Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

I am looking forward to this weekend’s Triple-I Conference and spending some time with you. This is a great opportunity for all of us to get together and share ideas and strategies for better serving our students. I will be speaking in the Second General Session on Saturday morning, as well as participating in a panel discussion from 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. that day. I will join Representatives Roger L. Eddy and Michael K. Smith to discuss Legislative Issues Impacting Districts. We will each be providing brief remarks and taking questions at the Hyatt Hotel, Ballroom Level, Regency C. I hope you can drop by for the discussion. I also invite you to stop by the Comiskey Room between 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday to meet our State Board members.

On the federal level, reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) will not likely happen before the end of this year’s Congressional session. Members of the Senate have said that they would continue to work on a bill rather than try to meet an “arbitrary deadline.” While it is unclear at this time when reauthorization may occur, we will be watching the NCLB reauthorization process very closely over the coming months and will offer updates as they warrant.

I want to express my appreciation to the Education Roundtable for using the time from its November 5 meeting to focus on growth models. Dr. Yeow Meng Thum, professor at Michigan State University who has published extensively on measurement and accountability systems, reviewed the growth model concept and answered questions from participants. Additionally, the group had an opportunity to discuss a recommendation of the Growth Model Task Force to more closely review Tennessee’s projection model. Some difficulties of growth model implementation concern the capacity of local and state entities to collect data and the fact that such models must eventually lead to 100% of students meeting or exceeding standards.

A recent review by the Special Ed Connection of five states that were approved for growth model use showed mixed results on the impact on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) calculations. In Arkansas, Florida and Iowa, about 10% of schools made AYP using growth models, while in Tennessee and Alaska the models assisted few schools in making AYP outside of the standard calculations. The data suggest that each state’s growth model results are tied to how standard AYP calculations are made. In the near future, I plan on reaching out to you in the field so that we can continue this discussion and work in Illinois.

Finally, ISBE has only three remaining regional budget hearings this year in planning for the FY 2009 budget. The Board will host one in Springfield as part of its regularly scheduled board meeting, and two more are scheduled for later this month – in Chicago at the Thompson Center on November 20 and in Belleville at the St. Clair County Regional Office of Education on November 28. You can find out specific details at http://www.isbe.net/news/2007/oct15.htm. I would encourage you to come and participate in the forums, as they provide a unique opportunity for informing the Board about your

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funding priorities during FY 2009. Your comments are valued and they do carry considerable weight with the Board and staff. I thank everyone who has already provided testimony at the previous sessions and look forward to hearing all of your ideas.

Look forward to seeing you at Triple-I.

Chris

Upcoming Deadlines

- **Unfilled Positions Survey (87-07)** – November 15, 2007
- **Illinois Arts Education Week Poster Contest entry deadline** – November 15, 2007
- **Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet - Section 17-1.5** – November 15, 2007
- **2007-2008 Health & Immunization Data Collection** – November 15, 2007
- **Health/Life Safety Processing System Training** – School District/Architects training at Kane ROE – November 27, 2007
- **Health/Life Safety Processing System Training** – School District/Architects training at Kane ROE – November 28, 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

Illinois Finance Authority

**Short Term Tax Anticipation Program for Cook County**

The Illinois Finance Authority is offering limited 60-day bridge financing to qualified school districts, cities, villages and towns in Cook County. The program is designed as a user-friendly, cost-effective option to meet immediate cash flow shortfalls. Funds are expected to be available **Thursday, November 29**.

The Illinois State Board of Education is providing this information to districts at the request of IFA. ISBE has no role in determining eligibility.

The program establishes a line of credit extended by KeyBank, N.A., which will be used to purchase tax anticipation warrants or notes, with a term of 60 days. Subject to Bank and IFA approval and pursuant to State law, participants would be permitted to draw-down up to 85% of the applicant’s second installment of the 2006 property tax levy payable 2007. An applicant must have a borrowing need of at least $100,000.
Participants will be required to adopt a resolution / ordinance to issue tax anticipation warrants or notes. Participants will pledge forthcoming property tax receipts as security for the anticipated debt.

A one-page application and comprehensive Q and A with timeline are available at the IFA web site at www ila fa.com.

**Nutrition**

**Del Rey Tortilleria, Inc., announces recall of its flour tortilla products**

Del Rey Tortilleria, Inc., Chicago, Illinois, is announcing the recall of its flour tortilla products.

