

March 12, 2024

WHAT'S INSIDE

- **Safe & Healthy Climate**
- **Learning Renewal**
- **2024 Illinois Teacher of the Year Cohort**
- **College & Career Readiness**
- **Special Education**
- **Standards & Instruction**
- **Leadership**
- **Wellness**
- **In Brief**




Dear Colleagues:

I have several important updates for you today, so please read through to the end.

First, I am excited to announce a new platform for our Illinois Teacher of the Year Cohort members, called the Illinois Teacher Advisory Group. Whenever I have the privilege of being in the same room with excellent educators, I notice they have instant mutual appreciation – an unmistakable yen to learn from each other. I observed this dynamic again on Saturday, at the reception we hosted for our 2024 Teacher of the Year Cohort. We heard speeches from several past Illinois State

Teachers of the Year, including current Board Chair Dr. Steven Isoye, before handing out awards to the 15 amazing educators chosen from across the state this year. Each speech coalesced around the same idea: encouraging the members of our Teacher of the Year cohort to seize this moment. Now, more than ever before, we need their voices to elevate the profession, bolster their colleagues, and inspire a whole new generation of future teachers.

The Illinois Teacher Advisory Group will give our cohort members an opportunity to do just that. The idea has been percolating for about a year, thanks to Illinois State Teachers of the Year organization President Bill Polasky. The group's mission and purpose will evolve over time, but one thing we know for sure is that the new Illinois Teacher Advisory Group will elevate the experience, expertise and collaborative spirit of these master educators to the benefit of all teachers across the state.

On a more serious note, I want to make sure all administrators take note of the Measles Update for Daycares and Schools  (/Documents/Measles-Update.pdf) issued by the Illinois Department of Public Health. It contains important information regarding the diagnosis, transmission and treatment of measles, in light of a recent spate of measles cases. Our state was measles-free for three years, but more than half a dozen cases have been confirmed in Illinois. These incidents underscore the need to improve vaccination rates in our school age populations, which is the best protection against measles.

I also extend my deepest condolences to the entire Schuyler-Industry Schools community, and especially to the families of those who lost their lives in yesterday's tragic school bus accident.

Lastly, I want to share an update with you regarding the federally required high school accountability assessment. ISBE's current contract with the College Board for the high school accountability assessment ends June 30, 2024. As required by state procurement law, ISBE issued a competitive procurement for the future administration of a high school accountability assessment beginning in the 2024-25 school year. The procurement resulted in an award to the highest scoring responsible and responsive offeror. The procurement process is ongoing and provides for an opportunity to protest the award by certain parties.

I understand that many in the field have different opinions or would like to see a particular outcome. Please do rest assured that the assessment will continue to be aligned to state standards and will serve as a nationally recognized college entrance exam, as required by state law, and that ISBE will provide the field with ample support.

Pictured: State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tony Sanders and Board Chair Dr. Steven Isoye joined the 2024 Teacher of the Year Cohort at the annual Teacher of the Year Finalist Reception on March 9 in Bloomington to celebrate some of the state's best and brightest educators. (Not pictured: Mashanda Scott)

All my best,

Tony

DATES AND DEADLINES

Please note this is not a complete list of events, meetings, and deadlines. For more events and details, visit the ISBE Calendar page (<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/ISBE-Meetings.aspx>).

