, the one page informational sheets offer suggestions and resources. The first in the series is “Insects” followed by “Trees” and “Leaves.” More topics will be developed in the future and are produced in both English and Spanish.

**Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest**

The 2009 Federal Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest rules, information and entry form are now available at [http://www.fws.gov/juniorduck/ArtContest.htm](http://www.fws.gov/juniorduck/ArtContest.htm).

The contest is a program for students in grades K-12 that uses fine arts to teach about waterfowl, wetlands and wildlife conservation. Completed artwork must be submitted by **March 15, 2009**.

Illinois co-sponsors with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and IDNR. For questions, e-mail dnr.teachkids@illinois.gov or call 217-524-4126.

**Education & Technology Conference**

The Illinois Technology Conference is scheduled for **Thursday, November 20**, and **Friday, November 21**, in Springfield at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

Two sessions will be of particular interest to administrators:

Ron Egolf’s Roundtable: Managing the Technology Storm. As technology pervades Illinois schools, more and more demands and responsibilities are placed on school technical staff, requiring change, specialization and extensive training. This roundtable discussion will focus on what has already worked to develop personnel and capacity to handle whatever is thrown at your department.

Mark Drone’s Tech-Geeks Top 10 List of Current Issues, “We’re Always Thinking So You Don’t Have To.” The Tech-Geeks ListServ is an invaluable tool used daily by Illinois technical directors, coordinators and staff to solve technical problems and issues. If you need to find a solution to a puzzling technical problem, just post it on the Tech-Geeks listserv.”

For more conference information, go to [http://www.il-edtech.org/](http://www.il-edtech.org/)

**Picturing America Application Deadline Extended to November 14**

The National Endowment for the Humanities has extended the deadline to apply for “Picturing America” through **Friday, November 14**. The extension will allow additional schools, libraries and school and library districts to apply for this free resource that
offers educators a way to teach American history and other subjects through great American art.

“Picturing America” includes 40 laminated large, high-quality reproductions of significant American art and a comprehensive teachers’ resource book with lesson ideas to use with the images in K-12 grade levels and subject areas.

Schools and libraries may apply for the program in a simple, online application process at: [http://picturingamerica.neh.gov/about.php?subPage=about_apply](http://picturingamerica.neh.gov/about.php?subPage=about_apply).

School and library districts may also apply for every institution in their jurisdiction with a single application.

**Blue Apple Health Education Awards**

The American Association for Health Education (AAHE) and HealthTeacher are announcing a partnership to bestow students in grades K-12 with the Blue Apple Health Education Awards. The new health education award will recognize up to 12 U.S. schools for their commitment and creativity in teaching students about the power of practicing a healthy lifestyle.

Schools receiving the Blue Apple Health Education Award will be honored during AAHE’s national convention in Tampa, Florida, in April 2009. Award recipients will receive:

- Recognition award and flag denoting their school as a Blue Apple recipient.
- AAHPERD/AAHE convention registration and travel stipend.
- Inclusion in national and local public relations campaign highlighting Blue Apple recipients.
- Free one-year subscription to HealthTeacher, a comprehensive online health education curriculum.

Applications for the Blue Apple Awards will be available beginning this month and must be received by Friday, December 12.

For an application and more information about Blue Apple Awards go to [www.blueappleaward.org](http://www.blueappleaward.org).

**English Language Learning**

**WIDA Webinars Coming**

Testing coordinators and program directors are invited to participate in one of the upcoming online WIDA webinars focusing on training resources for the annual ACCESS for ELLs® Kindergarten assessment. Although these webinars are NOT sufficient training to be certified to administer the Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs®, they will provide information and resources (“train the trainer” model) for attendees to disseminate to educators in their district and/or school.

The webinars will include a live question and answer session. Because “virtual seats” for these webinar broadcasts are limited to 75 attendees per session, groups of educators serving ELLs are encouraged to gather in one location that has the capability of projecting streaming audio and video.

**Reminder**: Whether a kindergarten teacher elects to participate in one of these webinars or views an archived webinar, all kindergarten test administrators MUST be retrained on the new test format via the online test administration training course on the WIDA website. Test administrators MUST pass the Kindergarten component quizzes before administering the Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs®.

