

January 9, 2024

WHAT'S INSIDE

- Learning Renewal
- Early Childhood Development
- Family & Community Engagement
- Improvement & Innovation
- Wellness
- Finance
- Teaching & Learning
- In Brief



Dear Colleagues:

The 2022-23 Report Card shows that, statewide, chronic truancy rates dropped by 10% over the previous year. That's the good news! The bad news? **One in five** students across Illinois is still chronically truant. Absenteeism is associated with lower academic performance, increased likelihood of dropping out, and even higher rates of future incarceration. Improving attendance is foundational to moving the needle toward our academic goals.

Various sections of the School Code address truancy and attendance at the school, district, regional, and state levels. These laws help ensure that students receive evidence-based support and intervention from their very first absence to prevent one absence from becoming truancy and to prevent any student from falling through the cracks. ISBE held an hour-long webinar on Daily School Attendance and Truancy Laws 🎥 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oiMTgWOrUUu>) in December that was very well attended, so we are hosting a second webinar 🎥

(<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/7014266695998651228>) at **10 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 17**. You can preview the presentation 📄 (</Documents/IL-Truancy-Att-Laws.pdf>).

The webinar will provide information on compulsory attendance, provisions in School Code for serving chronically absent and truant students, and simple tips and additional resources for supporting attendance.

One special area of focus will be a reminder about the data-sharing requirements set forth in 105 ILCS 5/26-3a (<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/fulltext.asp?DocName=010500050K26-3a>). This law requires school districts to report all students who have either left school or been removed from the enrollment roster (except due to transfer) to their regional superintendent or county/district truant officer *each quarter*, so that appropriate follow-up can be conducted with students and families.

We will prepare and share a comprehensive FAQ at the end of the month, but I did want to address now the questions we received during the first webinar about 105 ILCS 5/26-12a (<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/fulltext.asp?DocName=010500050K26-12>), which provides that "a truant minor may not be expelled for nonattendance unless he or she has accrued 15 consecutive days of absences without valid cause and the student cannot be located by the school district or the school district has located the student but cannot, after exhausting all available supportive services, compel the student to return to school." We wish to emphasize that districts can only remove a student from the roster after 15 consecutive days of absence if either the student *cannot be located* **or** the student can be located but has been provided *all available supportive services* and still *refuses to return to school*. This means that districts cannot remove a student because their family has taken an extended trip, for example, to visit relatives in another country. The district's knowledge that the student is on a trip and plans to return means they do not meet the statutory qualifications to be removed.

A district that is concerned about the impact of absences in these circumstances can engage their families and communities on the importance and impacts of attendance or to explore other solutions that may meet the needs of their communities, but if a district knows where a student is and that they are returning, the district cannot drop them from the rolls.

A school board could adopt a remote educational program policy for individual students to participate in with the consent of their parent/guardian, per 105 ILCS 5/10-29 (<https://ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/documents/010500050K10-29.htm>). Please note that statute requires that the criteria for determining that a remote educational program will best serve the student's individual learning needs must consider, at minimum, the student's prior attendance, disciplinary record, and academic history. Statute also requires that the remote instruction must be aligned to state learning standards, must be consistent with the instruction and educational experiences given to students at the same grade level in the district, and must be delivered by licensed teachers.

In the words of the great Stephen Hawking, "Half the battle is just showing up." We thank districts, regional superintendents, truancy interventionists, and educators for everything you do to partner with families to support all students in showing up for school every day.

Pictured: On their first day back from winter break, students at Spaulding Elementary in Gurnee School District 56 were excited to take a photo after accidentally matching each other and their teacher, Rachel Sutter!

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>).

