Message from Interim State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Good afternoon.

It was great to talk with so many of you at the Joint Annual Conference of the Illinois Association of School Boards, Illinois Association of School Administrators and Illinois Association of School Business Officials in Chicago. I extend my deep appreciation to IASB, IASA and IASBO for their efforts to create an annual event that brings together thousands of people who work for and care deeply about education in Illinois. The countless hours of work to organize and host this conference make possible an annual forum where we hear from national experts, brainstorm with colleagues around the state and come together in support of education excellence in Illinois.

As I start this transition period at the Agency, I want to take the opportunity to introduce Dr. John Herner who will serve as Interim Director of Special Education here at ISBE while I take on the work of Interim State Superintendent. John comes to us with a wealth of knowledge and experience. He served as Director of Special Education for the Ohio Department of Education for nine years and more recently worked as an independent consultant and project director of the University of Dayton. He has experience as an evaluation specialist, teacher and administrator. John is on board with us now, working out of the Springfield office and has hit the ground running. I hope you will join me in welcoming John to Illinois.

The faith I have in the winning combination of commitment and talent of Illinois educators, State Board members and ISBE staff makes it possible for me to serve as Interim State Superintendent with confidence that we will continue to make progress for the students and educators in Illinois schools. I look forward to working together with you as we move education forward in Illinois.

Chris Koch

December 4, 2006

Upcoming Deadlines

- Annual Statement of Affairs to ISBE – December 15
- Annual Immigrant Education Program (IEP) Data Report – December 15
- Love Your Veggies™ Grant – December 15
- NCUST Excellence in Education Awards – December 18
- Certificate of Tax Levy – December 26
- Waiver applications to be considered by General Assembly in Spring 2007 – January 12, 2007
- Non-Certified Staff Salary Study - March 31, 2007
**Student Assessment**

**PSAE results**

The details outlined here relate only to PSAE Day 2 and do not impact Day 1 results or student ACT scores.

As part of its regular data quality assurance processes, ISBE posted the 2006 PSAE scores in mid-October on the IWAS system for the data correction window. During the data correction period two districts notified ISBE Student Assessment with concerns that some of their students received high ACT scores but very low WorkKey scores. While this disparity is possible if students do not do well on Day 2 of the test, these districts were concerned because these results for the particular students involved was unexpected. The districts asked ISBE to look into the situation.

In investigating the situation, ISBE asked ACT to rescore the answer documents for some 160,000 students using keys for all three versions of the Day 2 tests. With that rescoring approximately 1,500 students earned higher Day 2 WorkKeys scores than their originally reported scores. ISBE verified that many of these students tested at schools which had answer documents “alerted” by Harcourt.

On further investigation ISBE found that during scoring Harcourt experienced many “alerts” for Day 2 answer documents. These alerts are part of the test quality assurance process. When resolving these alerts, Harcourt incorrectly determined that some answer documents should be scored using a different form number from the one gridded on the answer documents. This incorrect determination at Harcourt resulted in the Science answer documents being scored with an incorrect answer key. Harcourt then passed this same incorrect form number to ACT to score the Day 2 Reading and Mathematics WorkKeys tests.

ISBE told Harcourt to revisit these test results. Working with ISBE staff, it was discovered that many of these students should not have received scores because the school administered the wrong form of the test (e.g. – a student tested with accommodations used the standard time form rather than the form for accommodations). Schools have been notified of these situations.

There are some side effects in reassigning students to a different (and correct) test version for re-scoring. In particular, each time a PSAE test is given, the results are equated to those of earlier assessments. For equating to be valid, the correct key must have been used when scoring students’ answer documents. ACT then determined that the number of incorrectly scored Day 2 tests was large enough to affect equating, thereby affecting the original scores assigned to all students.

Accordingly, ACT removed all erroneous student test records from the equating sample and re-equated the 2005-2006 data to get correct scores for all grade 11 students. Although the net impact of re-equating and re-scoring is small and many students’ original scores will be unaffected, ACT made the determination to discard all previously generated scores and produce new Day 2 and PSAE scores for all students.

The net effect of the re-equating and re-scoring all 160,000 tests that roughly one PSAE mathematics score in the state changed from “below standards” to “meets standards.” For PSAE reading, 10 scores in the state changed from “below standards” to “meets standards.” For PSAE science, 69 scores in the state changed from “below standards” to “meets standards” and 27 in the state changed from “meets standards” to “below standards.”

The PSAE file is currently being rescored will be reposted in the next few weeks. This reposting will show the corrected scores with the new equating applied. All grade 11 reports and AYP for high schools will not be processed until the reposting has occurred.

Again, this does not impact Day 1 results or student ACT scores.

**Statewide conference calls scheduled to explain assessment process through SIS**

ISBE Student Assessment will hold four statewide conference calls to explain the Assessment process through the Student Information System (SIS). These calls will cover pre-ID files, uploading, reports and correction files.

Dates and deadlines will also be discussed. Each session will repeat the same information. We encourage district or school personnel who are involved in testing coordination and/or working with assessment uploads to SIS to call in to one of these conference calls. A PowerPoint presentation is available at http://www.isbe.net/assessment and will be used for these calls. A question and answer period will follow each of the following presentations:

**December 5, 2006 - 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.**

1-800-559-9370  
Confirmation # 1 6 3 4 4 3 0 4
Illinois Department of Public Health

Recommendations to limit pertussis transmission and control pertussis outbreaks in Illinois secondary schools

Pertussis (also called “whooping cough”) is a bacterial respiratory infection that spreads from person-to-person with close contact. Coughing episodes can persist for up to 10 weeks and, in between coughing episodes, it is not unusual for infected individuals to be symptom free.

More than 470 cases of pertussis have been reported in Illinois this year. A significant proportion of these cases have occurred among secondary school students. This is because the protection received from pertussis vaccination administered in early childhood begins to wear off after five-years to 10-years, leaving pre-teens and teenagers, as well as adults, at risk for this highly contagious illness.

The impact of pertussis in a population of susceptible students may result in the following outcomes:

- Pertussis is not life-threatening to most healthy secondary school students, this group may be in contact with younger children, infants and children with chronic illnesses who are a high risk of developing serious complications of pertussis, including pneumonia, seizures and death.
- Pertussis outbreaks in schools, in which numerous students are ill, often last for many months and can be disruptive to academic, athletic and extracurricular activities.
- If students with pertussis from your school are not properly treated and restricted from extracurricular activities, they may spread pertussis to students at other schools, thereby creating the potential for new outbreaks.

Measures that can be taken to help limit the impact of pertussis on your school and community include vaccination and identification of students with pertussis.

Vaccination

In early 2006, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued guidelines regarding use of a cellular pertussis vaccine (TdaP) to prevent pertussis in adolescents. Recommendations for use of this vaccine are outlined in the attached CDC Vaccine Information Statement (VIS), which also contains advice pertinent to vaccination of school nurses and faculty. Parents should be strongly encouraged to contact their children’s health care provider in order to find out if they should receive a pertussis booster shot with TdaP. For more information regarding vaccination, visit http://www.immunize.org/vis/tdap.pdf.

Identification of Students with Pertussis

Students with characteristic or persistent cough illness should be referred for medical evaluation, which should include evaluation for pertussis. Attached is a pertussis “Health Beat” fact sheet with detailed information about pertussis signs and symptoms. Physicians and school nurses should report pertussis cases to the local health department within 24 hours of case confirmation in order to help ensure that appropriate public health measures are taken for each case. Schools with pertussis cases should consult with their local health department about performing enhanced surveillance for cough illness that may be due to pertussis. For more information please visit http://www.idph.state.il.us/public/hb/hbpertus.htm.

Fiscal Services

Illinois School Purchasing Network (ISPN)

If you have not yet taken the opportunity to register with U.S. Communities or if you have never utilized your membership in U.S. Communities, ISBE invites you to do so. Please check out their website at http://www.uscommunities.org/. This joint purchasing cooperative is a great way to save your school district time and effort by offering the best government pricing through competitively bid contracts from which you can piggyback. There is no charge to participate. U.S. Communities offers office supplies, school supplies, furniture, P.E. supplies, playground equipment and much more. If you have any questions, please contact Tamara Morris, ISBE Procurement Services Supervisor, at 217-785-8777 or at tamorris@isbe.net.

Professional Development

New cohort-based educational administration program

The University of Illinois Department of Educational Organization and Leadership (EOL), in conjunction with the College of Education and the Office of Continuing
Education/Academic Outreach has announced a new continuing education opportunity available to Chicago area teachers and other qualified professionals in leadership positions.

The University of Illinois College of Education will host an Informational Meeting about the new cohort-based Educational Administration program, on Wednesday, December 6, 2006, at the Oak Brook Multi-University Center, 5:30 to 7 p.m. Faculty from the EOL department will be present at the meeting to discuss the purpose and structure of the Oak Brook based program. You may also learn more about the program and the Informational Meeting online at http://www.ao.uiuc.edu/eol/oakbrook/.