**WIDA Webinars are scheduled for:**

- **Tuesday, Nov. 11**, 8 – 9 a.m.
- **Friday, Nov. 14**, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m.
- **Wednesday, Nov. 19**, 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Registration information will be posted by **Tuesday, November 4**, on the WIDA website at: [http://www.wida.us](http://www.wida.us)

If you are unable to participate in any of these live webinars, they will be archived and available for up to one year for review.

WIDA will post a link on its website to the archived presentations within a week after the live presentations.

For more information, contact the WIDA Help Desk at help@wida.us or call 1-866-276-7735. Educators may also contact Bill Garcia at wgarcia@isbe.net, call 312-814-3850 or go to [http://www.isbe.net/bilingual](http://www.isbe.net/bilingual).

**Supplement Not Supplant Provision**

The U.S. Department of Education recently issued new guidance on the “Supplement Not Supplant” provision
of Title III. Please review the detailed guidance before you prepare your FY09 Title III LIPLEPS and/or IEP revised initial budget(s).

In particular, note that based on this guidance:

- Title III funds may not be used to pay for the cost of administering the annual ACCESS for ELLs™ or the cost of administration of the W-APT or MODEL screening instruments. As a result, Title III LIPLEPS and IEP budgets may not include pay for substitute teachers or additional testers to facilitate test or screener administration or purchase of materials or equipment related to the administration of ACCESS for ELLs™ or the W-APT or MODEL.

- Title III funds may not be used to fund the core language instruction programs for LEP students required under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

For detailed guidance see the “Supplement Not Supplant” provision of Title III and/or contact your assigned consultant at 312-814-3850.

**ACCESS for ELLs™ Update**

**Ordering Test Materials & ID Labels**
Local districts must order test materials and ID labels for ACCESS for ELLs™, the annual state English language proficiency assessment, from MetriTech by calling 800-747-4868 by Friday, November 14.

The ACCESS for ELLs™ test will be administered from January 12 through February 20, 2009. Additional details, including information on the Friday, October 31, which was the deadline to apply for a testing window waiver, are available at http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/access.htm.

For questions regarding the ordering of ACCESS for ELLs™ test materials, contact the Student Assessment Division at 217-782-4823.

**Kindergarten Administrator Recertification**
The 2009 Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs™ test will be using a new format. Therefore, all kindergarten test administrators are required to be recertified prior to administering the 2009 test by completing an on-line WIDA training. All kindergarten recertification testing must have taken place after September 30, 2008, for a teacher to be considered certified to administer the Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs™. Any kindergarten on-line certification completed prior to September 30, 2008, will not be valid.

In order to facilitate this process, WIDA is planning a series of kindergarten assessment web-based trainings in November and December 2008 that will incorporate live Q&A sessions. The WIDA Webinar information is included in this Weekly Message in “WIDA Webinars Coming.”

**Pre-K Kindergarten Screening**
Please note that schools will continue to use the current kindergarten W-APT screener during the 2008-2009 school year. MODEL, the newly updated kindergarten screener, will not be used in Illinois until the 2009-2010 school year. However, districts may begin using MODEL in spring 2009 to determine FY10 program eligibility for students newly entering Pre-K/Kindergarten.

**ACCESS for ELLs™ General Training**
Additional face-to-face ACCESS for ELLs™ training workshops will be offered for teachers and administrators on Wednesday, December 3, and Thursday, December 4. These workshops will focus on test organization, background/structure of test components, understanding, and accurately scoring the speaking test component. These professional development workshops are supplemental and do not replace any on-line certification training.

December 3, 2008
Elgin Community College
Seigle Auditorium
1700 Spartan Drive
Elgin, Illinois 60123
847-931-3925

December 4, 2008
Heartland Community College
1500 W. Raab Road
Normal, Illinois 61761
309-268-8000

For further information on the ACCESS for ELLs™ workshops, contact Bill Garcia at 312-814-3850 or go to http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/access.htm.
E-Bulletins

Parental Involvement & Notification Requirements Posted

Two new E-Bulletins have been posted on the ISBE website. These bulletins cover “parent involvement policies” and “parent involvement notification requirements” under NCLB.

E-Bulletins contain guidance and technical assistance for districts to meet the requirements of NCLB. If you have a suggestion for an E-Bulletin topic, please e-mail it to NCLB@isbe.net.

To access E-Bulletins, go to ISBE’s website at: http://www.isbe.net/e-bulletins/default.htm.

Legal

Notice of Final Interpretations

On Friday, October 17, the U.S. Department of Education published a Notice of Final Interpretations pertaining to state implementation of several assessment and accountability provisions of Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.


