December 3, 2008

Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving. I’ve just returned from Washington, D.C. after attending, with several of my colleagues, the working session of the Council of Chief State School Officers’ Transition Task Force. We met with several members of President-elect Obama’s transition team and stressed the importance of creating a new partnership for education among the federal government, state education agencies, and school districts. I can’t get into specifics just yet, but we did talk about promoting innovation, continuous improvement and integration; building state capacity; and accelerating change by focusing on teaching.

We also talked about the inclusion of education in any economic stimulus package, recent rulemakings, and the pending reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006.

I am encouraged by the openness of the dialogue we had with members of President-elect Obama’s transition team. Members of the task force are eager to work proactively with the new administration to address issues that are of critical importance to education. I am confident that we will put together a plan that will assist whomever is chosen as the new Secretary of Education in his or her dealings with both local and state education agencies.

The task force will release its recommendations in about two weeks.

I know there are lingering questions about the American Diploma Project (ADP) and our efforts to examine the Illinois Learning Standards for high school students in English language arts, mathematics and science. My staff and I get many inquiries about this effort and I wanted to provide you with a resource that will answer many of these questions. We have developed a page on our website devoted exclusively to ADP and you can access it at http://www.isbe.net/ADP/default.htm.

As you maybe aware, the Illinois Learning Standards were developed in 1997 and have not undergone a revision since their adoption. We are undertaking this review and revision process now to ensure that the learning standards for kindergarten through grade 12 are aligned to postsecondary and work expectations and meet national and international expectations. Our goal is to have fewer, clearer and more rigorous Illinois Learning Standards that effectively align to college and career readiness expectations. We are also reviewing learning standards from multiple perspectives. For example, we are reviewing them against 21st Century skills and benchmarks to ensure that they adequately address the application of learning, critical thinking skills, and other components. The more usable and relevant we make our standards for students and teachers, the more likely they will be used effectively to positively affect teaching and learning.

I know many of you have expressed an interest in joining the core content teams that will examine the learning standards for English language arts, mathematics, and science at the high school level. Applications are available online at http://www2.learningpt.org/ILDiplomaProjectLaunch/(S(sfcyvl55
Thanks and have a great week.

Chris

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**Upcoming Dates & Deadlines**

- **Education of Homeless Children and Youth State Grant submission** – December 15
- **PSAE Redesign Survey** – December 15
- **Illinois American Diploma Project – Learning Standards Review applications** – December 19
- **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
- **Looking for Your Lincoln Hero submissions** – March 1

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**Legal**

**Student Health Records Guidance**

Earlier this month, the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued “Joint Guidance on the Application of the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA) (administered by USDE) and the *Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)* (administered by HHS) to Student Health Records.”

This joint guidance is most welcomed as the intersection of these two complicated federal laws has long raised many questions regarding access to and disclosure of student health records by school districts and their employees (including school nurses).


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**Data Analysis & Progress Reporting**

**Teacher Service Record Updates**

District superintendents are encouraged to check their IWAS accounts for updated information on the Teacher Service Record (TSR) data collection process.

On **Monday, December 1**, a bulletin providing official notice of changes beginning spring 2009 was sent via IWAS to all TSR application users. The notice has also been posted on the TSR application home page and on the Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division website at [http://www.isbe.net/research/default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/research/default.htm) (see link under Announcements).

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**Curriculum & Instruction**

**Reading First Evaluation Report**

The Illinois Reading First Program Evaluation Report for the 2007-2008 school year has been released.

It may be accessed at the following link: [http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/reading/html/read_first.htm](http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/reading/html/read_first.htm).

**Illinois Virtual High School RFSP**

A Request for Sealed Proposal (RFSP) for the Administration of the Illinois Virtual School (IVS) has been posted on the Illinois Procurement Bulletin [www.purchase.state.il.us](http://www.purchase.state.il.us).

The purpose of this RFSP is to identify a contractor who will guide the transformation of the Illinois...
Virtual High School into the Illinois Virtual School (IVS), building on the successes of the IVHS and taking advantage of the most current research and technology available.

This school is intended to expand the number of traditional students served, expand the grade levels to include grades 5 - 8, operate in an “anywhere, anytime” mode, and serve nontraditional students (e.g., credit recovery, dual enrollment). The IVS will supplement and complement school districts’ efforts, rather than replace or compete with opportunities offered locally.

