Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

November 10, 2008

Tomorrow is Veterans Day, a time when we pause to remember the sacrifices of the men and women who have served our country in the armed forces. Whether it is a relative serving now or someone who has already served, we have all been touched by our veterans in some way, and our country owes them a debt we can never repay.

Last week’s election and January’s transition of power would not be possible without the valiant service of our veterans. It is to them that we owe the ability to transfer power peacefully from one party to another.

About 40% of our districts have the ability to be in school tomorrow and will use the day to instruct their students on the vital importance of veterans and their contributions to this country. In many cases, districts call on local veterans or veterans’ groups to share their remembrances with students or participate in assemblies. If you are not in school, I would hope that you would take a few minutes today to remind students and staff of the importance of this day, which was first celebrated in 1919 (as Armistice Day) and was designated a federal holiday in 1938.

With our country at war in Afghanistan and Iraq, many of our citizen-soldiers have been called upon to carry our flag and fight. Many of these citizen-soldiers are your former students, the parents of your current students or even staff members of your district. Whether or not you agree for the reasons we are at war, please remember these men and women.

At least 3,500 troops from the Illinois National Guard are actively deployed at this time. Their deployment can pose unique challenges for schools when these soldiers are part of our community, whether they’re one of our spouses, or a parent of our students.

Knowing that a loved one could be in harm’s way can affect a person in so many different ways—sleepless nights, anxiety, depression or daydreams. Just carrying the additional weight of having to pick up extra duties around the home can be a huge burden for a student or staff member.

In many cases, if we know a student or staff member has a family member that is deployed, we can offer assistance from existing services that are already in place. If you have not already done so, I would encourage you to poll your students and staff members to see who and how many have family members deployed and to offer your support. Additional resources can be found by contacting the National Military Families Association, which has the guide Working With Military Children—A Primer for School Personnel, and can be accessed at http://www.nmfa.org/site/DocServer?docID=642 or you can e-mail them with specific questions, concerns or ideas at ILLINOISMILITARYFAMILIES@GMAIL.COM.

In addition, I want to say congratulations to those districts that were successful in passing their referenda last week. One in particular that I would like to single out is the cooperative arrangement between Paris CUSD 4 and Paris-Union SD 95 to form one high school to serve students in both districts. These two small districts are working together to combine resources and expand opportunities for their students. This is a good thing for the students and the taxpayers in the districts and I applaud them and encourage others to look for similar ways to better serve the public.

Finally, I’d like to say thank you to Steve Humphrey, Hank Gmitro and Paul Swanstrom, superintendents for DuPage High School District 88 in Addison, Carol Stream Community Consolidated School District 93 and Joliet Township High School District 204. I had the opportunity to visit their districts last week and I can tell you they, their staff members and students are doing some wonderful things.
Have a great week and remember our Veterans.

Chris

### Upcoming Dates & Deadlines

- **Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet Section 17-1.5** – November 14
- **Health and Immunization Data due in IWAS** – November 15
- **Part 110, Part 125, Part 130, Part 235, Part 245, Part 500 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

### Grants & Programs

#### Parent Involvement Website

ISBE is pleased to announce the development of new online resources for parent involvement. We hope you have the opportunity to use the new online resources for planning parent involvement policies and activities as they relate to your school and/or district.

The new information is located in the “Resources” box on the Grants and Programs page under Parent Involvement. This page will provide guidance, information and resources for LEAs and schools to comply with NCLB requirements and to also offer support and technical assistance as it relates to parent involvement planning and activities.

The website includes sample templates for District Parent Involvement Policy; School Parent Involvement Policy and School/Parent Compact; E-Bulletins, which reference the guidance; and resources to help the schools with parent involvement.

Please visit the link [http://www.isbe.net/grants/html/parent.htm](http://www.isbe.net/grants/html/parent.htm).

#### Parent Involvement Analysis Tool

Districts and schools are required to review their parent involvement policies annually. To help with the review and to create new policies, ISBE encourages you to use the parent involvement needs analysis available at: [http://www.isbe.net/grants/html/parent_adi.htm#parent](http://www.isbe.net/grants/html/parent_adi.htm#parent). Directions are available for accessing the log in.

