

# ISBE'S WEEKLY MESSAGE

March 7, 2023

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Dear Colleagues:

March is Women's History Month. I know educators across the state will be honoring this month with lesson plans that pay homage to the many courageous and persistent women who have shaped our world. I also want to use this opportunity to remind you of our responsibility to the sheroes of tomorrow who are sitting in our classrooms today and one simple way we can make their journey more equitable: providing menstrual hygiene products in school bathrooms.

This isn't just a nice idea; it's the law. In 2017, our General Assembly passed the Learn with Dignity Act, requiring feminine hygiene products to be provided inside the restrooms in school buildings serving grades

6-12 – free of charge. In 2021, Rep. Barbara Hernandez updated the law through Public Act 102-340

(<https://ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=102-0340>), replacing the term “feminine hygiene” with “menstrual hygiene” and expanding the age range to include grades 4-12.

I know it takes time for any new law to reach full implementation. Women's History Month gives us the opportunity to put renewed effort and energy into ensuring menstrual hygiene products are in every school bathroom and are as routinely restocked as the toilet paper and hand towels.

The amazing members of the Girls Committee, part of the Illinois Council on Women and Girls, met recently with Rep. Hernandez, and shared about the status of implementation in their own schools. These young women shared about empty dispensers or having to go to the nurse's office or certain teachers for supplies – a detour that makes them late for class.

I recognize there have been instances of vandalism with the products in boys' bathrooms. But students can also vandalize stall doors and intentionally clog toilets with too much paper – and we aren't going to take those products out of school restrooms. The novelty and newness of seeing tampons and pads in school bathrooms will soon fade.

Menstrual hygiene products are necessary for good health. Periods are unpredictable. Being caught without supplies is a stressful situation, and no student is going to be able to focus on learning when they're distracted by such a crucial need. Not being able to afford enough of these products – “period poverty” – can also lead to a serious disease called toxic shock syndrome. The good we can achieve by providing staple products far outweighs any potential downsides.

Thank you for joining me in kicking off Women’s History Month and paying extra attention to ensuring we are equipping all our students with what they need to succeed.

*Pictured: On Friday, State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tony Sanders joined Governor JB Pritzker to announce a historic investment in the teacher pipeline. The plan would dedicate \$210 million over three years to help districts with the greatest teacher shortages*

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>).

<b>Mar. 8</b>	Illinois Education and Career Success Network’s 10th Annual Conference: Accelerating Equitable Success ( <a href="https://ilsuccessnetwork.org/2023-conference/">https://ilsuccessnetwork.org/2023-conference/</a> )
<b>Mar. 9</b>	Data Collection Q&A webinar ( <a href="https://register.gotowebinar.com/rt/2174502371330329612">https://register.gotowebinar.com/rt/2174502371330329612</a> )
<b>Mar. 13</b>	Deadline to submit applications for the FY 2024 Refugee Services Notice of Funding Opportunity ( <a href="https://juf-grants.smapply.org/prog/fy24_illinois_refugee_social_services_application/">https://juf-grants.smapply.org/prog/fy24_illinois_refugee_social_services_application/</a> )
<b>Mar. 13-17</b>	Illinois Arts Education Week
<b>Mar. 14-15</b>	Ready, STEM, Go! - Virtual STEM Conference ( <a href="https://www.readystemgoconference.com/">https://www.readystemgoconference.com/</a> )
<b>Mar. 15</b>	ISBE Board meeting
<b>Mar. 17</b>	ESSER Recipient Data Collection – Local Education Agency and Other Entities reports due
<b>Mar. 22</b>	Deadline to enter the National Center for State Courts Annual Civics Education Essay Contest ( <a href="https://www.ncsc.org/education-and-careers/civics-education/contest">https://www.ncsc.org/education-and-careers/civics-education/contest</a> )
<b>Mar. 22</b>	Deadline to enter the National Center for State Courts Annual Civics Education Essay Contest ( <a href="https://www.ncsc.org/education-and-careers/civics-education/contest">https://www.ncsc.org/education-and-careers/civics-education/contest</a> )
<b>Mar. 31</b>	SY 2022-23 5Essentials/School Climate Survey administration window closes
<b>Mar. 31</b>	Illinois Council for the Social Studies Annual Conference ( <a href="https://www.illinoiscss.net/2023-spring-conference.html">https://www.illinoiscss.net/2023-spring-conference.html</a> )
<b>Apr. 19</b>	ISBE Board meeting
<b>Apr. 20</b>	Illinois Postsecondary and Career Expectations Symposium ( <a href="https://www.isac.org/pace/Illinois-PaCE-Symposium/index">https://www.isac.org/pace/Illinois-PaCE-Symposium/index</a> )

<b>Apr. 21</b>	Deadline to submit full application for the U.S. Department of Energy's Renew America's Schools grant program ( <a href="https://eere-exchange.energy.gov/Default.aspx#Foald06985843-f32c-494e-880a-cb5db6d787a4">https://eere-exchange.energy.gov/Default.aspx#Foald06985843-f32c-494e-880a-cb5db6d787a4</a> )
<b>Apr. 29</b>	2023 Those Who Excel & Teacher of the Year Awards Banquet
<b>Jun. 13-15</b>	Illinois New Teacher Collaborative 2023 Summer Conference Series ( <a href="https://emails.illinois.edu/newsletter/37/1612142237.html">https://emails.illinois.edu/newsletter/37/1612142237.html</a> )
<b>Jun. 20-21</b>	IncludED Conference ( <a href="https://www.ltcillinois.org/included/">https://www.ltcillinois.org/included/</a> )

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=hv5kA8ZJ9Eq1LDNameV30Ufi4KgH87ICv6FRRQI8cviUNTdHWktDS1NJWjJZVDFaQ09RVINCUVdMRI4u>) how you are investing federal relief funds to help students recover.

### NATIONAL SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING WEEK

March 6-10 is National Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Week, and Friday, March 10, is International #SELDAY! Please join ISBE in celebrating the importance of equipping students with social and emotional competencies. SEL support for students and school personnel can result in positive outcomes, including the improvement of mental wellness and school connectedness. Learn more about SEL on our website (/sel) or reach out locally to your district's SEL Hub (/selhubs) for details on specific SEL programming being offered Hillsboro CUSD 3 participated in the Area 5 SEL Hub Summit, and reflected on their experience implementing SEL programming in their district.

NEW

## SAFE AND HEALTHY CLIMATE

### HOW TO REDUCE STREP THROAT INFECTIONS AT SCHOOL

IDPH and the CDC are observing an increase in strep throat -- specifically invasive group A streptococcus (iGAS) -- infections among children. ISBE is joining IDPH and the CDC in stressing the importance of early recognition, diagnosis, and appropriate treatment of these diseases in children and adults.

Find a downloadable fact sheet for parents here.

#### Webinar

You can join a webinar to learn more on Wednesday, March 8, at 1 p.m.

#### What Schools Should Do to Reduce Infections

Group A streptococcus bacteria are very contagious. The bacteria that causes strep throat travels in respiratory droplets that are created when an infected person coughs or sneezes. To help reduce strep throat infections, schools and early childhood settings should:

1. Notify parents and provide information on symptoms and encourage parents to promptly communicate with their health care providers when symptoms develop. Share this parent fact sheet.

2. Encourage students and staff to stay home if ill.
3. Encourage parents to bring their children to the doctor to get tested for strep so they can be prescribed the appropriate course of antibiotics and return to school quickly and safely in 24 hours.
4. Educate staff and students on the importance of good hand hygiene (wash hands frequently, especially after coughing, sneezing, eating or preparing food) and cough etiquette. Educate children and staff to avoid touching their hands to their mouths and eyes before handwashing.
5. High touch areas (in classrooms, play areas, cafeterias) should undergo at least daily disinfection in schools seeing cases of strep throat.

## Symptoms

The symptoms of strep throat usually include the following:



- Sore throat can start very quickly and can cause severe pain when swallowing.
- Fever.
- Red and swollen tonsils, sometimes with white patches or streaks of pus.
- Tiny red spots on the roof of the mouth.
- Swollen lymph nodes in the front of the neck.

Other symptoms may include headache, nausea, vomiting, or stomach pain.

## GET 25% MORE IN ENERGY EFFICIENCY INCENTIVES

ComEd is offering an additional 25% in energy efficiency incentives to help cover the cost of energy efficiency upgrades when you submit a pre-application for its Early Bird Energy Efficiency Program by **March 31**.

### What is it?

All customers who participate in the Small Business (<400 kW) or Standard (>400kW) program, which provides energy efficiency incentives that are specific to their unique facility needs, can take advantage of this bonus. Energy efficiency upgrades help these customers reduce their energy usage, saving significant dollars on energy bills and maintenance costs. The Early Bird incentive  (<https://www.comed.com/WaysToSave/ForYourBusiness/AdditionalIncentives/EarlyBird.pdf>) can be combined with the Made in Illinois 10% additional incentive  (<https://www.comed.com/WaysToSave/ForYourBusiness/AdditionalIncentives/MadeInIllinoisFactSheet.pdf>) for a total of 35% in additional project incentives.

### What's the process for a public school?

If you have a project planned, simply submit an Energy Efficiency pre-application prior to the deadline of **March 31** and the early bird bonus will be automatically applied to your project incentive. If you do not have a project in mind, you still can sign up for a no-cost Public Schools Carbon Free Assessment (PSCFA) to identify energy efficiency opportunities.