Included in the recall are flour tortillas of all sizes (White Flour Tortillas; Tortillas de Harina [6 inch]; Burritos 2, 3, and 4; and Fajita 8-inch size) with the name “Del Rey” on the label and one of the following date codes: OCT/17/07, OCT/20/07, OCT/24/07, NOV/04/07, NOV/10/07, or NOV/11/07.

Del Rey officials were told by health officials they believe there is a connection between the tortillas and recent illnesses in Racine, Wisconsin, schools where students experienced vomiting, nausea, and abdominal cramps. If you experience symptoms of this type, consult a health professional.

Del Ray has been told by health officials they do not believe the problem involves microbial contamination. Del Rey is not certain its products caused the reported symptoms, but is recalling the products as a precaution while its investigation continues.

This recall does not affect any other Del Rey products. The products were distributed nationwide through food distributors and grocery stores.

If your school has any questions, please contact the company by calling Marcy Toledo, General Manager of Del Rey, at 773-637-8900.

**Emergency Management in Foodservice Operations** satellite seminar from 2 – 3 p.m. Friday, November 16.

The seminar has been approved for two continuing professional education units (CPEs). Registration is required to access the satellite coordinates and/or receive the webcast. To register, go to NFSMI’s website at http://www.isbsmi.org/Education/Satellite/emergencymanagement/satinfo.html.

**School Breakfast BECAUSE**

The focus is on breakfast during November! Read the “School Breakfast BECAUSE” web pages online at www.isbe.net/nutrition to discover why! Hint: Illinois School Breakfast Week is November 12—16, 2007. Learn why more Illinois schools are saying “YES” to school breakfast.

**$3,500 School Breakfast Start-Up Grants Available. Apply Online Today!**

School Breakfast Start-Up Grants are available up to $3,500 to begin a school breakfast program. Visit http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/breakfast_state.htm to download the simple application. Do not delay, apply today.

**Healthy Cuisine for Kids Seminar in Chicago: March 11-14, 2008, Registration Deadline is February 1, 2008**

Register now for this 3 and ½ day seminar to help school nutrition professionals develop culinary skills needed to prepare and serve healthy and appealing meals sponsored by the National Food Service Management Institute and the Culinary Institute of America.

Targeting school nutrition directors, managers, and staff, with a train-the trainer concept, the seminar will:

- Feature culinary demonstrations provided by a chef from the Culinary Institute of America (CIA).
- Include use of alternate institute methods, flavor enhancement, and presentation to promote the principles of optimum nutrition and taste.
- Focus on healthful cooking techniques that reduce fat, sodium, and sugar.
- Promote the use of vegetables, fruits, and grains in school meals.
• Teach participants how to prepare recipes that appeal to students.

Go to http://www.nfsmi.org/Education/Workshops.html#cuisine and click on Healthy Cuisine for Kids Seminar for further information.

Legal

Privacy Guidance

On October 30, Secretary Spellings joined Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez and Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff at a high school in suburban Virginia to announce the availability of three new brochures that present guidance on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). In the wake of the Virginia Tech University shootings, these brochures -- one for K-12 officials, one for higher education officials, and one for parents -- seek to empower schools to better balance students' privacy rights with school safety concerns by explaining the agency's interpretations in plain language. The brochures also include contact information for obtaining additional assistance and guidance. More information, including press releases and guidance, is available online at http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/safeschools/.

Along with the brochures, the Secretary shared a handout on emergency management resources, including a variety of materials from the Department and partners across the federal government. More information is available online at http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/secletter/071030enc.html.

Meanwhile, in September, the Department's Family Policy Compliance Office issued its annual notification to states and school districts of their obligations under FERPA and the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA). PPRA gives parents and students over 18 certain rights regarding the conduct of surveys, the collection and use of information for marketing, and some physical exams. More information is available online at http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/.

Preventing the spread of MRSA

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has supplied schools and parents with a concise summary of guidelines on how to prevent the spread of methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus, or MRSA.

More information is available online at http://www.cdc.gov/Features/MRSAInSchools/. 

Less Red Tape

Just a reminder to send your ideas to lessredtape@isbe.net about ways in which agency rules, processes and procedures can be streamlined and made more effective. Since the email account debuted in October 2004, the agency has received 491 suggestions. Some of those suggestions led to changes in the School Code enacted through PA 94-875, effective July 1, 2006; others have caused staff to re-evaluate and improve the way in which our web-based systems and reporting procedures are conducted. Become a part of our improvement efforts by helping generate ideas and setting direction. Please encourage your district’s employees to do the same.

Driver Education Enrollment Guidance

Comprehensive changes concerning the Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) program will go into effect on January 1, 2008 as Public Act 95-0310 will be enacted. One of the provisions of the new law extends the instruction permit phase from three months to nine months. This change has prompted questions as to how the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) defines “enrolled” in the context of the Illinois vehicle code, which requires that a student be “enrolled in an approved driver education course,” in addition to other requirements in the statute specific to a student’s age and/or what approved driver education course they are enrolling in, in order be eligible for a drivers permit [625 ILCS 5/6-103]. The Illinois Secretary of State (ISOS) is honoring all instruction permits which are issued prior to January 1, 2008 under the current three month permit phase. For students that will take Driver Education after January 1, some school districts are taking the position that once the student has registered for Driver Education, they are enrolled, even if they are not beginning instruction until after January 1. ISBE has taken the position that for purposes of Driver’s Education, enrolled and registered are synonymous.

Educator Preparation & Recertification
Highly Qualified Bilingual Teachers, Special Education Teachers and Teachers in Small Rural Schools

Districts with teachers granted a period of time to become highly qualified by filing ISBE form 77-36 “Request to Report Status of Bilingual Teacher, Special Education, and Rural School Teacher as Highly Qualified for NCLB Purposes” received an ISBE letter sent to the district approving the teachers for the assignment. The TSR highly qualified staff report has now been programmed to reflect this approval. We recommend that districts wishing to see the report showing the status of these personnel run the report again.

Keep in mind:

- Teachers with these approvals need not be reported as not highly qualified during the approval period allowed.
- The approval is valid only for the subject noted on the approval letter
- The approval is valid only for the time period on the letter
- The approval is subject to the requirements listed on the application set, including any professional development and mentoring requirements
- At the end date of the approval, the teacher must be highly qualified in the subject

With regard to other teachers:

- Teachers of all other core subjects who are not highly qualified may be employed, but they cannot remain permanently not highly qualified and must become highly qualified within the two years allowed in the state plan.
- The parents of children who are taught for four consecutive weeks by a not highly qualified teacher of core subjects in Title I schools or paid from Title I funds must be notified that their children’s teacher is not highly qualified.

Highly Qualified Special Education Teachers

The highly qualified staff report available on TSR may not accurately reflect the status of special education teachers. Concerns about the interpretation of IDEA and NCLB were not resolved in time to permit programming the system last fall. We are also working to complete this programming before the closing of the TSR and districts may wish to run the list again when we have completed the programming.

Special education teachers highly qualified requirements:

- Consultative: Not responsible for giving the grade; a full special education certificate or a special education endorsement obtained by passing the appropriate special education examination.
- Content: The teacher of record who gives the grade; a full special education certificate or a special education endorsement obtained by passing the appropriate special education examination and meets the NCLB demonstration of competence in each core subject taught.
- Persons who have a regular certificate and a special education approval or the Short Term Emergency certificate in special education do not meet the federal definition of highly qualified.

Rules & Waivers

Invitation to Comment on Rules

As recently explained by Superintendent Koch, a newly proposed rulemaking is currently available for public comment. This item has been posted on the agency’s web site at www.isbe.net/rules; choose “Proposed Rules and Amendments.” Please submit any comments or suggestions you may have to rules@isbe.net.

Part 1 (Public Schools Evaluation, Recognition and Supervision)

These amendments include revisions addressing:

- recent legislation affecting waivers and modifications of Section 27-6 of the School Code;
- the waiver of school fees in conjunction with eligibility for reduced-price meals;
- administrative assignments;
- library media services;
- history and social studies requirements at eighth grade and twelfth grade;
- recent legislation permitting coursework toward graduation for 7th- and 8th-graders; and
- two transportation-related items.

Deadline for Public Comment: December 24, 2007
Curriculum & Instruction

Technology Integration Plan

The new Technology Integration Plan is now available online as an e-Plan, part of the IIRC network of plans.

Illinois has used School Improvement Plans (SIPs) and District Improvement Plans (DIPs) for several years now on the e-Plan system available through the Interactive Illinois Report Card (IIRC) based at Northern Illinois University (NIU). Use of the e-Plan was optional in the first year for SIPs.

School districts that have a Technology Integration Plan due in March 2008 have prepared a draft technology plan at one of several workshops across the state this fall. As of November 1st, they will be able to insert that information into TIP’s online e-Plan via the IIRC and continue their planning process.

To get to the TIP, go to the IIRC homepage (http://iirc.niu.edu), select the "district" radio button option in the lower left corner of the home page before inputting district name in the text box. Then click on the district name to open the district profile page. In the banner of the district profile page, click on the link "Log into e-Plans." Passwords will be sent to each superintendent in the immediate future.

For further information, feel free to contact your Learning Technology Center director or Faith Bishop or Gail Lieberman, Curriculum & Instruction Division, at 217-557-7323 or by e-mail at fbishop@isbe.net or glieberm@isbe.net. Staff will work with you to problem-solve as appropriate and then work with the IIRC staff on broad issues.

Illinois Arts Education Week Poster Contest

The third week of March is traditionally designated Illinois Arts Education Week in cooperation with the Illinois Alliance for Art Education (IAAE), the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), and the Governor’s Office. This year it will be March 10-16, 2008. ISBE produces the poster to promote the week and to reinforce the importance of the arts in the growth and development of students. Each year an Illinois student's artwork is featured on a poster. The deadline for entries is November 15, 2007.

Additional information about the Arts Education Week Poster Contest and the official entry form is available online at http://www.isbe.net/curriculum.

School Business & Support Services

Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet

As a reminder, school districts must submit the completed Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet - Section 17-1.5 to the Illinois State Board of Education’s School Business and Support Services Division by November 15, 2007.

A copy of the worksheet can be accessed at: www.isbe.net/sfms/AdminCaps/AdminCaps.htm

Additionally, the Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet is included in the Illinois School District Annual Financial Report – June 30, 2007 (ISBE 50-35). If a completed Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet was submitted along with the school district’s Annual Financial Report, a separate worksheet does not have to be submitted.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Michelle Heninger, School Business & Support Services, at 217-785-8779 or e-mail at mheninge@isbe.net.

Teacher Resources

ICEE Mini-Grants

The Illinois Council on Economic Education has two mini-grant programs available for schools/teachers to enhance curriculum. 3M Innovative Economic Educator grants are designed to enable K-12 teachers to develop innovative ways to teach their students economic and financial literacy concepts within the classroom.

Global Economics & Finance (GEF) mini-grants are available to teachers/schools for adding a global perspective to the teaching of economics in the classroom. Whether an elementary class wanting to learn about the economy of another country or a high school class learning about international trade, these mini-grants can help with the purchase of professional development, curriculum materials or other related activities.

**Virtual Economics 3.0 – a Tool for ALL Teachers**

Want a tool for easily finding lessons and activities to integrate economics or personal finance concepts into your classroom curriculum? Virtual Economics 3.0 lets you search by key word/concept, by subject area, or by state economic standard. The CD includes over 1,200 printable lessons; which have been correlated to state content standards.

The Illinois Council on Economic Education (ICEE) is offering professional development workshops featuring the new Virtual Economics 3.0 CD-ROM. The workshop content can be specifically tailored to fit the needs of your department, grade level, school or district. *All participants receive a free copy of this $99.99 CD-ROM.* These workshops are available free of charge through support from State Farm through the National Council on Economic Education.

To read more about Virtual Economics®: Version 3.0, please visit http://ve.ncee.net To learn more about this opportunity, or to schedule a workshop, please contact ICEE at icee@niu.edu or 815.753.0356.

To learn more about ICEE and the many other programs and services available for K-12 teachers, please go to: http://www.econed-il.org

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**Create-A-Greeting-Card Scholarship**

The Prudent Publishing Company and The Gallery Collection are sponsoring a Create-A-Greeting-Card Scholarship Contest for high school and college students. The grand prize is a $10,000 scholarship.

The contest deadline for entries is **January 15, 2008.** More information, including registration and rules, is available online at www.gallerycollection.com/scholarship.htm.

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**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.

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**In the News**

**Weekly news clips**


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**Professional Development**

**School Board Member Day**

House Resolution 162 proclaims **November 15th** of this year and every year thereafter as School Board Member Day. According to the Illinois Association of School Boards, there are nearly 6,000 men and women voluntarily serving as members of local boards of education. Please feel free to take this opportunity to recognize those members of your community serving in this capacity.

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**Student Opportunities**