Jan. 9	Deadline for students to submit artwork for National Association of State Aviation Officials contest (https://nasao.org/page/international-aviation-art-contest)
Jan. 9	Webinar: Grant Writing 101 – ISBE Early Childhood Block Grant (https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEsfuyrqDluEt3up5R223TF3gNORMgGAn1E#/registration)
Jan. 10	REACH Communities of Practice Informational Session (https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEsfuiurJlpHtaLN8e32HpzngMrsT_dU7Um#/registration)
Jan. 10	Webinar: Out-of-School Time After ESSER: Partnership Sustainability (https://actnowillinois-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJlqduiupzouHtGHqJON-4zPvlqPuVwOI3x#/registration)
Jan. 11	Webinar: Grant Writing 101 – ISBE Early Childhood Block Grant (https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEsfuyrqDluEt3up5R223TF3gNORMgGAn1E#/registration)
Jan. 15	Deadline to apply for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Presidential Innovation Awards for Environmental Educators (https://www.epa.gov/education/presidential-innovation-award-environmental-educators#about)
Jan. 16	Webinar: Grant Writing 101 – ISBE Early Childhood Block Grant (https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEsfuyrqDluEt3up5R223TF3gNORMgGAn1E#/registration)
Jan. 17	Deadline to apply to join REACH Communities of Practice (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd5WNdKhdn8J3RLfVOsUyzH2wywD76evG)

m9DHIInnf9EHGD1Q/viewform)

Jan. 17	ACCESS testing begins (https://www.isbe.net/Pages/AccessforELL.aspx)
Jan. 17	Webinar: Daily School Attendance and Truancy Laws (https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/7014266695998651228)
Jan. 18	Webinar: Grant Writing 101 – ISBE Early Childhood Block Grant (https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEsfuyrqDluEt3up5R223TF3gNORMgGAn1E#/registration)
Jan. 18	Webinar: We're Farm to School Ready (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSefn08bYZPfOLYCxNKWVcaHy_HAL4S2GufmowahDhJYAwdp0Q/viewform)
Jan. 19	Deadline to apply for Illinois National Board Maintenance of Certification Fee Subsidy (https://nbrc.illinoisstate.edu/renew/)
Jan. 19	Deadline to apply for Illinois National Board Retake Candidate Fee Subsidy (https://nbrc.illinoisstate.edu/candidates/retake/)
Jan. 20	First day for NBCTs to apply for new \$4,000 incentive awarded on a first-come, first-served basis (https://nbrc.illinoisstate.edu/4k-incentive/)
Jan. 23	Webinar: Understanding Expanded Federal Requirements for Site-Based Financial Reporting in Fiscal Year 2024 (https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/1563851217141343072)
Jan. 23 - Mar. 29	2023-24 5Essentials Survey administration window (https://www.isbe.net/Pages/5Essentials-Survey.aspx)
Jan. 25	Webinar: Discipline Dialogues (https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/7726087224956733781)
Jan. 30	Deadline to submit proposals for the Career Connections Conference (https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Career-Connections-Conference.aspx)
Jan. 31	Deadline to apply for U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean School Bus Grant Program (https://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus)
Jan. 31	Deadline to submit public comment on the draft Illinois State Digital Equity Plan (https://dceo.illinois.gov/connectillinois/federal-broadband.html)
Feb. 20	Illinois Social Emotional Learning Conference
Feb. 23	Deadline to apply for National Board Certified Teacher Intent to Mentor (https://nbrc.illinoisstate.edu/mentor/)
Mar. 1	Deadline to report the intent to move from half-day to full-day kindergarten instruction in school year 2024-25 to sff@isbe.net (mailto:sff@isbe.net)
Mar. 1-2	Illinois Teacher Leadership Summit (https://sites.google.com/view/ilteacherleadershipsummit/home)
Mar. 5	ACCESS testing ends (https://www.isbe.net/Pages/AccessforELL.aspx)
Mar. 11-15	42nd annual Illinois Arts Education Week (https://www.isbe.net/artcontest)
Mar. 29	Deadline to apply for NBCT incentive grant (https://nbrc.illinoisstate.edu/4k-incentive/)
Mar. 29	

2023-24 5Essentials Survey administration window closes
(<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/5Essentials-Survey.aspx>)

May 18	Those Who Excel & Teacher of the Year Awards Banquet
June 18	ISBE Career Connection Conference

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.

FROM RELIEF TO RESILIENCE: MOKENA SCHOOL DISTRICT 159'S STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS IN EDUCATION POST-PANDEMIC

Mokena School District 159, a PreK-8 district in a southern suburb of Chicago, initiated a strategic planning process in April 2021 at a crucial time in the pandemic. The district engaged diverse stakeholders — school board members, parents, the community, and staff — to set a course for the district's advancement over the next five years.

The district strategically aligned its Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds to support the implementation of the goals within the plan. The first goal concentrated on enhancing English language arts (ELA) education by procuring comprehensive instructional materials for kindergarten through fifth grade. This investment in foundational skills, reading and writing programs, classroom libraries, decodable readers, and more, significantly impacted student learning.

"We were able to utilize these funds to provide our students and teachers with high-quality instructional materials based on current research in the field of literacy. The impact of this will be felt for years to come in our community," said Mokena Assistant Superintendent of Instruction Dr. Kristin Johnson.

ESSER funds also enabled the introduction of a STEM course at the junior high school level, fulfilling the strategic goal of fostering exploration in technology and engineering. The investment facilitated engaging programs and materials, encouraging students' involvement in design, modeling, app creation, architecture, and computer science.

"The new programming has quickly become one of our middle school's most popular electives. It is exciting to see our students engaged in learning technology and engineering skills," said Mokena Superintendent Dr. Mark Cohen.

The federal pandemic relief funding also supported the district's goal to provide interventions to students not yet meeting standards by hiring a reading interventionist, offering a summer school program, and providing after-school tutoring. Finally, funds were used to support the district's goals to improve technology infrastructure via a one-to-one initiative and to offer high-quality, intentional professional development. Professional development activities included an instructional coaching program and training for teachers in foundational skills, advanced word study, comprehension, and writing across content areas. These efforts led to smoother implementation of high-quality instructional materials.

The strategic use of ESSER funds directly influenced student learning outcomes, leading to growth far above average in the 60th percentile in ELA and 58th percentile in math. These efforts, together with the strategic plan, are propelling the district forward from the pandemic's aftermath and reinforcing its commitment to continuous improvement.

Does your district have a data-driven success story waiting to be shared? We invite you to contribute by sharing it with us (<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=hv5kA8ZJ9Eq1LDNameV30Ufi4KgH87ICv6FRRQl8cvIUNTdHWktDS1NJWjJZVDFaQ09RVINCUVdMRi4u>).

REACH AND SEL HUBS PARTNER FOR TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE PRACTICES

The REACH initiative is joining forces this spring with Social-Emotional Learning Hubs to unite school staff statewide around trauma-responsive practices. Regional Communities of Practice (CoPs) will enable educators to engage in hybrid sessions, combining in-person and virtual meetings, offering participants a chance to "learn, share, and grow" their school's trauma-responsive practices.

These tailored CoPs provide a platform for educators to exchange insights, experiences, and best practices and nurture inclusive learning environments. Participants collaborate and work on individual transformation over a series of sessions to create collective impact for school communities.

Three regional, hybrid CoPs (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kAOuAqWS3VPaGVED-PXD5c3-6Ypv8Xaj/view>) will be offered from mid-February to late May:

- Area 2 (Northwestern Illinois) - Developing a Trauma-Informed School Climate
- Area 3 (Western Illinois) - Cultivating Holistic Wellness for Educators
- Area 4 (Eastern Illinois) - Balancing Act: Nurturing Well-Being in Education

Priority is given to schools that participate in Resilience Education to Advance Community Healing (REACH) members, but applications from community members outside REACH schools are welcomed. Professional development hours and Continuing Education Unit hours are available.

Ready to participate? Complete a brief online application

(<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd5WNdKhdrn8J3RLfVOsUyzH2wywD76evGm9DHInnf9EHGD1Q/viewform>) by **5 p.m. Jan 17**.

Curious but want more details? Attend an informational session

(https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEsfuiurjlpHtaLN8e32HpzngMrsT_dU7Um#) on how a Community of Practice can enrich your professional development at **3:30 p.m. Jan. 10**.

NEW

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

GRANT WRITING 101 WORKSHOPS – ISBE EARLY CHILDHOOD BLOCK GRANT

ISBE is excited to provide Grant Writing 101 workshops provided by ASIL Ventures for potential grantees. These trainings will focus on ISBE's Early Childhood Block Grant for entities outside the city of Chicago and will provide a greater understanding of government grants and tips on crafting strong proposals. Each session will be interactive, so please bring your questions.

ISBE hosted a series of listening sessions in preparation for the release of the FY 2025 Early Childhood Block Request for Proposals (RFP). One request that we heard throughout the sessions was that potential grantees need assistance with grant writing. Information on our upcoming Grant Writing 101 webinars is listed below:

Grant Writing 101 – ISBE Early Childhood Block Grant

(<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEsfuyrqDluEt3up5R223TF3gNORMgGAn1E#/registration>)

Presented by Lisa Green, MPA, CF APMP, ASIL Ventures

The webinars will occur at **6 p.m. every Tuesday** and at **10 a.m. every Thursday** for one hour throughout the month of January. Register for the Grant Writing 101 session of your choice

(<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEsfuyrqDluEt3up5R223TF3gNORMgGAn1E#/registration>).

Lisa Green is the founder and president of ASIL Ventures, LLC, an Illinois business development firm certified by the Business Enterprise Program. ASIL Ventures provides four primary services: RFP management, grant management, research management, and strategic planning services. Lisa is the board secretary for the Grant Professionals Association





Chicago Chapter. She works directly with clients to help them develop and manage their business development needs. She enjoys working on government grants and opportunities, especially those opportunities that strengthen local, community-based entities and their initiatives.

NEW

FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

HOMEWORK TIP SHEETS FOR FAMILIES AND SCHOOL STAFF


In accordance with 105 ILCS 5/2-3.133 (<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs4.asp?DocName=010500050HArt.+2&ActID=1005&ChapterID=17&SeqStart=14200000&SeqEnd=36700000>), ISBE created a useful tip sheet with strategies to support parents and guardians who help children in completing homework. The tip sheet, along with a link to a database of helpful homework support websites, may be found under "Family and Community Resources" on ISBE's Family and Community Engagement webpage (<https://isbe.net/Pages/Family-Community-Engagement.aspx>). Additionally, school and district professionals, as well as school board members, can find tip sheets on how they may aid in best practice regarding homework:

- Homework Help Strategies for Caregivers  (</Documents/Homework-Help-Caregiver.pdf>)
- Homework Help Strategies for Teachers  (<http://www.isbe.net/Documents/Teacher-Homework-Help.pdf>)
- Homework Help Strategies for Administrators  (</Documents/Admin-Homework-Help.pdf>)
- Homework Help Considerations for School Boards  (</Documents/Board-Policy-Homework-Help.pdf>)


NEW

IMPROVEMENT & INNOVATION


DAILY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY LAWS WEBINAR

Various sections of the School Code address truancy and attendance at the district, regional, and state levels. To help the field better understand these laws, ISBE will provide a webinar on Daily School Attendance and Truancy Laws  (<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/7014266695998651228>) at **10 a.m. Jan. 17**. It will contain information on compulsory attendance requirements, truancy and attendance reporting requirements, interventions and the prohibition on punitive action for truancy, programs in the School Code for serving chronically absent and truant students, and additional resources for addressing truancy.

One special area of focus will be the reporting requirements set forth in 105 ILCS 5/26-3a (<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/fulltext.asp?DocName=010500050K26-3a>), which requires school districts to report quarterly to the regional superintendent or county/district truant officer all students having left school or been removed from the enrollment roster (except due to transfer).

Register via GoToWebinar for the Daily School Attendance and Truancy Laws webinar  (<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/7014266695998651228>). For those unable to participate, the webinar will be recorded and posted on ISBE's TAOEP page (<https://isbe.net/Pages/Special-Education-Truants-Alternative-and-Optional-Education-Program.aspx>).

VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL ARTICULATION OF CURRICULUM TEMPLATE

Check out the editable K-12 Vertical and Horizontal Articulation of Curriculum template  (/_layouts/Download.aspx?SourceUrl=/Documents/K-12-Horizontal-Vertical-Articulation.docx). (This editable Word document will open in your downloads folder when you click the link.) Vertical and horizontal articulation of curriculum amongst teachers provides an opportunity to identify gaps that students are experiencing based on the Illinois Learning Standards. Engaging in regular and ongoing conversations about vertical and horizontal alignment of curriculum helps teachers implement effective instructional practices.

Time dedicated to vertical and horizontal articulation of curriculum can be counted by licensed educators as professional development hours toward license renewal.

NEW

WELLNESS

2023-24 5ESSENTIALS SURVEY

The 2023-24 5Essentials Survey window will run from **Jan. 23-March 29**. Participation in the 5Essentials Survey or an approved alternate survey is required annually, as they are part of the non-academic indicators for the summative designation for accountability. We have been working with UChicago Impact to get data ready for loading to the survey administration system. Emails will be sent to administrators the Friday before the survey opens to give them access to their survey accounts. You can also review the Survey Administration Technical Assistance Overview recorded webinar <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGxhHSpaaFQ>. Other resources will be made available over the next two weeks.

ISBE encourages administrators to work with school personnel to ensure that students accounted for on the roster take the 5Essentials Survey using their state student ID number to log in. Provisional surveys are only to be used for students and teachers who are not listed on district rosters. As a reminder, principals and survey coordinators should not ask for or require teachers to submit proof that they have completed a survey. Doing so is in violation of the Ethical Code of Conduct [\(/Documents/Survey-Admin-Ethical-Code-of-Conduct.pdf\)](#).

Visit the UChicagoImpact 5Essentials webpage (<https://uchicagoimpact.org/our-offerings/5essentials>) or the ISBE 5Essentials Survey webpage ([/Pages/5Essentials-Survey.aspx](#)) for more information about the survey.

Please reach out to 5Essentials@isbe.net if you have questions.

DISCIPLINE DIALOGUES WEBINAR SERIES - BEING BETTER TO MAKE OUR SCHOOLS BETTER

Register for the "Discipline Dialogues" <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/7726087224956733781>) webinar series at **1:30 p.m. Jan. 25**. The webinars will cover a range of topics related to school discipline, such as best practices, resources, implementing plans, etc.

FINANCE

SCHOOL-LEVEL FINANCE SURVEY WEBINAR: UNDERSTANDING EXPANDED FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SITE-BASED FINANCIAL REPORTING IN FISCAL YEAR 2024

Join ISBE at **10:30 a.m. Jan. 23** for a virtual webinar on the newly required School-Level Finance Survey (SLFS) for FY 2024. We will discuss the specific requirements and reporting options for the survey, highlighting how Local Education Agencies (LEAs) can efficiently complete both Site-Based Expenditure Reporting and SLFS using ISBE's online tool. This webinar is intended for LEA staff who complete the annual Site-Based Expenditure Report; entities that do not complete this report, (e.g., special education cooperatives, need not attend. Click here to register for the School-Level Finance Survey webinar <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/1563851217141343072>).


TEACHING & LEARNING

NEW 2024-25 FAFSA OVERVIEW WEBINAR RECORDING AVAILABLE

On Dec. 30, the U.S. Department of Education soft launched the 2024-25 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form -- for new and returning students who plan to attend college between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025. Are you ready for the new FAFSA? Check out the recording of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission's A FAFSA Preview: On the Web (<https://illinois2.webex.com/illinois2/ldr.php?RCID=31b2efb203ba025cc16275d5aefe9d64>) webinar for a screen-by-screen view of what a dependent student's path will be for the 2024-25 FAFSA.

State law requires all Illinois public high school seniors to complete either the FAFSA® or the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid (Alternative Application) as a prerequisite to receiving a high school diploma.

VALUE OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Illinois Heartland Library System and Reaching Across Illinois Library Systems have partnered to create a one-pager to highlight Value of School Libraries  (/Documents/School-Admin-One-Pager.pdf). This document promotes the positive impact school libraries can have on school districts. For example, students tend to read more, children from low-income families read more, and students are more likely to master writing and achieve ELA standards.

IN BRIEF

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Ed Leaders Network

Ed Leaders Network is offering the following live webinar. Visit the Ed Leaders course library (<https://edleadersnetwork.org/>) to view the entire selection available.

- **3 p.m. Jan. 24:** Today's Significant School Leader: Surviving & Thriving (https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_rBIRp1niSi-srLREMGs7IA?_x_zm_rtaid=enDnpubbTv-GbgWk6pj5cQ.1704736332771.a494dbf07ed0745856621515e1943f88&_x_zm_rhtaid=504#/registration) – Want to be a better leader? Want to be a more effective school administrator? Looking for something fresh and different? New to administration? Experienced yet need a reboot? Meet Andrew Marotta (<https://andrewmarotta.com/>)! Andrew will invigorate you, challenge you, and inspire you during this webinar. He will share stories, tips, hacks, and experiences from his 20 years as a building leader. This high-energy, enthusiastic presentation will be interactive, reflective, and purposeful for you to help you in your role as a school leader. No one promised you that the job would be easy, but Andrew will help you make it more manageable, fun, and rewarding.

Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest

Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Midwest (<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/region/midwest/partnerships/100024>) is looking to partner with Illinois districts to provide free professional development and other supports on student sense of belonging and middle school math instruction. If your district is interested in a partnership opportunity described below, please contact Sara Mitrano at smitrano@air.org (<mailto:smitrano@air.org>).

- Data-Informed Leadership for Equity (DILE) (<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/region/midwest/partnerships/100025>): The DILE approach provides ongoing professional development for school leaders and classroom teachers to help them better understand and respond to disparities in student belonging and engagement (e.g., attendance and discipline).
- Teaching Fractions Toolkit (TFT) (<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/region/midwest/partnerships/100029>): TFT offers research-based professional development and resources to help Grade 6 teachers improve students' abilities to understand and solve problems with fractions.

REL Midwest is part of a network of 10 regional educational laboratories funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, the research arm of the U.S. Department of Education. REL Midwest works with educators in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin to support the use of evidence and data to improve student outcomes.

EDUCATOR OPPORTUNITIES

School Food Authorities Invited to Buying Local Foods Event

The Illinois Farm to School Network (<https://illinoisfarmtoschool.org/>) will present "We're Farm to School Ready!" from **1:30-5 p.m. Jan. 18** at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield. Registration is under way for the free event (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSefn08bYZPfOLYCxNKWVcaHy_HAL4S2GufmowahDhJYAwdp0Q/viewform), which will provide participants with valuable information and best practices to source local foods and communicate directly with farmers, processors, and local food hubs.

All participants will develop a local food buyer profile during class, which will be shared with farmers and processors. This free training is provided by the Illinois Farm to School Network and funded through the Illinois Farm Bureau.

Northern Illinois University Social Justice Summer Camp Registration Open

The seventh annual NIU Social Justice Summer Camp is scheduled for **June 11-14**. It brings together teams of new and returning campers (educators!) to investigate multicultural and social justice education. Campers will have significant opportunities to discuss social justice issues -- both general and specific to their schools -- with experts and colleagues, as well as time for individual reflection and group activities.

The content of this professional learning experience is customized to meet the needs of educators in school districts and community colleges. Organizations send anywhere from one educator to dozens, so there is a wide range of campers to learn with and from.

Learn more and register now on the Social Justice Camp for Educators website (<https://www.cedu.niu.edu/c-and-i/social-justice-camp/index.shtml>).

Invent2Prevent - School Violence Prevention

The dynamic and extensive nature of the threat posed by targeted violence, hate, and terrorism necessitates a broad and adaptable approach.

Illinois' Office of Homeland Security has partnered with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, EdVenture Partners, and the McCain Institute to make available an innovative, experiential learning program for Illinois high school, college, and university students that addresses acts of targeted violence, hate, or terrorism in their communities.

Invent2Prevent (<https://www.edventurepartners.com/invent2prevent>) seizes the opportunity to gather diverse perspectives from youth nationwide, enabling a comprehensive range of responses from students. By providing a practical and hands-on platform, Invent2Prevent empowers students to proactively address the issues affecting their schools and local communities. This ability to leverage the varied insights of young minds is a key strength of the Invent2Prevent program.

Interested in participating in Invent2Prevent? Contact EdVenture Partners CEO Tony Sgro at tony@edventurepartners.com (<mailto:tony@edventurepartners.com>).

STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

Celebrating High School Innovators

Illinois State University, Illinois Wesleyan University, and Pontiac Township High School are proud to present the Celebrating High School Innovators (CHSI) competition. It identifies, fosters, and celebrates high school students whose contributions are exceptional and inspirational. Current Grade 9-12 students are eligible to apply in five areas:

- Arts, Media, and Literature
- Business Entrepreneurship
- Health and Nutrition
- Social Entrepreneurship
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)

Applications will be accepted through **March 1**. Students can apply on the CHSI website (<https://chsinnovators.org/apply/>). Don't miss this opportunity to showcase your students' talents. Have them apply now and make their mark!

The STEAM Blog

The STEAM Blog is looking for ambitious high schoolers who are interested in gaining service hours and changing the way that their community thinks about STEAM. The STEAM Blog (<http://www.thesteamblog.com/>) is an online, student-run platform and website dedicated to highlighting the voices of high schoolers through specially curated articles that find distinct intersections between STEM and the arts.

Students are often encouraged from a young age to pursue one career over another, whether that be a technical career requiring skills, such as math and science, or a creative-minded career, such as the performing arts (music, dance, etc.). Why not both?

The STEAM Blog aims to break this barrier by educating students on the multitude of ways in which STEM inventions and careers can tie into the arts. The STEAM Blog has a growing Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/thesteamblog/>) account and incorporates already-published writers from across the world. It is looking for more voices to recognize. More information about joining as a writer can be found on the STEAM Blog website (<http://www.thesteamblog.com/>).

Illinois State Poetry Society Annual Contest

The Illinois State Poetry Society (ISPS) is accepting entries for its annual Student Contest. The contest is open to Grades 6-12 public, private, and home school students. The deadline to enter is **Feb. 29**. For more information, visit the ISPS website (<https://www.illinoispoets.org/>).

Southern Illinois University Carbondale Art & Design Scholarship Competition

Southern Illinois University Carbondale's School of Art and Design (<https://academics.siu.edu/design/art/>) is presenting a statewide online art competition to celebrate the immense talent and creativity of Illinois high school juniors and seniors. The inaugural Creative Futures (<https://soad.siu.edu/creative-futures/>) art competition carries up to \$6,000 in SIU scholarships to students in three art media categories — 2D, 3D, and digital art and design. Illinois high school art and design teachers are invited to submit works by no more than five current juniors or seniors from their schools. The submission deadline is **Feb. 2**. Award winners will be announced Feb. 23. The online exhibit runs Feb. 16, 2024-Feb. 14, 2025. There is no entry fee. Additional information is available on the Creative Futures webpage (<https://soad.siu.edu/creative-futures/>).

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- Complaint Investigator (Principal Consultant #1538) (</Lists/ISBECareers/CareerDisplayForm.aspx?ID=912>)
- Technical Assistance Team Member/VDI Administrator Backup (Principal Consultant #1877) (</Lists/ISBECareers/CareerDisplayForm.aspx?ID=908>)
- Network Administrator (Senior Systems Administrator #1356) (</Lists/ISBECareers/CareerDisplayForm.aspx?ID=904>)
- Administrative Support (Program Specialist II #1563) (</Lists/ISBECareers/CareerDisplayForm.aspx?ID=910>)
- Administrative Support (Program Specialist II #306) (</Lists/ISBECareers/CareerDisplayForm.aspx?ID=911>)

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