Mar. 11-15	42nd annual Illinois Arts Education Week (https://www.isbe.net/artcontest)
Mar. 13	Webinar: Out-of-School Time After ESSER: Blending and Braiding Funding (https://actnowillinois-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0sdO6gqD0tGtAXrt3afSM4wcdLBJ5IQB8G#/registration)
Mar. 13	Updates on Concussion Assessment and Treatment webinar (https://illinois.webex.com/wbxmjs/joinservice/sites/illinois/meeting/download/6156e4bd1f364cbf91e62dd639cd6c06)
Mar. 14-15	2024 WELL Summit (https://ilprincipals.org/well-summit/)
Mar. 14	Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan Office Hours
Mar. 15	Deadline to submit nominations for the INSPRA Distinguished Service Celebration (https://www.inspra.org/dsc)
Mar. 15	Deadline to apply for the 2024 NLGA Lt. Governors' STEM Scholarship Program (https://nlga.us/strategies/nlga-state-strategies-in-stem/nlga-lt-governors-stem-scholarship-program/)
Mar. 19	Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan Office Hours
Mar. 22	Deadline to enter the 2024 National Center for State Courts essay contest (https://www.ncsc.org/education-and-careers/civics/contest)
Mar. 22	Deadline to register for free suicide prevention training from Illinois Department of Public Health: Question, Persuade, Refer (https://www.echo-chicago.org/resources/qpr/)
Mar. 22	Deadline to register for free suicide prevention training from Illinois Department of Public Health: Assessing and Measuring Suicide Risk Training (https://redcap.uchicago.edu/surveys/?s=4AME4DPD4W8N37JT)
Mar. 27	Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan Office Hours
Mar. 29	Deadline to apply for NBCT incentive grant (https://nbc.illinoisstate.edu/4k-incentive/)
Mar. 29	2023-24 5Essentials Survey administration window closes (https://www.isbe.net/Pages/5Essentials-Survey.aspx)


Apr. 5	Deadline to apply for the FY 2025 Bipartisan Safer Communities Act Stronger Connections Grant (https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Stronger-Connections-Grant.aspx)
Apr. 13	Argonne National Laboratory's Middle School Electric Car Competition (https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDOEANL/bulletins/388d532)
Apr. 22-23	2024 Illinois Association of Title I Directors Conference (https://www.eventbrite.com/e/iatd-spring-2024-conference-tickets-781622091717?aff=oddttdcreator)
Apr. 30	Deadline to apply for School Food System Transformation Challenge Grants (https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/hmi/school-food-system-transformation-challenge)
May 8	National School Nurse Day
May 18	Those Who Excel & Teacher of the Year Awards Banquet
May 31	Deadline to apply for the High-Quality CTE for all Students Summer 2024 Cohort (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfkZw0fQlbXlcLo0-f0txG168zfBJ8pifdm_3R2FBZgLBtUg/viewform)
June 15	Deadline to submit nominations for School Social Worker of the Year and Citizen of the Year (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeSDxKyYCvngSQqhqz6hirBcQwixwWqm6GETGhQ_3E8xF5Lzg/viewform?pli=1)
June 18	ISBE Career Connections Conference (https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Career-Connections-Conference.aspx)
July 8-12	Computer Science PD Week (https://www.ltcillinois.org/cspdweek/)
Sep. 30	ARP ESSER III Grant Programs End

NEW

SAFE & HEALTHY CLIMATE

MEASLES UPDATE FOR DAYCARES AND SCHOOLS

Illinois was measles-free for three years, but there have been at least six confirmed cases in the past six months. In February, the Indiana Department of Health confirmed a case of measles in a young child from northwest Indiana who received medical care at three Chicago hospitals while contagious, exposing numerous individuals to the disease. This month, there was a second case of measles, this time in an older adult who had no identified source of infection but multiple community exposures during their infectious period, suggesting a concern for local transmission of measles. An additional Illinois case was just confirmed this week in a young child from a new arrival shelter. That child has recovered and is no longer infectious. These incidents underscore the need to improve vaccination rates in our school-age populations. However, we are seeing a decline in measles vaccine coverage in school-age children -- nationally and in Illinois -- to a level below the 95% herd-immunity level needed for protection against measles.

Please see the Illinois Department of Public Health's Measles Update for Daycares and Schools document  (/Documents/Measles-Update.pdf) for important information regarding the diagnosis, transmission, and treatment of measles.

VIRTUAL TRAINING ON K-12 SCHOOL SAFETY FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Join the Federal School Safety Clearinghouse at 2 p.m. on March 26 for a virtual training on federal school safety grants available to the K-12 community. Representatives from the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice will provide overviews of open and upcoming funding opportunities, eligibility requirements and deadlines, and examples of past grantee projects to help interested applicants consider how these programs could be applied towards their own school safety efforts.

Click on the “Reserve a spot” button on the K-12 School Safety Funding Opportunities webpage (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/k-12-school-safety-funding-opportunities-registration-858173047687?aff=oddttdcreator>) to register.

ART CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED

This week we’re celebrating the 42nd annual Illinois Arts Education Week, sponsored by ISBE and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in cooperation with the Governor’s Office.

Thank you for all the entries, and congratulations to the winners of the 2024 Arts Education Week poster contest.



High School Division:

Lillian Wang, age 16, 11th grade

Stevenson High School

Teacher: Feng Xie

“As children, we all wonder what is out there in the world. This curiosity drives us to learn more about the world every day. As we grow older, we gradually lose our innocence and grow more wary about the world around us. Life becomes more complex, and we have moments where we lose hope and feel like giving up. This drawing of me as a young child, eagerly pointing out the window, is about memorializing the innocence and wonder we have about the world as children. Sometimes we all need to fall back on that and remember our beginnings.”



Middle School Division:

Aisha Kochar, age 12, 6th grade

University of Chicago Lab Schools

Teacher: Ms. Ana Romero

“I wonder what people of this generation will do about climate change and global warming. In my drawing, I am looking into a portal to the future. There are two landscapes before me. The left one shows what our world could look like in the future if we don’t show much care in improving climate change. The right one shows what our world could look like if we do something to help this situation of climate change. I am hoping that our generation can help make the world a better place for future generations.”

Elementary School Division:

Grades 3-5 Winner (**Best in Show**)

Keziah Haynes, age 11, 5th grade

Prairie Oak Elementary School, Berwyn North 98

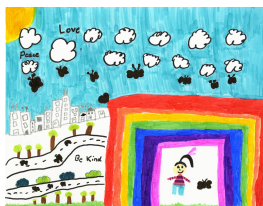
Teacher: Ms. Lopez-Martinez, Fine Arts



“My artwork is called, “A Ripple Effect” and it is somewhat more abstract than any of my other works of art. The purpose of creating this piece was to spark interest and invite the concept of wonder to the viewer. The meaning behind the work is up to discussion and it allows viewers to have a different insight to the artwork. I want them to look and reflect on their own personal wonder.

As a fifth-grade student, “I Wonder,” I think about what I want to be when I grow up. The endless possibilities puzzle me – what would my future hold? “A Ripple Effect” demonstrates this as a young girl, peer down at her older reflection illuminating her as a college graduate.

What can wonder do for you?”



Early Learning School Division:

K-2 Winner

Mai Claire Luunguyen

Age 6, 1st grade

Westchester Primary School, Westchester School District 92.5

Teacher: Mrs. Jill Jacobsen, Fine Arts

“I wonder how pretty it is to be inside a rainbow. I wonder what the view of the city looks like from the rainbow. I wonder if everyone is loving, peaceful, and kind.”

BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH

In observance of Brain Injury Awareness Month, the Illinois Partnership for Safety (IPS) and the Illinois Suicide Prevention Alliance are hosting a webinar: Updates on Concussion Assessment and Treatment

(<https://illinois.webex.com/wbxmjs/join/service/sites/illinois/meeting/download/6156e4bd1f364cbf91e62dd639cd6c06>) from

2-3 p.m. on March 13 featuring Elizabeth M. Pieroth, PsyD, ABPP, MPH, director of the Concussion Program at Rush University Medical Center and Midwest Orthopedics at Rush.

Objectives:

- Present newest updates on concussion consensus statement.
- Review new assessment and treatment recommendations.
- Discuss data on concussions in females.
- Review appropriate referrals for treatment.

Registration is not required. Go to the Webex website

(<https://illinois.webex.com/wbxmjs/join/service/sites/illinois/meeting/download/6156e4bd1f364cbf91e62dd639cd6c06>) at the time of the webinar to join it.

Contact Jennifer Martin, project manager for Injury and Violence Prevention at the Illinois Department of Public Health at Jennifer.L.Martin@illinois.gov (mailto:Jennifer.L.Martin@illinois.gov) or 217-558-4081 with questions or comments.


NEW

LEARNING RENEWAL

Each week this section will focus on the learning renewal that is taking place in Illinois schools. We invite you to share (<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?>


id=hv5kA8ZJ9Eq1LDNameV30Ufi4KgH87ICv6FRRQl8cvIUNTdHWktDS1NJWjJZVDFaQ09RVINCUVdMRi4u) how you are investing federal relief funds to help students recover.

ILLINOIS TUTORING INITIATIVE REPORT REVEALS REMARKABLE IMPACT ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The latest report from the Illinois Tutoring Initiative  (<https://illinoistutoringinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/ITI-STUDENT-and-TUTOR-OUTCOMES-REPORT-AY2393.pdf>) (ITI) sheds light on the significant strides made in student achievement across the state. Data from 3,124 students was analyzed. The report showcases compelling evidence of the effectiveness of high-impact tutoring in closing learning gaps and fostering academic growth.

One of the key highlights of the report is the statewide achievement observed among tutored students compared to their non-tutored peers. The analysis revealed statistically significant higher scores in both reading and math, indicating the tangible benefits of the ITI program. Tutored students exhibited consistent growth in both reading and math, with an impressive 90% meeting or exceeding expected growth in math and approximately 80% in reading between fall 2022 and spring 2023. This consistent progress underscores the effectiveness of the ITI in supporting learning recovery efforts statewide.

Susan Ramsey, a teacher and tutor at Jonesboro Grade School, said, "Parents report that their children's tutoring sessions have alleviated the nightly homework battles, have raised their children's grades, and have restored a sense of balance and peace to their school night home lives."

Read more about the Illinois Tutoring Initiative in the recent report  (<https://illinoistutoringinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/ITI-STUDENT-and-TUTOR-OUTCOMES-REPORT-AY2393.pdf>) and press release (</Lists/News/NewsDisplay.aspx?ID=1489>).

SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING: DEADLINE EXTENDED, NEW OPTION FOR BULK REGISTRATIONS

The registration deadline for the Illinois Department of Public Health's free suicide prevention training courses designed specifically for educators has been extended to **March 22** to offer additional opportunities for educators and school personnel to participate. Additionally, district leaders can opt for bulk registration, streamlining the process for districtwide participation.

Two courses are offered:

- Question, Persuade, Refer Training (<https://www.echo-chicago.org/resources/qpr/>), a one-credit hour course, is open to all school personnel.
- Assessing and Measuring Suicide Risk Training (<https://redcap.uchicago.edu/surveys/?s=4AME4DPD4W8N37JT>), a 6.5-credit hour course, is targeted at school support personnel, including school social workers, counselors, psychologists, and nurses.

Districts or schools interested in bulk registration may contact klee64@bsd.uchicago.edu (mailto:klee64@bsd.uchicago.edu). For all other questions, contact DPH.Safety@illinois.gov (mailto:DPH.Safety@illinois.gov).

NEW

2024 ILLINOIS TEACHER OF THE YEAR COHORT

ISBE has announced the members of the 2024 Illinois Teacher of the Year Cohort, including the 13 finalists for 2024 Illinois State Teacher of the Year. The annual Teacher of the Year program honors incredible classroom educators who have made lasting impacts on the students, families, and fellow educators in their school communities. ISBE will showcase cohort members in the Weekly Message each week leading up to the announcement of the 2024 Illinois State Teacher of the Year this spring. Congratulations to all this year's extraordinary awardees!

BERENICE DIAZ

Cook County Regional Teacher of the Year

Early Learning Center First Steps Preschool, *East Maine District 63*



Berenice Diaz is the dual language preschool teacher at the Early Learning Center First Steps Preschool in East Maine District 63. From an early age, Ms. Diaz had a clear aspiration to pursue a career in teaching, driven by a desire to inspire and educate young minds, cultivating their creative and critical thinking skills. Ms. Diaz's ultimate goal is to inculcate a love for learning in each of her students, a passion that will endure and continue to blossom long after they leave the classroom. Ms. Diaz is devoted to expanding family involvement beyond their "home" responsibilities. To achieve this, Ms. Diaz enjoys introducing families to new concepts and experiences by working alongside them in order for them to benefit from richer experiences and opportunities for growth. She has received invaluable support and profound gratitude during her five-year instructional career as she strives to enhance her instructional capabilities.

In May 2022, Ms. Diaz received her district's Extra Mile award, which is conferred upon staff members who have exhibited exceptional commitment to student success, teamwork, and instructional excellence. Similarly, in May 2023, she was awarded her district's Pam Surber Award of Excellence, which recognizes instructional staff for making an unwavering commitment to student and family engagement and instructional excellence; prioritizing the academic, social, and emotional needs of children; and ensuring equity for all children. In addition to earning these awards, Ms. Diaz demonstrates leadership skills by serving on multiple school and district committees to support the home-school connection and families' involvement in their student's education.

MASHANDA SCOTT



Cook County Regional Teacher of the Year

Clara Barton Elementary School, *Chicago Public Schools*

Mashanda Denae Scott is a National Board Certified Teacher in early and middle childhood literacy. She teaches fifth grade at Chicago Public Schools' Clara Barton Elementary School on the Southside of Chicago, where she helped create and implement the Reading Millionaires Club – a program that challenged all fifth grade students to read for a million minutes before the school year ended. Students gauged their progress with comprehension tests, earning rewards from local businesses for hitting milestones. Students were seen reading at lunch and recess, in enrichment classes, and even on bathroom breaks. Her pilot turned into a schoolwide initiative.

She actively works on the school's attendance and Multi-Tiered System of Support committees to improve the overall student experience. Mrs. Scott also serves as a mentor teacher for the Chicago Teachers Union. Her most rewarding professional experience has been in creating a community of teachers who were empowered to bring reading culture into their classrooms.

Mrs. Scott has been recognized as an Innovator of the Year for bringing inquiry and science inside the classroom. She is an advocate for her students known for her ability to collaborate with community stakeholders to give her students access to experiences outside of their community.

Mrs. Scott earned a Master of Arts in Elementary Education and is pursuing her Doctor of Education in Administration and Supervision with an emphasis in Curriculum and Instruction. Mrs. Scott's long-term research interests include enhancing student, teacher, and parent relationships; fostering an environment where students can learn and grow; and narrowing the student achievement gap in underprivileged neighborhoods.

NEW



COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

FAFSA RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS, FAMILIES, EDUCATORS, AND COUNSELORS

FAFSA completion is a graduation requirement in Illinois. Make sure to check studentaid.gov (<http://studentaid.gov>) for regular updates on all things FAFSA®, including webinars, pro tips, and toolkits for students, families, educators, and counselors. Your students can visit the ISACorps webpage to find their local ISACorps member (a near-peer helper) and a

list of community events.

More helpful resources:

- Better FAFSA Toolkit for Students & Families  (<https://www2.ed.gov/finaid/info/apply/fafsa-toolkit-students-families.pdf>)
- Better FAFSA Toolkit for Counselors & Educators  (<https://www2.ed.gov/finaid/info/apply/fafsa-toolkit-educators-counselors.pdf>)
- Pro Tips for the 2024–25 FAFSA® Form (<https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/fafsa-support/pro-tips>)
- 6 Things Students Need Before They Fill Out the 2024–25 FAFSA® Form (<https://studentaid.gov/articles/things-you-need-for-fafsa/#:~:text=However%2c%20beginning%20with%20the%202024%2con%20your%20Social%20Security%20card.>)
- How To Submit the 2024–25 FAFSA® Form if Your Contributor Doesn't Have an SSN (<https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/fafsa-support/contributor-social-security-number>)
- Federal Student Aid Estimator (<https://studentaid.gov/aid-estimator/>)
- Sign up to get information about upcoming events (<https://outreach.fsapartners.ed.gov/s>)
- Social Media (<https://studentaid.gov/notices/social>)

2024 SUMMER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CALENDAR

The professional learning calendar (<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wN2RIHUcq-Ei4yglxT4KBKEdnvPkva46AMRc8ZniOAQ/edit>) provides an overview of professional learning events being offered this summer. Additional learning opportunities may be added, and the majority of events are free for Illinois educators. Professional development hours (and Administrator Academy credit, where relevant) are available. More information and/or registration for these experiences can be found on the ISBE Career Technical & Education webpage ([/Pages/Career-Technical-Education.aspx](#)).


NEW

SPECIAL EDUCATION

LATE LIQUIDATION ARP-IDEA PART B REQUEST

The deadline to obligate American Rescue Plan (ARP) Part B IDEA Flow-Through (4998 ID), ARP Coordinated Early Intervening Services (4998 CE), or ARP IDEA Preschool (4998 PS) funds was **Sept. 30, 2023**. The deadline to liquidate funds was **Jan. 28, 2024**.

If funds were obligated by **Sept. 30, 2023**, the U.S. Department of Education can approve liquidation extension requests. Each grantee must submit a written request, in accordance with 2 CFR § 200.344(b), based upon specific obligation facts and circumstances. On behalf of grantees, ISBE may request an extension of up to 14 months beyond the automatic 120-day liquidation period, which would extend the liquidation period through **March 31, 2025**.


As a grantee, you are able to submit a request at this time. In order to request a liquidation extension please complete this survey (<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=hv5kA8ZJ9Eq1LDNameV30Qk2uwwzo7IEIEOT9TACHIdUMVY4TjYxNFFVREVRQVFXUjdaR1IYWVhYUS4u>) by **April 12**. Completion of the survey will ensure review and submission of your extension request. If you have questions about the liquidation extension request process, please see ISBE's ARP Part B IDEA Liquidation Extension Requests  ([/Documents/Liquidation-Ext-Request-ARP-Part-B-IDEA-Funds.pdf](#)) PowerPoint presentation for an overview. If you have questions about completing the survey, please contact Twylia Bennett at GrantsTeamReporting@isbe.net (<mailto:GrantsTeamReporting@isbe.net>).

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL: SPECIAL EDUCATION LEADERSHIP ACADEMY 2024-25 ADMINISTRATOR ACADEMIES

The Illinois Special Education Leadership Academy (SELA) is accepting proposals for the development of new Administrator Academies for the 2024-25 school year on the following topics:

- Behavior/Discipline
- Supporting/Coaching staff
- Special education leadership
- English learners
- Transition
- General education/special education administrator collaboration
- Dispute resolution
- Other topics of relevance for educating students with disabilities

Successful applicants will be paid \$5,000 per proposal for completing, submitting, and making required revisions, if any, as well as conducting one presentation. There will be a \$4,500 stipend paid upon approval; the remaining \$500 will be paid after the SELA presentation.

Proposals are due **April 1**. View the Request for Proposal  (<https://campussuite-storage.s3.amazonaws.com/prod/1559142/55884a52-4353-11ed-ae8a-0e8d50c885b7/2753921/11aa4c34-dcba-11ee-88f1-0e56db942e05/file/Academy%20RFP%203.2024.pdf>). Please send questions and submit proposals to Molly Dunne at mdunne@nsseo.org (<mailto:mdunne@nsseo.org>).

NEW


STANDARDS & INSTRUCTION

COMPUTER SCIENCE EQUITY GRANT

The new competitive Computer Science Equity Grant, which was enacted by Public Act 103-0264 (<https://ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=103-0264>), is now available. The purpose of the grant is to create opportunities for K-12 learners to develop or enhance computer science skills through coordinated statewide professional learning. It will support efforts to improve equity outcomes and decrease accessibility issues to ensure all K-12 students in public school districts can engage in computer science learning. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)/Request for Proposals (RFP) sets forth requirements that apply to funding, renewal provisions, and rulemaking. The NOFO/RFP can be found on the Standards and Courses page (</Pages/Standards-Courses.aspx>), under the blue bar titled "Funding Opportunities."

LEADERSHIP






FIRESIDE CHAT WITH DR. SANDERS AND GOLDIE HAWN

Did you miss State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tony Sanders' Fireside Chat with Academy Award-winning actress, producer, director, best-selling author, and founder of MindUp (<https://mindup.org/>), Goldie Hawn? No worries. We recorded it for you! Head over to our YouTube channel  (<https://youtu.be/7lr0cqzzFbw>) to watch their in-depth conversation about mental health and resiliency.

WELLNESS

UPDATED RESOURCES TO INCREASE 5ESSENTIALS PARENT PARTICIPATION

The deadline to complete the 5Essentials Survey (</Pages/5Essentials-Survey.aspx>) is soon approaching. We have updated our 5Essentials webpage with additional resources to assist schools in increasing their parent participation and reaching the goal of at least a 20% participation rate, including:

- Flyers (in English  (</Documents/5Essentials-Parent-Flyer-English.pdf>) and Spanish  (</Documents/5Essentials-parent-flyer-Spanish.pdf>))
- Tip sheet  (</Documents/5Essentials-Tips-Parent-Participation.pdf>)
- Parent Guide (in English  (</Documents/5E-Parent-Family-Guide-English.pdf>) and Spanish  (</Documents/5E-Parent-Family-Guide-Spanish.pdf>))

FY 2025 BIPARTISAN SAFER COMMUNITIES ACT STRONGER CONNECTIONS GRANT

ISBE is pleased to announce that the fiscal year 2025 Bipartisan Safer Communities Act Stronger Connections Grant Program Request for Proposals (RFP) is now available. The program's purpose is to support high-need Local Education Agencies in their efforts to prevent violence and to establish safe, healthy, inclusive, and supportive teaching and learning opportunities and environments that create a positive school culture and climate and prioritize student wellness and academic outcomes through evidence-based activities as specified in Section 4108 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Available federal funds will not exceed \$40,424,746. Successful applicants will receive a one-time award of no less than \$100,000 to a maximum of \$4,958,020, contingent upon district population to include a base and per student amount based on the most recent fall enrollment report.

For more information, including a technical assistance webinar <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EHFKmkfHTDQ&feature=youtu.be>) and the RFP [\(/Documents/FY25-BSCA-Stronger-Connections-NOFO.pdf\)](/Documents/FY25-BSCA-Stronger-Connections-NOFO.pdf), visit ISBE's Stronger Connections Grant webpage [\(/Pages/Stronger-Connections-Grant.aspx\)](/Pages/Stronger-Connections-Grant.aspx). If you have any questions, please contact Sarah Littrell at strongerconnections@isbe.net (mailto:strongerconnections@isbe.net). Responses to questions received will be posted in an FAQ document on the Stronger Connections Grant webpage. Proposals are due no later than **April 5**.