Principals need to log in initially and create their password. In addition, principals will need their RCDTS code plus 09, which is to represent the current school year. For example, RCDTS-09 of a school, 01-001-0000-01-0000-09.

If you have questions about technical issues related to the website, please contact [SSI@adi.org](mailto:SSI@adi.org). For specific questions relating to parent involvement programming as it relates to NCLB, contact Marci Johnson by e-mail [marjohns@isbe.net](mailto:marjohns@isbe.net) or at 217-524-4832.

#### Funding & Disbursements

**Driver Education FAQs Update**

The driver education Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document has been updated and can be accessed at: [http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/driver_ed_faq.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/driver_ed_faq.pdf)

The updated document incorporates changes to the graduated license law (PA 95-0310) that took effect **January 1 and July 1, 2008**. The document also covers a broad range of driver education issues including student eligibility requirements for driver education, required course content and length of
instruction, instructor requirements, fee assessment and waiver procedures. The Part 252 of the state administrative rules which govern the operation of public school driver education programs can be accessed at:

Questions regarding the FAQ document or the driver education rules can be directed to Lisa Willhoit at lwillhoi@isbe.net or 217-782-5256.

**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.

**Special Education**

**Assistive Technology Services Delivery**

The State Board of Education, UCP/Infinitec and the Illinois Assistive Technology Program have partnered with Special Education Directors throughout the state to study the delivery of assistive technology services in Illinois. The intent is to maximize our resources and continue to improve and provide effective services for students in Illinois.

Our first task is to collect data through a survey. We would like to request that each cooperative and/or district identify one person that has knowledge specific to obtaining assistive technology services, (i.e., training, technical assistance, and equipment) to complete the survey. Please send the name, telephone number and e-mail address for this person to Dawn Camacho at dcamacho@isbe.net.

**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.

The worksheet and instructions can be found at [http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/idea_part-b.htm](http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/idea_part-b.htm). 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.

**Nutrition**

**School Year 2010 Annual Commodity Order Approaching**

The Illinois Commodity System (ICS) will accept orders beginning Friday, January 2, 2009, for next school year. Due to time constraints placed on states by the USDA, ISBE must require that you complete your order by Monday, February 2, 2009.

Schools that choose to divert commodities to processors should watch the ICS message board carefully starting in February for important news regarding processors who are receiving trucks of commodities. Orders placed with processors that are not receiving trucks can change to processors that are receiving trucks from February 9 through February 16. Reminder: If you place an order with a processor not receiving a truck and you do not change to a processor receiving a truck, that order will be deleted.

Please contact the ISBE Food Distribution Program staff at 217-782-2491 if you have any questions regarding the annual order process.

**Bridging the Gap in School Meal Service Procurement Workshops**

All school food authorities (SFAs) conducting a new procurement or considering contracting for school meal services for the 2009—2010 school year are encouraged to attend the Bridging the Gap in School Meal Service Procurement training.

The training is designed to assist SFAs who contract or are seeking to contract for meal services with a food service management company or meal vendor in meeting all requirements associated with the Invitation for Bid and Contract process. Workshop registration begins at 8 a.m. and training is held from 8:30 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

For dates, locations, and pre-registration, go to [http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/workshops.htm](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/workshops.htm).

**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.

**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. 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 or call 1-800-720-3249 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.

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/

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.

**Student Opportunities**

**National Radon Poster Contest**

The 2010 National Radon Poster Contest for students ages 9 through 14 is underway. The contest is held to inform students and parents alike about radon gas.

Contest prizes include a $50 savings bond for regional winners, a $100 savings bond for state winners and an all-expense paid trip to Washington D.C. for the national winner.

The National Safety Council and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are sponsoring the contest. Entries are due **April 2009**.


**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](http://www.christophercolumbusawards.com). The entry deadline is **February 9, 2009**.

**Awards & Grants**

**EPA Grants**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has just announced the availability of the 2009 Environmental Education grant application form.

The total estimated funding for this competitive grant opportunity is approximately $3 million.
The application deadline is **Thursday, December 18**.

**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](http://www.npli.org/nsca). The deadline to submit materials is **March 4, 2009**.

**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**

ISBE has posted highlights from last week’s education news clips at: [http://www.isbe.net/news/2008/newsclips/081107.htm](http://www.isbe.net/news/2008/newsclips/081107.htm)