If interested, access the website address above and select the "Registration" button located at the top of the screen and complete the form following the instructions given.

Once registered, click on “IllinoisBid” and then on the top right select “Sort by Agency”. Scroll down to “SBE” and click on the triangle. The solicitation for the Administration IVS will be listed. Click on the solicitation number and the RFSP will be located at the bottom of the screen as an attachment. You must register if you wish to open the RFSP.

For assistance, contact the Illinois Procurement Bulletin Help Desk toll free at 1-866-ILL-BUYS (1-866-455-2897). Registration is not required if you only want to browse through the site, however, you need to register with CMS to view any RFSPs or solicitations.

**Special Education**

**Revised IDEA Regulations Part B**

The U.S. Department of Education issued the final regulations for IDEA Part B, 34 CFR Part 300. The following changes are of considerable importance and impact.

**Parental Consent:** § 300.9(c)(3) is added, indicating that when a parent evokes consent for IDEA services after the parent’s child has been receiving such services:
- The revocation must be in writing; and
- The public agency is not required to amend the child’s education records to remove any reference to the child’s previous receipt of such services.

§ 300.300(b)(4) is added. A parent can revoke consent for continued IDEA services provided to the parent’s child.
- The revocation must be in writing;
- The public agency must provide the parent with written notice under § 300.503 (which may be one way of establishing just when the services should cease);
- The public agency may not utilize mediation or the due process procedures to challenge the parent’s revocation of consent;
- The public agency is not required to convene an IEP Team or develop an IEP; and
- The public agency will not be deemed in noncompliance with the IDEA for failure to provide a FAPE to an otherwise eligible child.

**Hearing Rights: § 300.512(a)(1) has been amended to indicate that State law will determine whether a party (parent or public agency) can be represented by a non-attorney.**

**Monitoring and Enforcement:** § 300.600(e) is added, establishing a one-year time frame within which a State must ensure an LEA achieves corrective action based upon incidents of noncompliance identified through the monitoring process. (NOTE: In the Comment/Discussion section at p. 73020, the USDE indicates a State can enter into a Compliance Agreement with the USDE where corrective action will take more than one year. A Compliance Agreement is effective for up to three years from its execution.)

§ 300.602(b)(1)(i)(A) establishes that a State must, no later than 120 days after submitting its annual performance report (APR) to the Secretary, provide a report to the public on the performance of each LEA. This doubles the current allowable time frame.

These are just the highlights of the final regulations. The Federal Register for December 1, 2008, can be accessed at [http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/IDEA_regs12-08.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/IDEA_regs12-08.pdf).

**Professional Development**

**Charter School Webinar Available**

The Illinois Network of Charter Schools (INCS) will present an interactive webinar on Tuesday, December 9. The webinar, Designing a High-Quality Charter School, will be presented by Anne Levy Brown and Steve Zemelman from 3:30-5 p.m.
This interactive webinar will provide the information needed to begin planning a high-performing charter public school in Chicago’s suburbs and greater Illinois. It will help to:

- Understand the process and requirements for charter school start-up in Illinois.
- Gain a roadmap for designing an excellent school.
- Learn about common stumbling blocks and how to overcome them.
- Get answers to your pressing questions.

To register for the webinar go to: http://www.incschools.org/start_a_charter.html
Webinar details will be e-mailed to all registered participants.

For questions contact Anne Levy Brown at alevybrown@incschools.org or 312-235-0798 ext.18.

Grants & Programs

**FY09 Federal Charter School Start Up Grants RFP Released**
*(All awards are 100% federally funded)*

Not-for-profit educational entities and recently authorized charter schools are available to apply for a Federal Charter School Start Up Grant. A not-for-profit entity may apply for a **pre-charter** grant upon proof of delivery to ISBE of a charter school proposal to an Illinois public school district. If the charter school proposal is approved by a local school board, the charter school then becomes available to apply for a **charter planning** grant. Upon initial operation of the charter school, the charter is available to apply for an **implementation** grant.

Contact Richard Loman, Division of Educator and School Development, for more information at 217-782-2948 or rloman@isbe.net or access the RFP at http://www.isbe.net/charter/Default.htm.

**FY 2009 Education of Homeless Children and Youth State Grant**

The Division of Grants and Programs is pleased to announce a new competitive RFP, the Education of Homeless Children and Youth State Grant Program.