The EOL department will start a new cohort-based Educational Administration program in the Chicago area in summer 2007, hosted at the Multi-University Center in Oak Brook. The Oak Brook General Administrative Endorsement program, starting in summer 2007, will enable teachers to pursue either a Master’s Degree or an Advanced Certificate in Educational Organization and Leadership without having to come to the Urbana campus. The program is designed to meet both the degree requirements of the College of Education and the certification requirements for the State of Illinois General Administrative (Type 75) Endorsement.

All courses will be taught evenings or weekends. For more information, please contact:

**Dr. Donald Hackmann**, Associate Professor
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University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
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1-800-252-1360, extension 30230; dghack@uiuc.edu

**Dr. Barry Swanson**, Lecturer
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### Investing in Youth 2006 Conference


This summit will provide information to effectively bring together community resources to implement a plan to improve outcomes for at-risk youth and eliminate the causes for joining gangs.

The conference goals include: providing opportunities for young people to become independent as an investment to avoid potentially expensive problems in the future, ensuring that all youth acquire the necessary skills and work experience to successfully transition into adulthood and helping ensure that young people become self-sufficient and engaged citizens.

To register call the Performance Institute at 703-894-0481 or visit http://www.performanceweb.org/.

### IASPA Conference

The Illinois Association of School Personnel Administrators (IASPA) has a mission to connect human resource leaders committed to recruit, retain and develop a highly qualified, professional staff. IASPA will hold its First Annual Conference February 8 and 9, 2007. For more information on joining this group or attending the conference, visit http://www.iaspa.org.

### Federal Grants and Programs

#### School Improvement Plan audio conference

Schools that have not made adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years are required to revise their school improvement plans. Schools have three months to revise their plans following notification of academic status.

Notification of status related to the state assessment results will start the clock ticking for revising school improvement plans. As soon as final notification occurs, schools will have three months for planning, followed by a 45 day peer review process and local board approval. At the end of that period, district superintendents must post the approved plans using the Illinois e-Plan School Improvement Template at the Interactive Illinois Report Card website http://iirc.niu.edu/.

In the meantime, ISBE has hosted two call-in sessions to talk about the requirements and timelines for the revised plans. A final call-in session will be held December 12. Further information about the call-in session is available at: http://www.isbe.state.il.us/CSR/html/conference.htm.

ISBE advises administrators of school in academic status to review student progress from other available local data, to identify the degree to which instruction is aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards and to measure the progress of strategies and activities in their existing school plans. The resulting information from these activities will assist in determining priorities for the required plan once state assessment data are finalized. It is imperative that schools continue to work towards eliminating achievement gaps in the school.
Nutrition Programs

Breakfast Survey

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Nutrition Programs is conducting two breakfast surveys: one for parents and one for administrators. The goal of the parent survey is to gauge parental interests in the School Breakfast Program. You can share this with your parents through an upcoming school newsletter, via the school lunch menu or share with parent organizations in your school. The goal of the administrator survey is to determine, from the administrators perspective, advantages and barriers to operating the School Breakfast Programs. ISBE is requesting your voluntary and anonymous assistance in completing this electronic survey.

The easiest way to complete the survey is online at http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/. If, however, you wish to print the survey, please return completed to the Nutrition Programs Division by fax at 217-524-6124 or mail to 100 North First Street, W-270, Springfield, IL, 62777-0001. The results of the survey will be made available in a future Outlook newsletter. If you have any additional questions or need further assistance please email cnp@isbe.net or call our office at 217-782-2491 or 800-545-7892.

Fiscal Year 2008 annual commodity order

The Illinois Commodity System (ICS) will accept orders beginning January 2, 2007, for next school year. Due to time constraints placed on states by the USDA, we must require that you have your order completed by Friday February 2, 2007.

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

Call the Food Distribution Program at 217-782-2491 if you have any questions regarding the annual order process.

Make and keep these New Year’s resolutions

• Celebrate National Nutrition Month in March 2007
• Join Action for Healthy Kids-Illinois at http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/

Data Analysis

2006-2007 Dental Data Collection

At the request of the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Illinois State Board of Education will collect the following additional dental data:
• Number of children with dental sealants present
• Number of children without dental sealants present
• Number of children with caries experience/restoration history
• Number of children without caries experience/restoration history
• Number of children with untreated caries
• Number of children without untreated caries
• Number of children needing urgent treatment

Please share this information with the school nurse or health technician and those submitting dental data to ISBE. Please address questions to Mr. Shafiqul Azam at 217-782-3950 or email him at mazam@isbe.net.

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: http://www.isbe.net/news/2006/newsclops/061201.htm