For further information, please contact Richard Smith at 202-401-1402.

Nutrition

Nutrition Grants Available

Are you encouraging veggie consumption in an elementary school? Let a Love Your Veggies grant assist you. For an application, which is due by Friday, November 7, visit http://www.lovemyveggiesgrants.org/apply.php.


Lincoln Bicentennial

Looking for Your Lincoln Hero Contest

Those interested in writing about a Lincoln-like hero they admire are encouraged to enter the Looking for Your Lincoln Hero contest. Participants should tell why this person inspires them in an online essay or they can also create a piece of artwork to illustrate how their hero is like Lincoln.

Essay and artwork categories include elementary, middle or high school students, college and graduate students and adults and professionals.

The entry deadline is Monday, December 1. For complete details on the contest, go to www.MyHero.com and click on “Looking for the Lincoln of Today.”

The contest is sponsored by Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition and the My Hero Project.

Student Opportunities

Christopher Columbus Awards

The Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation is calling for entries for its 2008-2009 awards program. Now in its 13th year, the awards program challenges students in grades 6 – 8 to explore opportunities for positive change in their communities.

For information on the entry process, go to www.christophercolumbusawards.com. The entry deadline is February 9, 2009.

John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Essay Contest

The John F. Kennedy Library Foundation has announced that the national Profile in Courage Essay
Contest is accepting entries from U.S. high school students through Saturday, January 10, 2009.

The annual essay contest, a companion program of the Profile in Courage Award, invites students from across the nation to write an essay describing the political courage of a U.S. elected official.

The winner of this competitive award receives a $5,000 cash prize. The student’s nominating teacher receives a $500 public service grant to be used for school projects involving student leadership and civic engagement. A second place winner receives $1,000 and up to five finalists each receive $500. The essay contest winner and nominating teacher will also receive an expense paid round-trip to Boston, where they will be honored by Caroline Kennedy and U.S. Senator Edward M. Kennedy at the annual John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award ceremony in May 2009.

More detailed information about the essay contact is available at the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation website www.jfklibrary.org.

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**Awards & Grants**

**Panasonic National School Change Awards**

The Panasonic National School Change Award invites nominations of schools for this annual award. In the past nine years, 665 schools have been nominated from 44 states.

Six schools will be chosen as winners in July 2009, and will receive a $5,000 check. In addition, successful school principals will be the guest of the National Principals Leadership Institute.

While schools can nominate themselves, the application is stronger if it comes from an individual or organization outside the school.

For complete information on the application process, go to www.npli.org/nsca. The deadline to submit materials is March 4, 2009.

**THINKFINITY Offers Free Internet Resources**

Thinkfinity is the cornerstone of the Verizon Foundation’s Literacy, Education and Technology Initiatives. It is a free internet resource. There is no need to register or log on and never any fees to pay. This program is built upon the merger of two highly acclaimed programs – Marco Polo and the Thinkfinity Literacy Network.

Thinkfinity is designed to improve learning in traditional settings and beyond the classroom by providing high-caliber content with over 55,000 lesson plans, learning activities, worksheets and rubrics and the professional development needed to use the resources to improve student achievement anytime, anywhere, at no cost. To find out more about this resource go to www.thinkfinity.org.

Free in-service workshops on how to bring these Internet resources into the classroom are available to local schools, pre-service teachers and community service organizations. We are also looking for dedicated educators to become field trainers. These field trainers will train other teachers in the use of this new resource.

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**Professional Development**

**Raising Student Achievement Conference**

The annual Raising Student Achievement Conference presented by the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools and Intermediate Service Centers will be held on Monday, December 8, and Tuesday, December 9, at Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, Illinois.

The conference is open to all educators and others interested in improving the quality of education. More than 100 breakout sessions and four administrator academies will be offered focusing on content and instruction, school climate, leadership, school improvement planning and subgroup populations.

**John Elder Robison**, author of *Look Me in the Eye: My Life with Asperger’s* and **Keni Thomas**, former army ranger, whose talks focus on leadership, teamwork, and training will be the keynote speakers.

For registration and more information go to: http://www.roeachievementconference.org. Discounted online registration ends Friday, November 21. After November 21, only onsite registration is available.
For more information, contact Debbie Potts, Thinkfinity state coordinator, Illinois Office of Educational Services, at dpotts@ioes.org or at 800-252-4822, ext. 233.

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: