



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

A newsletter from the Illinois State Board of Education



August 2010

Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

We have received word from the U.S. Department of Education that Illinois has not been selected to receive a Race to the Top grant. While this is disappointing news, I am proud of the effort that our state has made to put together such an ambitious plan, which I believe should serve as our blueprint for where we need to take education through the next decade.

We still intend to develop new rigorous teacher and principal evaluation systems, as required by state law, as well as continuing our work to improve teacher and principal preparation programs. We are also committed to developing a comprehensive longitudinal data system to assist us in better preparing students for college and careers and we are already on our way to implementing the new Illinois Learning Standards, incorporating the Common Core.

Two weeks ago, Congress passed and the President signed a \$26 billion Education Jobs Fund bill that will mean an additional \$415 million for Illinois schools. States are required to submit an application for the funds and Governor Quinn submitted Illinois' application on Aug. 17.

Federal officials say they should begin sending money back to the states within a couple of weeks of receiving a completed application. In conversations with staff from the Governor's office they have indicated it is his intent to get funding from the Education Jobs Fund bill into the districts as soon as possible. The funds will be disbursed to districts allocated based on the General State Aid Formula.

These funds are required to be used to pay salaries and benefits for school level personnel. Federal guidance states that you districts can use these new federal funds for the purposes of retaining existing staff. Districts will be required to submit quarterly reports on jobs retained, saved or created. More information on the use of the funds can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/educationjobsfund/applicant.html>.

Thank you all for your work on behalf of Illinois students.

Chris

MISSION

The Illinois State Board of Education will provide leadership, assistance, resources and advocacy so that every student is prepared to succeed in careers and postsecondary education, and share accountability for doing so with districts and schools.

Legislative Liasons: For questions or inquiries, contact Nicole Wills (nwills@isbe.net) or Cynthia Riseman (criseman@isbe.net) in the Governmental Relations Division at 217-782-6510 or by fax at 217-782-3097.

Budget Update

Governor Quinn has taken final action on the FY 2011 education budget. In the previous legislative newsletter, ISBE had indicated that, at its June Board meeting, the State Board made some difficult decisions on the budget that was passed by the General Assembly and spent time allocating the lump sum appropriations in PA 96-0956 and PA 96-0957. Since that time, Governor Quinn has exercised powers granted to him by the Emergency Budget Act (PA 96-0958) and the FY2011 Budget Bill (PA 96-956) to modify the budget that the State Board approved in June. He has chosen to increase funding to several line items, including Advanced Placement Classes, After School Matters, Agricultural Education, Arts and Foreign Language, Bilingual Education and Early Childhood Education.

In addition, the Governor placed a reserve on the Regular/Vocational Transportation Mandated Categorical line of \$65 million. This reserve, coupled with the \$81 million reduction in the budget approved by the General Assembly, means this line item has now been reduced by 42 percent (or \$146 million) from its FY10 level. A reduction of this magnitude will translate into substantially reduced transportation reimbursements to districts. In addition, there has also been a reduction of \$837,200 to the Regional Superintendent's salary line item (which is a 9.2 percent reduction compared to FY10), as well as a \$500,000 reduction to the Regional Offices of Education — School Services line item. The chart found at the following link shows action taken on the budget passed by the General Assembly, the Board's allocations of the lump sum appropriations and Governor's actions- http://www.isbe.net/budget/FY11_budget.pdf. The FY11 ISBE Allocation column details the

final FY11 appropriations after all actions have been taken.

FY10 Comptroller Backlog to School Districts

At the end of July, the Comptroller's Office paid \$530 million in outstanding FY 10 vouchers issued by ISBE to school districts and other ISBE grant recipients. This \$530 million payment included the second quarter Mandated Categorical (MCAT) payment. School Districts have now received the first, second and fourth MCAT payments for FY10. The Comptroller was able to make these payments because of a \$1.3 billion bond issuance by the State in mid-July. This reduced the amount of outstanding education-related vouchers from approximately \$1.3 billion to \$758 million. Prior to this large payment the oldest backlogged voucher was from Dec. 15, 2009. As of Aug. 16, the amount of outstanding education-related vouchers is \$743,179,254.06. The oldest unpaid voucher issued by ISBE currently is dated Feb. 10, 2010.

ACT Test Results

The ACT scores for the graduating class of 2010 were released last week and show some mixed results. The statewide and national averages dropped one-tenth of a point from 2009 to 2010, but Illinois' 5-year trend still shows positive movement on the composite and in all four subject areas. It is important to note that Illinois leads the eight states that test more than 90 percent of their students. In addition, since 2001, when we became a universal ACT state, we have seen continued growth for our students after an initial drop.

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ACT also has benchmarks for predicting student readiness to succeed in college. In Illinois, we've seen the percentage of students who meet those benchmarks increase from 20 percent in 2006 to 23 percent in 2010, just below the national average of 24 percent.

A review of the data shows that many Illinois students just narrowly missed the benchmark for being college ready in all subjects. In English, 10 percent of students were within 2 points of the benchmark; in math, 9 percent within two points; in reading, 13 percent; and in science, 14 percent were within 2 points of the college readiness benchmarks. Had these students taken one or more "core" courses their chances of meeting those benchmarks would have greatly improved.

Proposed Rule Change – Testing Procedures

Last week members of the State Board of Education approved for public comment a proposed administrative rule to clarify when high school students are required to take the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE). No Child Left Behind requires that all schools test students at least once for accountability purposes while they are in high school. In Illinois, we are required by state statute to administer the PSAE to 11th-graders for accountability purposes.

The agency noticed, as did the federal government, that some districts were not testing a significant portion of their 11th-grade students. In our compliance audit by the U.S. Department of Education earlier this year they directed us to take action to ensure that all students are being tested for accountability

purposes and that is why we're proposing this clarification.

Some districts were using local calculations of a specific number of credit hours or courses to define 11th grade, and, in some isolated instances, this was done in an exclusionary fashion, resulting in 8 percent of students not being tested. What we are proposing is that all students would take the PSAE the third year after they have successfully completed the eighth grade. An exception is being made for students with Individualized Education Programs.

We anticipate this clarification will result in more consistency of PSAE administration throughout the state.

Public comments will be taken on the proposed rules through Oct. 18 and individuals may submit comments at rules@isbe.net. Once the public comment period ends, the State Board of Education will have a chance to review comments and may or may not make changes based on those comments.

All pending rules can be reviewed at <http://isbe.net/rules/proposed/default.htm>.

2010 Legislation Passed by the General Assembly

A full list of legislation impacting ISBE or school districts passed in the spring legislative session can be found at http://www.isbe.net/gov_relations/pdf/public_act_summary_10.pdf. This document will be updated as the Governor takes action on the legislation.

ISBE staff has been working on implementation of all relevant legislation from the spring, including establishing the School Bullying

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Prevention Task Force, the Instructional Mandates Task Force, and the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (required by PA 96-0952, PA 96-1374, and PA 96-861 respectively).

The School Bullying Prevention Task Force will explore the causes and consequences of bullying in schools, identify promising practices in school districts that reduce incidences of bullying and evaluate the effectiveness of schools' current policies and bullying prevention programs. A report on the task force findings is due to the Governor and General Assembly on or before March 1, 2011.

The Instructional Mandates Task Force has been established to examine all the current instructional mandates governing public schools and make recommendations concerning existing mandate and the imposition of future mandates. In addition, the task force is to include in its recommendations information about necessary funding to carry the identified instructional responsibilities. A report on the recommendations and findings is due to the Governor and General Assembly on or before July 1, 2011.

The Performance Evaluation Advisory Council has been established and meeting since May 2010. This group is charged with identifying annual and long-term goals for performance evaluations as well as assisting ISBE and districts with development of effective student growth measures and was part of our Race to the Top effort.

ISBE Board Meetings

The State Board will meet for the annual Board retreat Sept. 21-22 in Bloomington. A full list of

upcoming board meetings can be found at <http://isbe.net/calendar/default.htm>.

Education Funding Advisory Board

The Education Funding Advisory Board (EFAB) was established by PA 90-0548 to make recommendations on state support of funding for K-12 education in Illinois. EFAB has been meeting over the last year, holding its last meeting on Aug. 10 in Chicago. The next meeting will be held Sept. 15 in Springfield. Information about EFAB can be found at <http://www.isbe.net/EFAB/default.htm>.

Going Green

In an effort to be more environmentally conscious, ISBE will be sending out communications, including budget updates and letters from the State Superintendent, via e-mail instead of through the mail.

This effort will both reduce administrative time within the agency and provide cost savings for printing and mailing. In the future, the e-mail address used for this message will be the one used for all ISBE communication from the State Superintendent, Board and Governmental Relations staff.

If you have an alternative e-mail address to which you would like this information sent, or if you change e-mail addresses, please contact Nicole Wills (nwills@isbe.net) or Cynthia Riseman (criseman@isbe.net) in our Governmental Relations Division so that your information can be updated and so that you can receive this information in a timely manner.

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Legislative Liaisons, General Assembly Scholarship Questions

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If you have any questions or paperwork concerning General Assembly scholarships, those should be directed to Kim Clarke at kclarke@isbe.net or 217-782-4648.

School District Directory

A comprehensive directory of all public and non-public entities that provide services to K-12 students in Illinois is available on the ISBE website at <http://isbe.net/research/htmls/directories.htm> by clicking on "Directory of Educational Entities."

The directory includes contact information, administrators, grade levels served and legislative districts for Private and Public Schools, Public Districts and other Public Units like Regional Programs, Department of Corrections schools, Special Ed Cooperatives and Vocational schools. The directory is updated nightly as additions or changes are submitted to ISBE.

Regional Offices of Education

A list of all the Regional Offices of Education, Regional Superintendents and their contact information can be found at in the ROE directory at <http://isbe.net/regionaloffices/pdf/roedirectory.pdf>.

This directory includes the contact information for the three Intermediate Service Centers in Suburban Cook County that have taken over the duties of the Suburban Cook County Regional Office of Education that was abolished by Public Act 96-0893.