The new grant will assist eligible school districts with the opportunity to provide services to homeless children and youth.

Approximately $3 million will be available. It is anticipated that approximately 75 to 100 programs will be funded. The RFP and attachments are located at http://www.isbe.net/homeless.

The deadline for submission is 5 p.m. **Monday, December 15**. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Peggy Dunn 217-524-4832 or e-mail at madunn@isbe.net.

**Illinois Association for Gifted Children Convention**

The 14th IAGC Convention is scheduled for **February 1-3**, at the Chicago Marriott Downtown. Local and national presenters will focus on program development and social and emotional issues of the gifted/talented population.

Sunday will include parent and educator sessions; Monday and Tuesday will include a full slate of offerings.


**Nutrition**

**Summer Mandate**

Public Act 095-0155, signed by Governor Blagojevich on **August 14, 2007**, amends the Childhood Hunger Relief Act (105 ILCS 126/20). This amendment requires that a school district must, in all schools in which 50 percent or more of the student population is eligible for free or reduced-price meals AND that have a summer school program, implement a summer breakfast and/or lunch program for the duration of the summer school program. This amendment applies to all schools which meet the above criteria, including those schools that do not currently participate in any of the Federal Nutrition Programs. The legislation along with question and answers are accessible at www.isbe.net/nutrition on either the National School Lunch Program or Summer Food Service Program web page under **Summer Mandate**.
ISBE administers two federal nutrition programs: the National School Lunch Program’s Seamless Summer Option or Summer Food Service Program to assist in implementing a successful program and to supplement the cost of providing the program.

Staff from the Nutrition Programs Division is available at 800-545-7892 or 217-782-2491 to offer technical assistance with this new legislation.

**Important Dates for Public Act 095-0155**

**January 15**
Petition is due to regional superintendent to opt out of the summer mandate Public Act 095-0155.

**February 15**
School district must declare a plan to have a summer meals program for each school that meets the requirements of Public Act 095-0155.

**March 1**
Regional superintendent shall inform the school district in writing if an exemption for the summer mandate Public Act 095-0155 was granted or denied.

Regional superintendent shall report to ISBE’s Nutrition Programs Division a listing of all districts that applied to opt out of either summer meal program, the decision of the regional superintendent, and the reason for the action.

**April 1**
The State Superintendent of Education shall inform the school district in writing if an exemption for the summer mandate Public Act 095-0155 was granted or denied. This situation only occurs if the original exemption was appealed to the State Superintendent of Education.

Each school can enter up to 12 items (six posters and six written works). Entries must be postmarked and sent to the IEPA by **February 6, 2009**.

Contact Kristi Morris-Richards at IEPA for more information at 217-558-7198 or at 1021 North Grand Avenue East, P.O. Box 19267, Springfield, IL 62794-9276.

**Awards & Grants**

**IAAE Outstanding Service Awards**

Each year the Illinois Alliance for the Arts Education recognizes outstanding service in the field of arts education. The Annual IAAE Service Recognition Awards Ceremony will be hosted by the Quad City Arts in Rock Island on **Thursday, March 19, 2009**, during Illinois Arts Education Week (**March 16-22**).

If you know an individual or organization that has advanced the cause of arts education in Illinois during the past year, please consider nominating them.

Awards are presented in the following categories: Arts Educator, Public/Community Service, Industry/Business Partner, Artist, School Administration, IAAE Organization, and Creative Ticket. The 2008 award winners represented a diverse cross-section of the state and across arts disciplines, geographic location, and types of activities.

Nominations must be submitted on the official form (copy as needed) and must be postmarked by **Monday, December 15**. The nomination form and a category qualification checklist can found at [www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net) under “What’s New” on the Curriculum and Instruction webpage.

Please forward all nominations to the Illinois Alliance for Arts Education, 315 Dresser Road, DeKalb, IL 60115; e-mail: barbarah@tbc.net or 815-756-7615.

**Student Opportunities**

**IEPA Poster, Poetry and Prose Contest**

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) invites fifth and sixth grade students to compete in its annual Poster, Poetry and Prose Contest. This year’s focus is on the importance of water conservation and clean water. The contest theme is “Your Water Footprint … Keep it Small, Keep it Clean!”

**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: