



Illinois State Board of Education

Direct Certification

Nutrition Department

Roxanne Ramage, MS, RDN, SNS

rramage@isbe.net

Equity • Quality • Collaboration • Community

Commonly Used Acronyms

2

- **HEA** – Household Eligibility Application
- **IWAS** - ISBE Web Application Security
- **LEA** – Local Educational Agency
- **NSLP** – National School Lunch Program
- **POS** – Point of Service
- **SNAP** - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- **SIS** – Student Information System
- **TANF** - Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
- **WINS** – Web-based Illinois Nutrition System



Carryover of Previous Year's Eligibility

- Schools are required to carryover eligibility from the previous year for 30 operating days into the subsequent school year or until a new determination has been made, whichever comes first.
- Although schools are NOT required to notify households that carryover period has ended, we have a sample form and recommend that you do.
- Household is responsible for any meal charges incurred until new application is received and approved. Refer to your Local school policy on charging meals.

SY2022-2023 Eligibility Carryover

- For those schools returning to regular meal counting and claiming for SY22-23 that either participated in NSLP/SBP or who participated in SSO and conducted certification and verification for SY21-22, the meal benefit status of eligible students (free or reduced-price) at the end of the prior school year must be carried over for up to 30-operating days OR until a new eligibility status is determined.

**For any school operating SSO during SY21-22 and did NOT conduct certification and verification for SY21-22, the USDA has provided flexibility to use the most recent eligibility data available for their school district, even if the most recent available data is determinations from SY19-20. (Waiver #6 in WINS, if needed)



Full-Year Eligibility

- Once Eligibility is determined, whether direct certification or via HEA, that eligibility remains in effect for the rest of that school year and for carryover into the subsequent school year.
- Households are NOT required to report changes in income, household size, receipt of benefits, or homeless/migrant status.
- Exceptions to full-year eligibility occur when:
 - The initial eligibility determination was incorrect, maybe due to a confirmation review or audit/review.
 - Verification of household eligibility does not support the level of benefits for which the household was approved.



Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

CEP approved schools continue to have access to the electronic direct certification and should continue to track data to determine if the CEP identified student percentages are increasing/decreasing/remaining level.



How Are Meal Benefits Determined?

- Direct Certification

- Certification of SNAP/TANF/Income-eligible Medicaid/Foster Child AND Homeless/Migrant/Head Start benefits via *Electronic Direct Certification System*

OR

- Categorical Eligibility

- Homeless, migrant, runaway, foster child or Head Start listing

OR

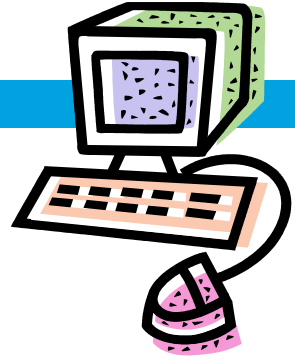
- Household Eligibility Application (HEA)

- SNAP/TANF application
- Income application
- Foster child application



Overview of the Electronic Direct Certification System

8






- The *Electronic Direct Certification System* contains confidential data and accessible by USDA program participating schools only.
- You must have a login name and password to *IWAS* to access *WINS*.
- The *Electronic Direct Certification System* is available from the main dashboard in *WINS*.
- All rules and regulations regarding the use of this data including confidentiality and disclosure must be followed.



Main Dashboard in WINS

9

Sponsor Tasks	Sponsor Applications & Participation	Site Applications	Claims & Monitoring	Sponsor Info
Administrative Tasks				
Sponsor Tasks		Site Application Tasks		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Batch Daily Meal Counts Batch Participation Detail Add/Remove Detail Dates Batch Site Questionnaire Batch Site Participation CEP Group Information Add New Site Deactivate/Re-activate Site(s) Deactivate Sponsor Review Citation Responses Supply Chain Assistance (SCA) Waivers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enroll Site In New Program Edit Site Questionnaire Edit Program Participation Edit Participation Detail		
Reports		Budget		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waiver Submissions Applications Not Received NSIP Monthly Summary Report Direct Certification Deleted Sites Claim Data Report Summary Reports - Applications Submitted for Sponsor Summary Reports - Applications Submitted for Sites Summary Reports - List of Sites and Applications Submitted		No WINS Budgets required.		



Direct Certification in Illinois

10

Direct Certification is conducted through a partnership between the ISBE and the following:

- Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) for **SNAP and TANF records**,
- Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) for **income-eligible Medicaid records** and
- Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) for **foster children records**.

What is Direct Certification?

11

- Direct Certification is the process when LEAs certify children who are members of households receiving assistance under the SNAP, TANF, income eligible Medicaid or Foster Children as eligible for free or reduced-price school meals/milk based on agency records. Added Homeless, Migrant, and Head Start reports via SIS for Public Schools Only.
- Households in which students are directly certified are NOT required to complete the Household Eligibility Application to receive free meal/milk benefits.
- Via extension of meal benefits, if any member of the household is eligible for SNAP/TANF/Income Eligible Medicaid benefits, all students in that household are eligible for free or reduced-price meal/milk benefits.
 - Extension of benefits is NOT allowed for Foster Child, Homeless, Migrant or Head Start status.
- Students directly certified for free or reduced-price school meal/milk benefits are eligible for the entire school year and are not subject to verification requirements.



Frequency of Direct Certification

12

- Direct Certification is a requirement for LEAs participating in NSLP and must be conducted at least three times annually per USDA as follows:
 1. at or around the beginning of the school year,
 2. three months after the initial effort, and
 3. six months after the initial effort.
- ISBE recommends that all sponsors (Public and Non-public) access the *Electronic Direct Certification System* monthly to maximize direct certification and lessen administrative paperwork!



Eligibility Process



- **Step One:**
 - Begin July 1 Annually
 - Maximize Direct Certification
 - Access and process the July Annual File or complete Upload of Enrollment File
 - Could also include August File, depending on start date of school and preference
 - Extend benefits if SNAP, TANF or Income Eligible Medicaid
- **Step Two:**
 - Notify households directly certified for free or reduced price meals benefits.
- **Step Three:**
 - Distribute a HEA (Letter to Household, Application and Instructions) to all household not directly certified for meal benefits.



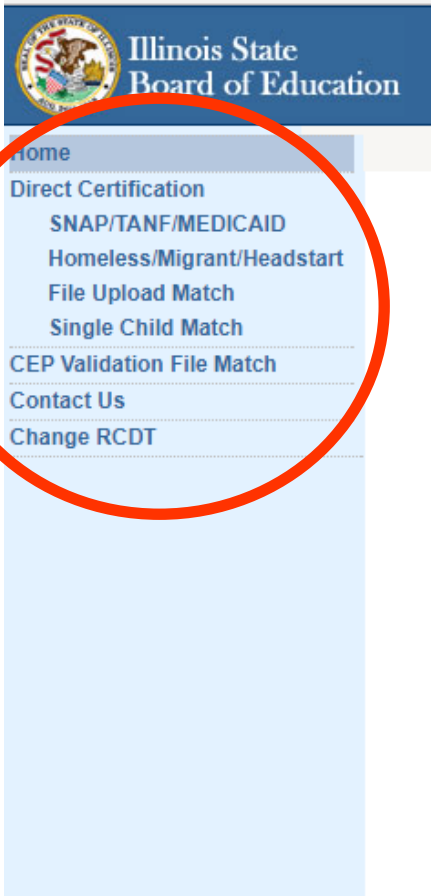
Eligibility Process

- **Step Four:**
 - **Process HEA according to USDA requirements within 10 days of receipt**
 - **Continue to document directly certified students, if possible**
- **Step Five:**
 - **Notify all households who submitted HEA if approved or denied.**
- **Step Six:**
 - **Throughout the school year, access direct certification reports and process all submitted HEAs.**



Electronic Direct Certification Home

15



Illinois State Board of Education

Home

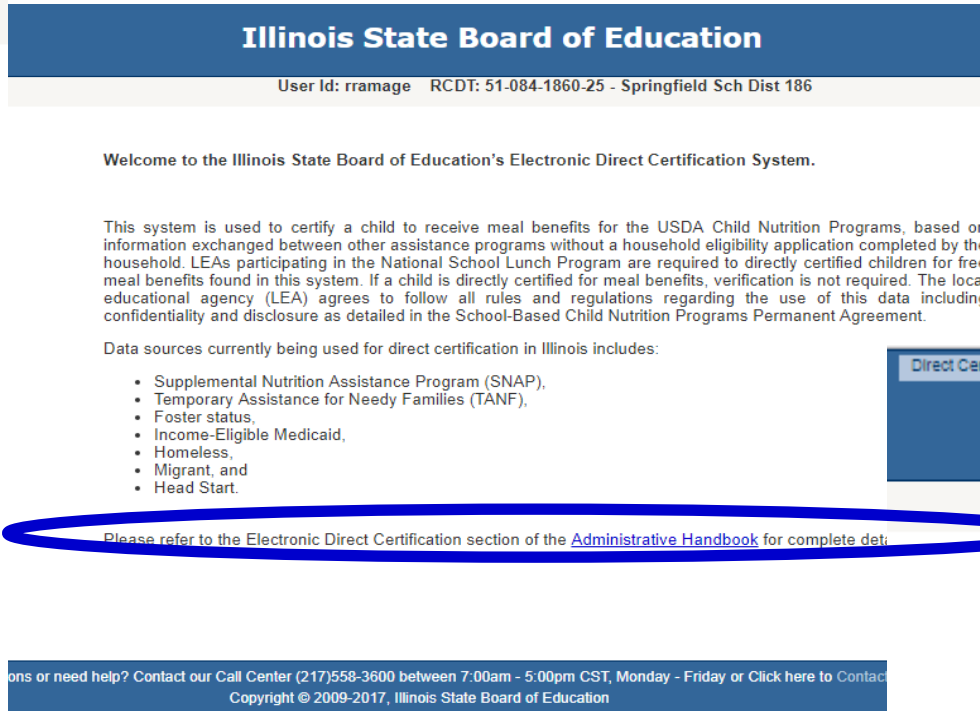
Direct Certification

- SNAP/TANF/MEDICAID
- Homeless/Migrant/Headstart
- File Upload Match
- Single Child Match

CEP Validation File Match

Contact Us

Change RCDT



Illinois State Board of Education

User Id: rramage RCDT: 51-084-1860-25 - Springfield Sch Dist 186

Welcome to the Illinois State Board of Education's Electronic Direct Certification System.

This system is used to certify a child to receive meal benefits for the USDA Child Nutrition Programs, based on information exchanged between other assistance programs without a household eligibility application completed by the household. LEAs participating in the National School Lunch Program are required to directly certify children for free meal benefits found in this system. If a child is directly certified for meal benefits, verification is not required. The local educational agency (LEA) agrees to follow all rules and regulations regarding the use of this data including confidentiality and disclosure as detailed in the School-Based Child Nutrition Programs Permanent Agreement.

Data sources currently being used for direct certification in Illinois includes:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP),
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF),
- Foster status,
- Income-Eligible Medicaid,
- Homeless,
- Migrant, and
- Head Start.

Please refer to the Electronic Direct Certification section of the [Administrative Handbook](#) for complete details.

Direct Certification Home | ISBE HOME | LOGOUT

SESSION TIMEOUT 18:11

Questions or need help? Contact our Call Center (217)558-3600 between 7:00am - 5:00pm CST, Monday - Friday or [Click here to Contact Us](#)

Copyright © 2009-2017, Illinois State Board of Education

Electronic Direct Certification

16

- Annual/Monthly Match
 - *(Public School Districts ONLY)*
- Sponsor File Upload Match
 - *(ALL LEAs)*
- Single Child Lookup
 - *(ALL LEAs)*



Annual/Monthly Match

(Public School Districts ONLY)

17

- File available July 1st annually and each month thereafter
- File Type: *Annual/Monthly*
- The *Annual* file will identify the students that were enrolled in SIS (June Records) for your district that are receiving SNAP/TANF/Foster or Income Eligible Medicaid benefits.
- Each Public School District will have **ONE** *Annual* File each school year.



Annual/Monthly Match





















(Public School Districts ONLY)

18

- The *Monthly* file will identify any new students that are enrolled in SIS (Current Month Records) that did NOT appear on the *Annual* file for your district that are receiving SNAP/TANF/income eligible Medicaid/Foster child benefits.
- *Monthly* files will identify the number of matches found via this match. In some cases, this will be zero.
- Students on this report/file, currently enrolled in your district, are automatically eligible for free or reduced price meals/milk, **regardless of the case ID number and the address listed on the file.**
- It is unlikely that ALL students on the file will be directly certified. For example, some students may NOT re-enroll in your district or may transfer schools. Some matches are close matches, and not an enrolled student.
- Public schools should access the *Monthly* file as close to the 1st of the month as possible.



SNAP/Tanf/Medicaid Monthly/Annual Match Files

File Type	Approximate Number of Records	Match Date	Access Date	Download	Print
Monthly	5	08/01/2022	08/05/2022		
Annual	8,524	07/01/2022	06/30/2022		
Monthly	73	06/01/2022	06/02/2022		
Monthly	105	05/05/2022	05/05/2022		
Monthly	9	05/01/2022	05/02/2022		
Monthly	120	04/01/2022	04/02/2022		
Monthly	67	03/01/2022	03/01/2022		
Monthly	193	02/01/2022	02/08/2022		
Monthly	No matches found	01/20/2022		N/A	N/A
Monthly	6	01/01/2022	01/03/2022		
Monthly	405	12/01/2021	12/02/2021		



Annual Match Steps



- Home
- Direct Certification
 - SNAP/TANF/MEDICAID**
 - Homeless/Migrant/Headstart
 - File Upload Match
 - Single Child Match
- CEP Validation File Match
- Contact Us
- Change RCDT

Download File

Each public school district LEA will have a download file named Annual. This file is created one time per year (early July) by ISBE to compare students enrolled in the Student Information System (SIS) with the current SNAP/TANF/MEDICAID/FOSTER file. Public school districts are encouraged to update student eligibility using the Annual file first.

A Monthly file is created for all public schools the first of the month for each month thereafter (September – June). The August file will compare to the previous school year SIS records. The September- June Monthly file will compare to the current school year SIS records. A zero record match may result from either no new matches or a district not having a current school year SIS record. Each Monthly file is NOT a cumulative file, and must be used in conjunction with the Annual Report.

If any LEA uploads a file with student information to match to the SNAP/TANF database, the download file(s) will be named Sponsor File with the appropriate date.

For each file, the LEA must maintain the documentation from the Printed Report. The option to Download the data is available to ease transfer of data into another computer program.

Students found in this manner are directly certified for free meal benefits. Direct Certification benefits are extending to other household members when the status is SNAP, TANF, or income Eligible MEDICAID. There is no extension of benefits for Foster eligibility status.

SNAP/Tanf/Medicaid Monthly/Annual Match Files

File Type	Approximate Number of Records	Match Date	Access Date	Download	Print
Monthly	475	08/01/2017			
Annual	8,511	07/01/2017			



Homeless, Migrant, Head Start

21

Effective SY2018-2019: Only Available September 1 – June 30

Illinois State Board of Education

User Id: rramage RCDT: 51-084-1860-25 - Springfield Sch Dist 186

Home
Direct Certification
SNAP/TANF/MEDICAID
Homeless/Migrant/Headstart
File Upload Match
Single Child Match
CEP Validation File Match
Contact Us
Change RCDT

Download File

As this feature utilizes data found in the Student Information System, this function is only available for PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Each public school district LEA may access a current direct certification report for students categorized as homeless, migrant or Head Start within the Student Information System. This report must be printed and maintained as documentation of such statuses. Students found in this manner are directly certified for free meal benefits. There is no extension of benefits for Homeless, Migrant or Head Start eligibility status.

Homeless Migrant HeadStart

File Type	Approximate Number of Records	Description	Download	Print
HMHS	34	Homeless, Migrant, Headstart Students		

Have questions or need help? Contact our Call Center (217)558-3600 between 7:00am - 5:00pm CST, Monday - Friday or Click here to Contact Us

Copyright © 2009-2017, Illinois State Board of Education

Annual/Monthly Match (Public School Districts ONLY)

22

- Select PRINT – An Annual/Monthly Match Report is displayed.
- **This Report MUST be printed and maintained to document eligibility status.**
- The Eligibility of a student begins either the first day of the match month or the access date, depending on the districts selections for HEA effective dates.
- File also available for Download. See Admin Handbook for detailed instructions if needed for POS.



Sponsor Match (ALL LEAs)

23

- Any LEA may upload a comma delimited file at any time.
- Each file must contain the following fields:
 - First Name,
 - Last Name,
 - Gender, (F-Female, M-Male)
 - Birth date (month/day/year, 01/17/2004)
- An optional 5th and 6th column of data may be added.
 - Such fields will be returned unchanged in the sponsor match file.
 - May be helpful to include SIS ID number, name of school, etc. for ease of matching to overall student file.
- Results will be displayed as File Type: *Sponsor File*



Sponsor Match (ALL LEAs)

24

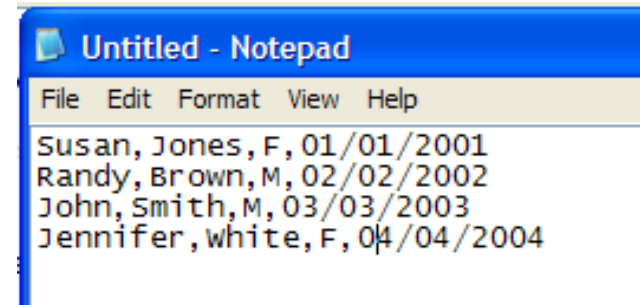
- Results will identify the students included on the upload file that are receiving SNAP/TANF/income eligible Medicaid/Foster Child benefits.
- Students on this report/file may be directly certified for free or reduced price meals/milk if the LEA determines that the students are enrolled in the school/school district.



What is a comma delimited file ?

25

- A file format that is used for uploading data to the *Electronic Direct Certification System*.
- A comma delimited file uses a [comma](#) to separate values.
 - Example: Susan,Jones,F,01/01/2007
- See sample in Notepad below.
- More detailed information about comma delimited files and how to create one in both Notepad and Microsoft Excel are included in the *Guidance Document*.



```
Untitled - Notepad
File Edit Format View Help
Susan, Jones, F, 01/01/2001
Randy, Brown, M, 02/02/2002
John, Smith, M, 03/03/2003
Jennifer, white, F, 04/04/2004
```

Duplicate Matches for Same Student

26

- In some instances, a student might be found in one program file one month, and another program file another month. This is a duplicate student match.

- If this occurs, please use the following as the hierarchy of direct certification status:
 1. SNAP
 2. TANF
 3. Foster
 4. Income Eligible Medicaid – FREE
 5. Income Eligible Medicaid – REDUCED

Single Child Lookup (ALL LEAs)

27

- LEA may search for a single student who may be receiving SNAP/TANF/Income Eligible Medicaid/Foster Child benefits.
- An LEA may search First name, Last name, and City.
- A *Single Child Lookup Report* is available.
 - Please limit each report to 8 students!
 - There is no limit to the number of Single Child Reports that may be created.
- The option to download a file is NOT available for a Single Child Lookup.

Single Child Match

28

Name and Address Search

- Home
- Direct Certification
 - SNAP/TANF/MEDICAID
 - Homeless/Migrant/Headstart
 - File My Data Match
 - Single Child Match**
 - CEP Validation File Match
- Contact Us
- Change RCDT

Illinois State Board of Education

User Id: rramage RCDT:

Single Child Match

An LEA may look up a single student with the following search criteria:

1. first name, last name, and city.

When you look up a single child by Name and Address, the first and last name are required fields. The city is an optional field.

Lists with child(ren) that match exactly or that are close will appear. Each LEA must select the child(ren) that is (are) enrolled in their school by selecting Add to Report. When the LEA completes their search, select Edit Report to review the children names or Print Report to print the report for your records.

Type of Search

- Name and Address Case Number

Search Criteria

First Name *
Last Name *
City

* required field

Search



Illinois
State Board of
Education

Exact Match and Close Match

29

- **Exact Match** – All fields match.
- **Close Match** – One or more fields may be close matches or could “sound-like” the requested search.
- With **ALL** matches, the LEA makes a determination if the MATCH is the student enrolled in their school.
- If the LEA determines that the match is an enrolled student, free or reduced price meal/milk benefits **MUST** be provided.
- If the LEA determines that the match is **NOT** an enrolled student, please indicate on the documentation. No further action is needed by the LEA.

USDA Policy- Extending SNAP/TANF/Income Eligible Medicaid Eligibility for Free Meal Benefits

30

- Extending eligibility means that ALL children or adults in the household who are participating in a Child Nutrition Program are categorically eligible for free or reduced price meal/milk benefits if any household member (child or adult) is receiving SNAP/TANF/Income Eligible Medicaid benefits.
 - **NOTE:** The *Electronic Direct Certification System* contains only children aged 23 years old and younger.
 - **NOTE:** Foster Child, Homeless, Migrant, and Head Start status is NOT extended to other students within the same household.



Required Notification to Households

31

- The LEA must notify the household of the following:
 - The student(s) is eligible for free or reduced-price meal/milk benefits;
 - If student(s) residing in the same household are NOT included on the notice, they should contact the school to request an extension of free or reduced-price meal benefits to all students;
 - No further action is required. The household **DOES NOT** have to complete a Household Eligibility Application; and
 - If the household does not want free or reduced-price benefits for a directly certified student, how to notify the LEA.



Maximizing the Direct Certification Numbers

32

- Access the system on a MONTHLY basis or more frequently.
- If a HEA with a SNAP/TANF number or a foster child application is submitted, the LEA should check the *Electronic Direct Certification System* for the student.
 - If found, direct certify the student (and any additional household members for SNAP/TANF/Income Eligible Medicaid).
 - If not found, however, process the HEA at face value.

Important Note: HEA with Medicaid Case ID Numbers CANNOT be accepted under any circumstances.

Direct Certification with Medicaid – Expansion to Reduced Price Eligibility

- Direct Certification matches will be expanded in the near future to include students eligible for reduced price meal benefits based on their participation in Medicaid at the appropriate reduced price income levels.
- More guidance will be shared, once available.
- Such matches will be on a separate downloadable export and print report via the Electronic Direct Certification system in WINS for NSLP/SBP schools.



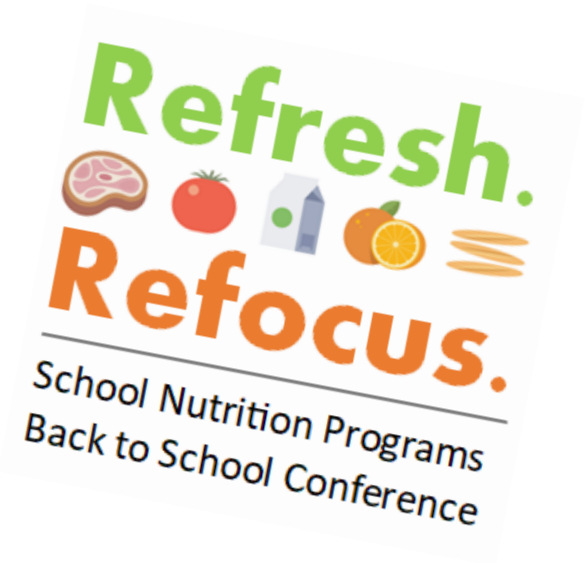
**Illinois
State Board of
Education**



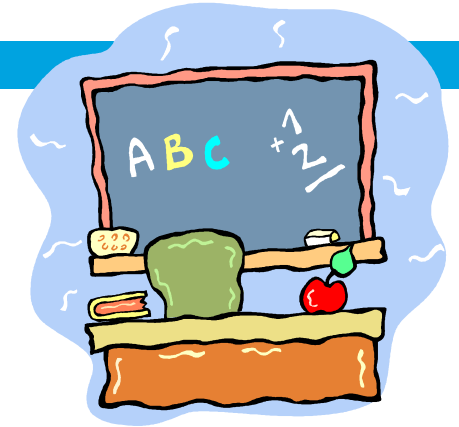
**Illinois
State Board of
Education**

Updates to Direct Certification

- If you have any suggestions that could be used to update/refresh the Electronic Direct Certification System, please share with the ISBE team by sending an email to cnp@isbe.net.
- We are hopeful to have updates throughout the SY22-23 and ready for SY23-24!



Contact Us



Nutrition Department
Illinois State Board of Education

Telephone: 800/545-7892 in Illinois only
217/782-2491

Fax: 217/524-6124

Email: cnp@isbe.net

Website: www.isbe.net/nutrition



Illinois
State Board of
Education