IN BRIEF

EDUCATOR OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities for Teachers to Grow their Leadership

Teach Plus Illinois will offer four fellowships for educators this fall:

- Chicago Change Agent Fellowship (https://teachplus.org/regional_programs/instructional-leadership-programs-illinois/)
- Illinois Policy Fellowship (https://teachplus.org/regional_programs/policy-fellowship-illinois/)
- Early Childhood Educator Policy Fellowship (https://teachplus.org/regional_programs/illinois-early-childhood-educator-policy-fellowship/)
- Affinity Group Facilitators Fellowship (https://teachplus.org/regional_programs/illinois-affinity-group-facilitators/)

Teach Plus Illinois' programs are highly selective leadership opportunities for outstanding teachers looking to expand their influence without leaving the classroom. They span the 2024-25 school year and offer selected teachers a generous stipend for their time and effort.

The Change Agent Fellowship supports Chicago teachers who see a problem they want to address at their school, the Policy Fellowships are for teachers throughout Illinois who want to advocate for policy change on behalf of their students, and the Affinity Group Fellowship is for teachers who want to facilitate supportive environments for teachers of color. Grow as a teacher leader by exploring these opportunities!

Teach Plus Illinois is seeking cohorts of excellent educators who reflect the cultural, linguistic, and geographic diversity of our students. Additionally, applicants:


- Are teachers with at least two full years of teaching experience by August 2024.
- Have a track record of success teaching students.
- Are ready to dedicate time and passion to their fellowship.

For more information on these opportunities, please contact Kimberly Nguyen at knguyen@teachplus.org (mailto:knguyen@teachplus.org). Applications are due between **April 7** and **May 1**, depending on the program.

Illinois Poison Prevention Month Resources

March is Illinois Poison Prevention Month. The Illinois Poison Center (IPC) is happy to provide students, school nurses, and staff with a free, quick, and easy online Poison Prevention Education Course

(<https://www.illinoispoisoncenter.org/education/poison-prevention-education/>) (available in English and Spanish). IPC also invites all Illinois middle and high schools to:

- Integrate this free course into the school's curriculum (early learning/development, science, physical development and health, community service, etc.). Bonus: Nurses, child care providers, and emergency medical services professionals can earn free continuing education credit (<https://www.illinoispoisoncenter.org/education/continuing-education-credit/>).
- Integrate the IPC logo into your communications.
- Encourage staff/students to order free poison prevention education materials  (<https://ipcblog.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Illinois-Poison-Prevention-Month-flyer-1.pdf>) (tote bags, activity books, stickers, posters, magnets, etc.).

Illinois Council for the Social Studies Spring Conference

Teachers, administrators, and curriculum specialists are invited to the Illinois Council for the Social Studies Annual Conference (<https://www.illinoiscss.net/conferences.html>) on **April 12** at the University of Illinois Springfield. This year's theme is "Emerging Narratives and Technologies in Social Studies," and sessions will focus on AI and generative technologies as well as expanding students' experiences with underrepresented voices. Sessions include dialogue regarding navigating controversial topics in the classroom, using Supreme Court cases in the classroom, and more.

STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

Your Voice: Changing the World, One Speech at a Time Contest

The Simon Wiesenthal Center's Mobile Museum of Tolerance (MMOT) has joined with the Illinois Commission on Discrimination and Hate Crimes for the "Your Voice: Changing the World, One Speech at a Time" contest as part of its ongoing work to promote human dignity and digital media literacy.

All students in Grades 6-12 can weigh in on a quote from Simon Wiesenthal, a Holocaust survivor who dedicated his post-Holocaust life to pursuing justice. Speeches are due **March 22**. For more information on the contest, visit the MMOT website (<https://mmot.com/your-voice/2024-2/>).

FEATURED ISBE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

- Accountability Dept. Developer/Statistician (Principal Consultant #1824)
- Data Strategies & Analytics Supervisor 1541
- Early Childhood Development Administrative Support (Program Specialist II #425)

View all open positions at ISBE (</Pages/Careers-at-ISBE.aspx>).