2018 Special Education Directors’ Conference

July 31 - August 2, 2018
Crowne Plaza Hotel • Springfield, Illinois
Bruce Rauner
Governor

Illinois State Board of Education Members

James T. Meeks
Board Chair

Craig Lindvahl
Board Member

Eligio Cerda Pimentel
Board Vice Chair

Mitch Holzrichter
Board Member

Cesilie Price
Board Secretary

Ruth Cross
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Kevin Settle
Board Member

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State Superintendent of Education

ISBE Special Education
Directors’ Conference Planning Committee
Melanie Archer - Chicago
Lori Clampitt - Chicago
Sherry Colegrove - Springfield
Mary T. Gallagher - Chicago
Melissa Hummer - Chicago
LaMetrice Lane - Chicago
Mary Long - Springfield
Rhonda Marks - Chicago
Brett Nelson - Chicago
Together Toward Tomorrow

Conference Welcome

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the 2018 Special Education Directors’ Conference. On behalf of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the Center for Teaching and Learning, and the Special Education Services Division, we welcome you to the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield, Illinois. We hope you find these conference days are filled with information which is practical, proactive, and progressive! Our goal, as always, is to provide you with the most up-to-date information regarding special education policy, practices, procedures, and programming. In addition, this year we are hoping to highlight again some innovative ways to improve outcomes for all students, especially students with disabilities.

To begin this year’s conference, there is a pre-conference session on Tuesday afternoon (July 31) where grant and funding/disbursement information will be shared. On Wednesday morning (August 1), Dr. John Hodge will provide the first keynote address, BE THE ONE! In his presentation, Dr. Hodge will provide insight about how to put research and theory into everyday practice and make the necessary changes to help all children meet and exceed rigorous academic standards.

Wednesday’s session strands cover a wide range of topics including the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Legal Updates, School Health Issues, Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) Update, I-Star Student and Personnel Updates, Accessibility Laws, Early Childhood Outcomes, Addressing the Needs of English Learners with Disabilities, Accessing Assistive Technology, etc. In addition, you will have an opportunity to join your fellow colleagues and ISBE personnel at the Thursday evening Social Hour from 4:00-5:00 p.m. in the Ballroom.

The conference continues on Thursday (August 2) with Dr. Patrick Schwarz who will present the keynote, FROM DISABILITY TO POSSIBILITY: ACHIEVING AN INCLUSIVE LIFE. The Conference will conclude with a legal presentation from Deusdedi Merced who will share Hot Topics in Special Education Law.

Again this year, to continue our efforts to “go green,” all presentations will be posted to the ISBE website on the Special Education Services webpage:

https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Annual-Special-Education-Directors-Conference.aspx

Additionally, we ask that you please take a moment to complete a survey which will help us in planning future conferences. The link to the survey may be found at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2018DCLMQWGKY and will be available on Thursday, August 2. It may also be accessed via the QR code below.

We hope you find this year’s conference valuable and look forward to collaborating with you in advancing educational support programming throughout Illinois.

Heather Calomese
Executive Director of Special Education
Illinois State Board of Education
# ISBE Special Education Directors’ Conference

**July 31 – August 2, 2018 ● Crowne Plaza Hotel ● Springfield, Illinois**

## Tuesday, July 31, 2018 ● Pre-Conference Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:00-2:25</td>
<td>IDEA Grant Overview – Tammy Greco and Felicia Malloy, Principal Consultants, Special Education Services, ISBE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:35-4:00</td>
<td>State and Federal Special Education Funding - Tim Imler, Division Administrator, Funding and Disbursements, ISBE</td>
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## Wednesday, August 1, 2018

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<tr>
<td>7:00-10:00</td>
<td>Registration Open (Registration Desk)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:30-8:15</td>
<td>Breakfast Buffet (Pre-function Area)</td>
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<td>8:15-8:45</td>
<td>Welcome and State of the State: Heather Calomese, Executive Director of Special Education, ISBE</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:15-10:15</td>
<td>Keynote Speaker: Dr. John W. Hodge</td>
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**Dr. John W. Hodge** is president and co-founder of Urban Learning and Leadership Center (ULLC), an organization focused on student achievement and reduction of the achievement gap. He has served as a reading teacher, English teacher, AVID teacher, Assistant Principal and Associate Director of AVID Center Eastern Division. He served as Director of An Achievable Dream Academy, an inner city school that piloted many of the interventions used by ULLC. An Achievable Dream Academy is a high performing, high poverty school that has received numerous national awards.

