Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

I’ve just returned, along with colleagues from Chicago and Schaumburg, from an international seminar on educational cooperation and bilingual programs in Valencia, Spain. I want to thank my colleagues who went with me and encourage those of you who are interested in our cultural and teacher exchanges with Mexico and Spain to contact our Division of English Language Learning for more information.

The great diversity and wealth of language potential in our country is perhaps best realized when you consider that the United States is now the second largest Spanish-speaking country in the world after Mexico. While the need for English language proficiency continues to grow, the opportunities for embracing the asset of bilingualism also should be realized. Clearly, this is a growing field that will continue to increase in the future as our world becomes more multicultural.

I know many of you have been watching the events concerning state government unfold this past week, and I want to assure you that the State Board of Education hired me to oversee education in the state of Illinois. I along with the rest of the agency’s dedicated staff continue to be focused on that critical task. Our Board will be meeting in Springfield this week, and we will continue to conduct all of the day-to-day operations of the agency, continuing to focus on our children, our teachers and administrators, and our districts.

We continue to submit vouchers for payments to school districts and vendors in a timely manner, but as you know, Illinois is not immune to the national economic slowdown. As I have indicated in the past, the state currently has more bills than it can pay. Despite the news headlines of the last week, state government continues to function, day-to-day work continues to be done, and efforts to manage this economic situation continue to move forward. The Comptroller is now making payments from the month of September and is running approximately 64 business days behind schedule. We are keenly aware of the pressure that delayed payments place on school districts and continue to monitor the situation closely. We are also ensuring that elected officials understand the gravity of the situation and the potential impact that any further reductions this fiscal year will have on school districts.

Bearing in mind all that has occurred, the best advice I can give you now is the same advice I gave you last month—exercise caution as you administer your district’s funds for the remainder of the school year. Once we receive information and can verify its impact on the education budget, we will let you know.

As I said earlier, the State Board will be holding its monthly meeting in Springfield on Wednesday and Thursday. Some of the items that may be of interest to you include the State Board’s consideration of legislative proposals for the 2009 session, consideration of the Charter Schools Annual Report, and consideration of reports about capital needs and the Reading Improvement Block Grant program. The Board also will consider several changes to administrative rules and, of course, will be discussing the Fiscal Year 2010 budget.
Finally, I would like to congratulate the students and staff at Highlands Elementary School in Prairie Hills Elementary School District 144, and Joseph Stockton Specialty and McKinley Park Elementary schools in City of Chicago School District 299. Highlands and Stockton schools have been named as finalists for the 2009 National Excellence in Urban Education Award from San Diego State University’s National Center for Urban School Transformation (NCUST). McKinley Park was one of 18 schools that, while not chosen as a finalist, placed on NCUST’s Honor Roll.

Thanks, and have a great week!

Chris

### Upcoming Dates & Deadlines

- **PSAFE Redesign Survey** – December 19
- **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
- **The 2010 school year annual commodity order period** – January 2 – February 1
- **Waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly during Spring 2009 session** – January 9
- **Part 1 (Public Schools Evaluation, Recognition and Supervision) and Part 25 (Certification): Public comment ends** – January 20
- **Looking for Your Lincoln Hero submissions** – March 1
- **History Teacher of the Year Award first round nominations** – March 2

### Curriculum & Instruction

**TECH 2009 Date Set**

TECH 2009 will be held **Thursday, April 30**, at the State Capitol Building in Springfield.


The deadline to apply is **Monday, January 12**.

**Sylvia Charp 2009 Award**

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2009 Sylvia Charp Award for District Innovation in Technology.

Nominees should tell about the unique or inventive technology programs their district has implemented.

The Charp Award is presented annually by T.H.E. Journal and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) to recognize the best district-wide technology program in the country. The winning entry is chosen on the basis of consistent district commitment to excellence and overall success of the program.

The winning district will:

- Be honored at the NECC 2009 Conference, **June 28-July 1, 2009**, in Washington D.C.
- Receive $2,000 for travel and registration expenses to attend NECC 2009.
- Be recognized in both T.H.E. Journal and Learning and Leading with Technology.

Deadline for submissions: **March 16, 2009**.

For more information or to nominate your district for this award, go to: [http://www.1105info.com/t.do?id=1947442:3269365](http://www.1105info.com/t.do?id=1947442:3269365)
**FY2009 Erate Application Filing Window**

The FY 2009 Erate application filing window opened at noon EST on **Tuesday, December 2**, and will close at 11:59 p.m. EST on **Thursday, February 12, 2009**. The filing window will be open for 73 days. Applicants should note that FY2009 Form 470s can be filed now.

Traditionally, a high percentage of Form 471s arrives at USAC during the final week that the window is open. We urge you to file early so that:

- You have an opportunity to review your work and make corrections if necessary.
- You can re-file your form if an error you made cannot be corrected.
- USAC has your information and can start reviewing your application.
- We also urge you to file online.
- The system notifies you of possible errors and allows you to correct them.
- The system does your calculations for you.
- You can review your information online before you submit it.
- Your information is submitted to us quickly and correctly.

For additional information, go to [http://www.usac.org](http://www.usac.org).

**History Teacher of the Year Award**

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and ISBE are looking for elementary school teachers in Illinois who teach American History. To qualify teachers must have:

- At least three years of classroom experience in teaching American history.
- A commitment to teaching American history, including local and state history.
- Evidence of creativity and imagination in the classroom that address literacy and content beyond state standards.
- Close attention to primary documents, artifacts, historic sites, and other primary materials of history, including oral history.
- Evidence of thoughtful assessment of student achievement.

**Eligibility:** Any full-time elementary school teacher who teaches American history (including local and state history) as the primary subject, or one of the subjects he or she is responsible for in the classroom.

**Nominations** can be made by a department or division head, a school director, social studies director, principal or superintendent.

**First Round Nominations Deadline:** **March 2, 2009**.

Submit the following to the state coordinator: **Mike Hatfill**; ISBE, 100 North 1st Street, C-215, Springfield, IL 62777 or by e-mail to dhatfill@isbe.net.

- The nominee’s resume.
- A letter of nomination that addresses the award criteria and includes quantitative measures of student achievement.
- A letter of support from a colleague, immediate supervisor, or education professional familiar with the nominee’s work.

**Second Round: Additional Materials for Consideration will be due April 10, 2009.** From the pool of first round nominations, state coordinators will select up to five finalists who will be asked to submit additional materials.

For additional information, contact **Mike Hatfill**, Curriculum & Instruction at dhatfill@isbe.net.

**ICE 2009 Conference**


This year’s conference will feature **David Thornburg** as the luncheon keynote. There is a special fee for this luncheon and space is limited, so register early if you would like to attend.

The pre-conference booklet contains information about the full-day and half-day workshops, Administrator Academy sessions, and the “Bring-Your-Own-Laptop” (BYOL) workshops. To print the booklet online go to [http://www.iceberg.org/site/files/ice_2009.pdf](http://www.iceberg.org/site/files/ice_2009.pdf).

All registrations must be done online at [http://www.iceberg.org/form.php?fid=efc8ad5aeeb37b5ebfd5a0113044296](http://www.iceberg.org/form.php?fid=efc8ad5aeeb37b5ebfd5a0113044296).
For questions about registration procedures, contact ICE at 630-628-1088 or info@iceberg.org.

Nutrition

2010 Annual Commodity Order Period

The 2010 school year annual commodity order period is January 2 through February 1, 2009. Illinois Commodity System (ICS) will begin accepting orders Friday, January 2, for next school year. Due to time constraints placed on states by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, ISBE must require districts to complete orders by Sunday, February 1.

Starting in February, schools choosing to divert commodities to processors should watch the ICS Message Board carefully for important news regarding processors receiving trucks of commodities. You may change your orders placed with processors that do not receive a truck to processors that are receiving trucks from February 6 through February 13. If you place an order with a processor that does not receive a truck and you do not change to a processor that is receiving a truck, ISBE will delete that order.

For questions regarding the annual order process, call Food Distribution Program staff at 800-545-7892 or 217-782-2491.

Excess USDA Commodity Inventory at Further Processors

USDA regulations require commodity inventories held at further processors to be monitored. Based on a processor’s average monthly usage, regulations do not allow processors to maintain more than a six-month inventory level.

To help districts meet this requirement, ISBE implemented procedures to address the excess inventories at further processors. The procedures are on ISBE’s Food Distribution Program website at http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/pdf/FDP_Inventory_Leve1_Procedures.pdf.

If you have questions regarding these procedures or about processing USDA commodities, contact Food Distribution Program staff from the Nutrition Programs Division at 800-545-7892 or 217-782-2491.

Breakfast Survey

Pursuant to Public Act 94-0981, the Nutrition Programs Division is conducting a breakfast survey for which we are seeking your assistance. ISBE has two surveys, one for parents and one for administrators.

The goal is to gauge parental interest in school breakfast and the administrators’ perspective, which includes the advantages and barriers to operating the School Breakfast Program.

ISBE is requesting your assistance in completing this survey, whether or not you currently have a School Breakfast Program.

Please encourage parents to visit the survey site and complete the parent portion. The deadline is Friday, February 6. ISBE will publish the survey results in a future edition of The Outlook newsletter.

If you have questions or need further assistance, please e-mail cnp@isbe.net or call ISBE at 800-545-7892.

School Business Services

New Rule for Contracts Exceeding $25,000

In January 2008, the School Code [105 ILCS 5/10-17] was amended to add requirements concerning contracts exceeding $25,000, beginning with FY2008, in conjunction with submission of the ASA.

The new provisions include the following requirements:

1. A school board must list on the district’s Internet website all contracts over $25,000.

2. In conjunction with the submission of the ASA to ISBE by December 15, the district shall submit an annual report on all contracts over $25,000. The Excel spreadsheet labeled “Contracts Exceeding $25,000” will be utilized by all school districts (excluding Joint Agreements) and is included in the ASA (ISBE Form 50-37).

For additional questions regarding the new rule, contact the School Business Services Division at 217-785-8779 or finance1@isbe.net.

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E-Bulletins

Requirements Posted for Targeted Assistance School Programs and Schoolwide Programs

A new E-Bulletin has been posted on the ISBE website. NCLB authorizes two distinct program structures under Title 1, Part A. This bulletin covers the two types: targeted assistance and schoolwide programs and serves as a refresher on the requirements to operate each type under Title I, Part A.

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.

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Professional Development

ICEARY 2009 Conference

Illinois Coalition for Educating At-Risk Youth (ICEARY) 2009 Conference: Celebrating Lincoln will be held Tuesday, March 10, and Wednesday, March 11, at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield.

The conference is designed for educators, interventionists, counselors, parents and those who work with at-risk youth. It will offer ideas, skill-sets and motivation for teaching this population.

The registration deadline is February 1, 2009.

The registration form and conference information may be found at www.iceary.org or contact Julie Wollerman at jwollerm@fayette.k12.il.us or 618-283-5011.

STEM Polar Connections Summer 2009 Institute

Middle and high school science, math and technology teachers are encouraged to apply to attend a one-week summer institute sponsored by STEM Education Institute and the Climate System Research Center.

The summer institute will be held June 28 through July 2, 2009, at UMass Amherst.

The program is designed to promote the teaching of science concepts and processes related to the polar regions and to emphasize connections to state and national science standards for middle and high school.

For complete details, go to www.umassk12.net/ipv or ipv@umassk12.net or call 413-545-0734.

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Student Opportunities

Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Scholarship

Illinois high school students are encouraged to apply for the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange scholarships. This year, scholarships will be awarded to 50 high school students who wish to spend a year as an exchange student in Germany (July 2009 – July 2010).

Youth For Understanding USA is helping to spread the word about the Congress-Bundestag scholarships. This congressionally funded youth exchange program has been preparing young people to live in a global society since 1983. Recipients live with a host family, attend the local high school and receive a four-week orientation and language course before the start of school.

For applications and additional information, go to www.usagermanyscholarship.org or www.yfu-usa.org. For additional information, call 1-800-TEENAGE to speak with an admission counselor.

All applications must be postmarked on or before Tuesday, January 13.

McKelvey Foundation Entrepreneurial Scholarships

The McKelvey Foundation awards entrepreneurial scholarships for college to high school seniors who have started their own businesses.
The Foundation began awarding scholarships in 2006. This year the goal is to award scholarships to 100 students of up to $10,000 per year to attend any four-year college in the United States.

The next annual deadline to submit applications is January 25, 2009. The Foundation is trying to reach as many potential applicants as possible.

For scholarship criteria and application information visit http://mckelveyfoundation.org/entrepreneurial/

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**IDPH Reminders**

**Reporting and Preventing Illnesses**

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) requests that schools contact their local public health department with questions about reporting illnesses or using prevention measures to control illnesses in their schools. In the event a county has no local public health department (there are only two such Illinois counties), school personnel can reach IDPH Communicable Diseases at 217-782-2016.

The following link is to Illinois' reportable disease list. The number of hours or days allowed to report each disease is also noted. [http://www.idph.state.il.us/health/infect/STOPandReportPoster2008.pdf](http://www.idph.state.il.us/health/infect/STOPandReportPoster2008.pdf)

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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](http://www.isbe.net/hr/Default.htm)

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**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/081212.htm](http://www.isbe.net/news/2008/newsclips/081212.htm)