Dr. Hodge received his Bachelor of Science degree from North Carolina A&T State University where he graduated with honors. He later received his Master of Arts degree from Chapman University. Dr. Hodge completed his academic and professional preparation by earning a Doctor of Education degree from Virginia Tech where he conducted extensive research on factors that contribute to the academic success and/or failure of impoverished children. What sets Dr. Hodge apart in the field of education is his well-documented ability to put research and theory into everyday practice in rural, urban and suburban schools. Dr. Hodge has helped educators in elementary, middle and high schools make the necessary changes to help all children meet and exceed rigorous academic standards. He is truly one of America's most respected new voices in education.

Prior to starting his career in education, Dr. Hodge distinguished himself in the service of our country with the 7th Infantry Division of the United States Army. He is known as a master teacher and staff developer.

Dr. Hodge's career has been defined by assisting students and teachers overcome obstacles and achieve goals. He has served as an inspirational speaker across the United States and has been a guest lecturer at Christopher Newport University, Hampton University, North Carolina A&T State University and George Washington University. Dr. Hodge is a trained facilitator for the Southern Regional Leadership Board (SREB) Leadership Initiative Modules, "Leading Assessment and Instruction" and "Creating a High Performance Learning Culture" and a trained assessor and facilitator in the National Association of Secondary School Principals’ (NASSP) "Developing the 21st Century Principal" program.

Dr. Hodge is a frequent speaker for elementary, middle and high school student assemblies. His presentations are often "the spark" for schools in their quest to meet and exceed state/federal accreditation standards and implement strategies for continuous improvement. Dr. Hodge is an expert in helping schools create and sustain academic excellence.
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Session #1</th>
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<tr>
<td>10:30-11:30</td>
<td>Plaza I</td>
<td>Post-Keynote Breakout: Following the S.A.M.E Pathway to Excellent Schools.</td>
<td>Keys to Statewide Assessments for Students with IEPs in FY 2019</td>
<td>Addressing the Needs of English Learners with Disabilities</td>
<td>What and How of Accessing Assistive Technology</td>
<td>Ensuring Quality and Compliant Postsecondary Transition Plans</td>
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<td>12:30-1:30</td>
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<td>1:35-2:35</td>
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**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 1, 2018**

**LUNCHEON – BALLROOM**

**SESSION #6**
Utilizing Facilitated IEPs as a Capacity Building Tool

**SESSION #7**
Special Education Cooperatives in the Illinois Report Card

**SESSION #8**
Using the TPOT (Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool) to Support Effective Practices in Inclusive Preschool Classrooms

**SESSION #9**
I-Star Student and Personnel Updates

**SESSION #10**
Making All Students College and Career Ready Through 21st Century Literacy Skills

**SESSION #11**
Making Placements in Private Special Education Facilities

**SESSION #12**
Supports from IL-EMPOWER

**SESSION #13**
Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) Updates

**SESSION #14**
I-STAR IEP: Accessing Free Electronic IEP Software

**SESSION #15**
Making All Students College and Career Ready Through 21st Century Literacy Skills (Repeat of Session #10)

**BREAK**

**SESSION #16**
State Systemic Improvement Plan: Success and Lessons

**SESSION #17**
Illinois and 7th Circuit Legislative and Legal Updates

**SESSION #18**
From Asthma to Marijuana: What’s New in School Health

**SESSION #19**
Supporting New Special Education Administrators

**SESSION #20**
Utilizing IEP-Q as Professional Development with Staff

**SOCIAL HOUR – BALLROOM**
**THURSDAY, AUGUST 2, 2018**

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<td><strong>ANNOUNCEMENTS:</strong> Heather Calomese, Executive Director of Special Education, ISBE</td>
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**GENERAL SESSION – Ballroom**

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| 8:45-10:15 | **KEYNOTE SPEAKER:** Patrick Schwarz, Ph.D.  CEO, Creative Culture Consulting, LLC  
Professor Emeritus, Diversity in Learning and Teaching Department, National Louis University, Chicago  
Dr. Patrick Schwarz is a dynamic and engaging professor, author, motivational speaker and leader in Education (Inclusive Education, Special Education, General Education, and Educational Leadership) and Human Services. He is the CEO of Creative Culture Consulting LLC and Professor Emeritus at National Louis University, Chicago. He is the author of *From Disability to Possibility®, You’re Welcome* (with Dr. Paula Kluth), *Just Give Him the Whale* (with Dr. Paula Kluth) and *Pedro’s Whale* (with Dr. Paula Kluth). His latest book is *From Possibility to Success*.  
With the goal of building current and lifelong skills for the classroom community, Patrick offers the most promising authentic processes and supports to help leaders transform school districts into meaningful inclusive practices. Included are embracing students’ interests and passions, working toward students’ dreams, promoting leadership, self-advocacy, self-determination, effective classroom supports and how we characterize and depict students. With an overview of supports and compelling stories of how they have helped real students and real teachers in real classrooms, Patrick empowers leaders to combine the science and art of teaching all learners. This keynote gives everyone hope, direction, and inspiration to turn learning possibility into educational success! |

**LEGAL SESSION - Ballroom**

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| 10:15-10:30 | **LEGAL SPEAKER:** Deusdedi Merced  
Special Education Solutions, LLC  
Attorney Deusdedi Merced has 20 years of experience in special education and other related litigation. Early in his career, Mr. Merced represented the New York City Department of Education in federal and state courts and administrative hearings. He then opened a five-attorney law firm and represented parents of children with disabilities in hundreds of IDEA due process hearings.  
Mr. Merced currently is an independent consultant whose clients include state education agencies, including the New York and Illinois state departments of education. Mr. Merced provides training for more than 100 hearing officers in several states. Mr. Merced consults on legal issues, assisting state education agencies in drafting revisions to state laws, regulations, policies, and procedures to enhance the fairness, impartiality, and independence of special education hearing processes. Mr. Merced also serves as a State review officer in Nevada. From 2010-2013, Mr. Merced served as the Chief Hearing Officer for the District of Columbia impartial special education hearing system. Mr. Merced’s accomplishments in his role as Chief Hearing Officer include achieving a thirty percent reduction in IDEA complaints filed as a result of improvements in hearing officer performance. As Chief Hearing Officer, Mr. Merced monitored and supervised the process to ensure that the parties received timely and fair due process hearings and timely, high quality decisions. From 2008-2010, Mr. Merced served as an impartial hearing officer for the District of Columbia. None of the more than 200 cases over which Mr. Merced presided were appealed, which is a testament to his knowledge of special education law and his skill as an adjudicator.  
As a result of his broad experience in special education litigation, training, and oversight, Mr. Merced has a deep appreciation for the unique perspectives of school districts, parents, and hearing officers. Mr. Merced has first-hand knowledge of the challenges hearing officers face in presiding over due process hearings. His extensive knowledge and experience have made Mr. Merced a sought-after speaker at nationally recognized conferences on special education. He has been a featured speaker at LRP’s National Institute on Legal Issues of Educating Individuals with Disabilities, LRP’s School Attorneys Conference, the Academy for IDEA Administrative Law Judges and Hearing Officers at Duke Law School and Seattle University School of Law, as well as the Lehigh Special Education Law Symposium: ALJIHO Institute. |
| 10:30-12:00 | BREAK                                                                |
Pre-conference Sessions

Tuesday, July 31, 2018 ● 1:00 – 2:25 p.m. Plaza I
IDEA Grant Overview
Tammy Greco and Felicia Malloy, Principal Consultants - ISBE

The grant team will provide an overview of the IDEA Part B grants. They will discuss the many facets of the IDEA grants and provide essential information for effective grant management.

Tuesday, July 31, 2018 ● 2:35 – 4:00 p.m. Plaza I
State and Federal Special Education Funding
Tim Imler, Division Administrator, Funding and Disbursements - ISBE

Participants will be provided the latest information on state special education funding programs and payments as well as federal IDEA Part B grant awards. A brief overview of how the IDEA Part B district allocations are calculated will be provided.

Wednesday, August 1, 2018 ● 8:15 – 8:45 a.m. Ballroom
WELCOME and STATE OF THE STATE:
Heather Calomese, Executive Director of Special Education, Illinois State Board of Education

8:45 – 10:15 a.m. Ballroom
KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Dr. John W. Hodge – BE THE ONE!

The education of America’s youth is a challenging prospect when one considers the many burdens faced by impoverished children and their families. Research indicates that poverty need not be a barrier to academic excellence. As co-author of the book Standing in the Gap, Dr. Hodge states, "Across the nation, schools are demonstrating that it can be done: That students can reach high standards, that all children can succeed, that the gap between white and minority students, poor and affluent, can be closed." More often than not, one caring adult can make all the difference in the world. Today’s presentation will encourage all of you to BE THE ONE!

Dr. Hodge is president and co-founder of Urban Learning and Leadership Center (ULLC), an organization focused on student achievement and reduction of the achievement gap. He has served as a reading teacher, English teacher, AVID teacher, Assistant Principal and Associate Director of AVID Center Eastern Division. He served as Director of An Achievable Dream Academy, an inner city school that piloted many of the interventions used by ULLC. An Achievable Dream Academy is a high performing, high poverty school that has received numerous national awards.

Dr. Hodge has helped educators in elementary, middle and high schools make the necessary changes to help all children meet and exceed rigorous academic standards. He is truly one of America's most respected new voices in education. His career has been defined by assisting students and teachers overcome obstacles and achieve goals. Dr. Hodge is a frequent speaker for elementary, middle and high school student assemblies. His presentations are often "the spark" for schools in their quest to meet and exceed state/federal accreditation standards and implement strategies for continuous improvement.
SESSION DESCRIPTIONS
Wednesday, August 1, 2018 ● 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

SESSION #1
Post-Keynote Breakout: Following the S.A.M.E Pathway to Excellent Schools.
Dr. John W. Hodge

SESSION #2
Keys to Statewide Assessments for Students with IEPs in FY 2019
Laura Quimby, Division Supervisor, Assessment and Accountability, ISBE

This session will focus on the student with a disability and the selection of the most appropriate assessment based on the student’s current data. This session will also incorporate how to maximize the full potential of the alternate assessment in alignment with the curriculum. There will also be assessment policy updates for the 2018-2019 school year.

SESSION #3
Addressing the Needs of English Learners with Disabilities
Rocio Seda, Principal Consultant, ISBE
Sonia Serrano, Principal Consultant, ISBE
Lydia Kvinta, Principal Consultant, ISBE

Multi-identified English learners with disabilities are found in many districts across Illinois. This population of students requires specific supports to address their disabilities and their English language proficiency levels. Oftentimes, the variety of needs causes confusion for practitioners. This presentation will focus on providing tools and examples of promising practices for addressing the specific needs of English learners with disabilities.

SESSION #4
What and How of Accessing Assistive Technology
Erin Saxton, Principal Consultant, ISBE
Mark McCabe, Director of K-12 AT & AAC Assessments at IATP
Greg Grill, Sr. Director at UCP Seguin/ATEN
Jenn Skalitzky, Assistive Tech and Webinar Facilitator at UCP Seguin/Infinitec

This session will focus on three different ISBE-funded assistive technology programs that are available to all students in Illinois. The Illinois Assistive Technology Program (IATP) conducts AT/AAC K-12 evaluations for students. IATP will discuss the difference between AT and AAC assessments, the entire process from the initial request to the final report, and the types of students served. The device loan program and teacher trainings will be covered. The ISBE Exchange Network (EN) grant provides refurbished computers/laptops to identified Illinois students, allowing access to technology for school or home use. In addition, this program also provides Durable Medical Equipment (DME) such as mobility items and therapy equipment for school use. Through the ISBE TA and Training grant, Infinitec provides state-of-the-art information and training on assistive technology annually throughout Illinois via seminars, conferences, and webinars. The focus of Infinitec is to build capacity to allow staff to make informed decisions on assistive technology. Additionally, Infinitec provides guidance and intensive assistive technology implementation training, including the Assistive Technology Guidance Manual.

SESSION #5
Ensuring Quality and Compliant Postsecondary Transition Plans
LaMetrice Lane, Principal Consultant, ISBE
Helen Kossler, Principal Consultant, ISBE

Students with disabilities are more likely to be employed and living independently when they have access to transition plans that are both high quality and compliant with IDEA regulations. This workshop will address how school districts and cooperatives can ensure positive outcomes for their graduating students.
SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Wednesday, August 1, 2018 ● 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

SESSION #6
PLAZA I
Utilizing Facilitated IEPs as a Capacity Building Tool
Sherry Colegrove, IEP Facilitation Coordinator, ISBE
Kathryn Cox, IEP Facilitator
Michael McElherne, IEP Facilitator

The Division of Special Education Services has concluded its first full year of IEP facilitation. This session will focus on strategies used by the state-provided facilitators to enhance effective communication and to keep team members focused on developing the Individualized Education Program (IEP) document. The presenters will also share a few lessons learned and tips for districts to support a positive facilitation outcome.

SESSION #7
PLAZA H
Special Education Cooperatives in the Illinois Report Card
Patrick Payne, Director of Data Strategies and Analytics, ISBE

Mr. Payne will provide a walk-through of ISBE’s plans to include additional entities in the Illinois Report Card for 2018. There will also be an opportunity to offer feedback and ask questions about how that information is displayed.

SESSION #8
PLAZA G
Using the TPOT (Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool) to Support Effective Practices in Inclusive Preschool Classrooms
Kathy Slattery, Project Director, STAR NET Region II
Jac McBride, Resource Specialist, STAR NET Region II

The TPOT (Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool) is an instrument used to measure practitioners’ implementation of teaching and behavior support practices associated with the Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children. As Illinois recently became a Pyramid Model State, professional development around this model has increased in early childhood inclusive programs. The TPOT can be a useful tool in planning for implementation of this framework of social emotional/behavioral support. Join this session to learn how to plan for effective integration of the Pyramid Model into your program using the 14 TPOT indicators.

SESSION #9
PLAZA F
I-STAR Student and Personnel Updates
Lindsey Atkins, Trainer/Client Support
Sarah Noelle, Trainer/Client Support
Mackenzie Schmitt, Trainer/Client Support
Debra Stubbs, Director

This session will cover current Student and Personnel I-Star topics. Evidence-Based Funding Impacts for Personnel in I-Star will be discussed by Harrisburg Project staff and ISBE’s Tim Imler. Student topics will include enhancements in I-Star for the 2018-19 school year that will improve the district and/or coop user experience. Following the presentation, there will be time for questions.

SESSION #10
PLAZA C & D
Making All Students College and Career Ready through 21st Century Literacy Skills
Margo Izzo, Program Director, Ohio State University Nisonger Center

Teaching 21st Century skills is essential for school and employment success. In this presentation, participants will be introduced to the online EnvisionIT curriculum. EnvisionIT is an evidence-based, standards-aligned intervention that teaches English/Language Arts, technology, and financial literacy skills in the context of college and career readiness to students in grades 8-12.
SESSION DESCRIPTIONS
Wednesday, August 1, 2018 • 1:35 – 2:35 p.m.

SESSION #11
Making Placements in Private Special Education Facilities
Abbey Storey, Principal Consultant, ISBE
Sue Taylor, Principal Consultant, ISBE

This session will encompass steps taken during the placement of a student into a nonpublic special education program, including the responsibilities of both the nonpublic program and the home school district before and during the placement. The session will also cover the process for Room and Board Reimbursement (Form 34-37).

SESSION #12
Supports from IL-EMPOWER
Jason Helfer, Deputy Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, ISBE
Allison Sherman, Executive Director of IL-EMPOWER, ISBE

This session will provide a brief overview of ESSA design principles, including indicators measuring school quality. In addition, participants will receive an introduction to IL-EMPOWER, the statewide system of accountability and support that empowers schools with greater choice and voice in the school improvement process. Formal implementation of IL-EMPOWER begins during the 2018-2019 school year. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions regarding the expectations and impact of this initiative on schools identified for improvement.

SESSION #13
Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) Updates
Marc Gibbs, Projects Administrator, GATA, ISBE
David Hellwig, Principal Consultant, ISBE
Alex Wheeler, Principal Consultant, ISBE

This session will provide an overview of GATA requirements for FY 19 grants.

SESSION #14
I-Star IEP Program
Harrisburg Project
Erin Saxton, Principal Consultant, ISBE
Connie Heinz, Principal Consultant, ISBE

The second I-Star IEP Program session will offer an overview of the free I-Star IEP program available to all districts/cooperatives in the state. Harrisburg Project will present the main features of the system, as well as NEW features that have been implemented over the past school year. Following the presentation, there will be time for questions.

SESSION #15
Making All Students College and Career Ready through 21st Century Literacy Skills (Repeat of Session #10)
Margo Izzo, Program Director, Ohio State University Nisonger Center

Teaching 21st Century skills is essential for school and employment success. In this presentation, participants will be introduced to the online EnvisionIT curriculum. EnvisionIT is an evidence-based, standards-aligned intervention that teaches English/Language Arts, technology, and financial literacy skills in the context of college and career readiness to students in grades 8-12.
SESSION DESCRIPTIONS
Wednesday, August 1, 2018 • 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

SESSION #16  PLAZA I
State Systemic Improvement Plan: Success and Lessons
Jodi Fleck, Principal Consultant, ISBE and Julie West, Statewide Program Director, IL MTSS-Network

Session participants will receive a brief review of the three phases of the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), with emphasis on Phase III, Years 2 and 3. A summary of SSIP Phase III, Year 2 implementation progress will be provided for each of the three SSIP coherent improvement strategies. An overview of Phase III, Year 3 will address plans, expectations, and next steps in the coming SSIP year. The session will conclude with a question/answer portion.

SESSION #17  PLAZA H
Illinois and 7th Circuit Legislative and Legal Updates
Rupa Ramadurai, Assistant General Counsel, ISBE

The presentation will provide an overview of pivotal legal cases presented in the 7th Circuit and district cases that will offer guidance to school districts and their IEP teams in service of students with disabilities. The presentation will also provide a recap of recent amendments made to the Illinois Administrative Code, proposed legislation, recently passed bills, and those awaiting the signature of the Governor, and finally will touch on the recent Public Inquiry conducted by ISBE within the Chicago Public Schools.

SESSION #18  PLAZA G
From Asthma to Marijuana: What's New in School Health
Jessica Gerdes, Registered Nurse, Principal Consultant, School Health Issues, ISBE

Come to this session to learn what is new in school health. Recent legislation (some still pending gubernatorial action) impacts school health services in ways that may produce a change in school health policy and practice in your district. This session will update the experienced director and serve as an important introduction to school health services for new directors.

SESSION #19  PLAZA F
Supporting New Special Education Administrators
Members of the SELA Board

The Illinois Special Education Leadership Academy (SELA) will be facilitating a session for all new special education directors and administrators. The purpose of this session is to review supports and professional development that are available from SELA including a mentoring program, a year-long cohort focusing on leadership, supervision, and management of special education programs; regional workshops/academies on topics relevant to special education administrators; and annual drive-around workshops. In addition, the SELA team will be sharing resources to help new administrators get started in their new roles and successfully open the 2018-2019 school year.

SESSION #20  PLAZA C & D
The IEP Utilizing IEP-Q as Professional Development with Staff
Jim Shriner, University of Illinois and Susan Carty, University of Illinois

The IEP Quality (IEPQ) Tutorial is a web-based decision-making support system to guide meaningful access to standards-referenced curriculum for students with disabilities. Developed with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, and the Illinois State Board of Education, the Tutorial is free and available to all Illinois special education professionals in K-12 schools. The presenters will provide an overview of the Tutorial’s current content and tools, which include best practice guidance and examples for nearly every section of the Illinois IEP, downloadable reference charts, planning sheets for team members to use in IEP development, and tools to assist in writing quality annual goals and short-term objectives that are aligned to new Illinois Learning Standards. The speakers will also report on the feedback received from users about the benefits and supports of the Tutorial and offer a preview of new resources under development. The presentation is best suited for participants who are unfamiliar with the Tutorial and its resources.
Thursday, August 2, 2018 ● 8:30 – 8:45 a.m.  Ballroom

ANNOUNCEMENTS:
Heather Calomese, Executive Director of Special Education, Illinois State Board of Education

Thursday, August 2, 2018 ● 8:45 – 10:15 a.m.  Ballroom

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Patrick Schwarz, Ph.D.

From Disability to Possibility: Achieving an Inclusive Life

With the goal of building current and lifelong skills for the classroom community, Dr. Schwarz offers the most promising authentic processes and supports to help leaders transform school districts into meaningful inclusive practices. Included are embracing students' interests and passions, working toward students' dreams, promoting leadership, self-advocacy, self-determination, effective classroom supports and how we characterize and depict students. With an overview of supports and compelling stories of how they have helped real students and real teachers in real classrooms, Dr. Schwarz empowers leaders to combine the science and art of teaching all learners. This keynote gives everyone hope, direction, and inspiration to turn learning possibility into educational success!

Thursday, August 2, 2018 ● 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  Ballroom

LEGAL SPEAKER: Deusdedi Merced

Hot Topics in Special Education Law

Deusdedi Merced will discuss various legal cases in special education that were published in the last two years. The selected cases will provide lessons with practical significance related to how you carry out your duties and responsibilities as a special education director. Mr. Merced will also discuss the practical considerations of applying Endrew F. across local school districts.

Attorney Deusdedi Merced has 20 years of experience in special education and other related litigation. Early in his career, Mr. Merced represented the New York City Department of Education in federal and state courts and administrative hearings. He then opened a five-attorney law firm and represented parents of children with disabilities in hundreds of IDEA due process hearings. Mr. Merced currently is an independent consultant whose clients include state education agencies, including the New York and Illinois state departments of education. Mr. Merced provides training for more than 100 hearing officers in several states. Mr. Merced consults on legal issues, assisting state education agencies in drafting revisions to state laws, regulations, policies, and procedures to enhance the fairness, impartiality, and independence of special education hearing processes. Mr. Merced also serves as a state review officer in Nevada.

From 2010-2013, Mr. Merced served as the Chief Hearing Officer for the District of Columbia impartial special education hearing system. Mr. Merced's accomplishments in his role as Chief Hearing Officer include achieving a thirty percent reduction in IDEA complaints filed as a result of improvements in hearing officer performance. As Chief Hearing Officer, Mr. Merced monitored and supervised the process to ensure that the parties received timely, fair due process hearings and timely, high quality decisions. Mr. Merced worked to improve the performance of the independent hearing officers by providing regular training, observing prehearing conferences and due process hearings, reviewing decisions and administrative records, and providing feedback on performance. Mr. Merced also served as the primary IDEA mediator, settling 95 percent of the cases he mediated. Prior to this position from 2008 to 2010, Mr. Merced served as an impartial hearing officer for the District of Columbia. None of the more than 200 cases over which Mr. Merced presided were appealed, which is a testament to his knowledge of special education law and his skill as an adjudicator.

As a result of his broad experience in special education litigation, training, and oversight, Mr. Merced has a deep appreciation for the unique perspectives of school districts, parents, and hearing officers. Mr. Merced has first-hand knowledge of the challenges hearing officers face in presiding over due process hearings. His extensive knowledge and experience have made Mr. Merced a sought-after speaker at nationally recognized conferences on special education.