### What is the PSCFA?

The Public Schools Carbon-Free Assessment is a free program from ComEd that is designed to help public schools by assisting in energy cost savings and carbon reduction strategies. The program is offered at NO cost to public schools.

### PSCFA Benefits

- Free assessment of the facility on a date/time that works best for the school.
- Energy efficiency cost-savings opportunities.
- Information on the infrastructure required for electrification (like electric buses).
- Solar energy potential of the building.

- Guidance on achieving WELL certification.
- Identification of energy efficiency project incentives and third-party funding sources.

Completing the PSCFA can also help with grant qualification. For instance, to qualify for a grant under Section 5-40 of the School Construction Law, a public school district must submit a copy of a PSCFA report (if a PSCFA has been performed) or request the PSCFA and submit a copy as soon as it becomes available. ComEd will file the PSCFA report on your behalf.

## Get Started

Learn more and sign up for the Early Bird Energy Efficiency Program by clicking here (<https://www.comed.com/WaysToSave/ForYourBusiness/Pages/EarlyBird.aspx>). If you have questions about qualification or setting up a facility assessment, call 1-855-433-2700.

Visit [ComEd.com/PSCFA](http://www.comed.com/PSCFA) (<http://www.comed.com/PSCFA>), call 855-433-2700, or email [BusinessEE@ComEd.com](mailto:BusinessEE@ComEd.com) (<mailto:BusinessEE@ComEd.com>) to request your free Public Schools Carbon-Free Assessment.

NEW

## ILLINOIS TEACHER OF THE YEAR

### ISBE ANNOUNCES 2023 ILLINOIS TEACHER OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

ISBE has announced the 2023 finalists for Illinois Teacher of the Year, as well as the 2023 Outstanding Early Career Educator. The annual Teacher of the Year program honors incredible classroom educators who have made lasting impacts on students, families, and fellow educators in their school communities. ISBE will showcase several finalists in the Weekly Message each week leading up to the announcement of the 2023 Illinois Teacher of the Year. Congratulations to all this year's extraordinary awardees!

### SARA SZEWCZYK



#### ***South Suburbs Regional Teacher of the Year Summit Hill Junior High, Summit Hill School District 161***

You can tell a lot about a teacher by how they decorate their space. At Summit Hill Junior High in Summit Hill School District 161, Sara Szewczyk's classroom is set up as a sanctuary for seventh graders. "If you walked into Sara's classroom, you would immediately feel the warmth," says Principal Laura Goebel. It features with cozy aesthetics, helpful organizational tools and supplies, adjusted lighting, and a massive library of 640 books – something for every student in English Language Arts.

"Seventh grade is a time of rapid development socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically," Sara says. "Navigating these changes is very challenging, therefore there is no better time to learn tools and strategies to grow into a better version of themselves." Her students have won national poetry contests with poems written in her class.

"I see my students as people with their own ideas, thoughts, and beliefs that deserve as much respect and attention as any adult," she says.

### NICOLE WEH

#### ***Southeast Regional Teacher of the Year Central Community High School, Central Community HSD 71***



Nicole Weh's empathy comes in part from her own childhood struggles -- she loved school, but had an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for dyslexia. But what motivates Mrs. Weh is her desire to educate her students for life beyond school. In 2017, she created Functional Life Skills, a class that provides her Central Community High School students the opportunity to work, earn money, shop for groceries, and prepare meals. But that's not all. Her students worked to host a dance for their peers in 11 other districts -- doing everything from gathering donations to planning the budget, shopping for decorations, and creating a spreadsheet of music to learning about personal space and initiating conversations. More recently, they created an on-campus coffee shop -- from business plan to designing the menu and taste-testing the drinks -- staffed alongside their non-IEP peers. These students have IQs ranging from mid-30s to upper 60s.

Dr. Dustin Foutch, superintendent of Central Community HSD 71, calls Nicole Weh the "most outstanding educator I have worked with." He says that the impact she has on her special needs students and their families is "simply life-changing."

## MADELINE WOOD



***West Central Regional Teacher of the Year***  
***United Community Unit School District No. 304, Monmouth***

Madeline Wood has been teaching since age 14, when she started giving private flute lessons in her family's living room. When she arrived at United CUSD 304 in 2011, she was surprised to find the high school band had only 15 students -- five of whom were percussionists, and few who could read music.

The fact that this year's Beginner Band has 37 members gives an idea of how much her music program has grown. That's in part because she created an instrument loan program that allows students to use instruments for free, and in part because of her sixth grade music appreciation class, which she uses to teach everything from geography to empathy. For example, her students learn about the Paraguay "Landfillharmonic" orchestra, and then create their own musical instruments out of trash.

She helped bass trombone student Darrin Ross create a Gay-Straight Alliance (now known as the Gender-Sexualities Alliance), and is an advocate for the Racism-Free Schools Act. Ms. Wood is the 2022 TeachPlus Policy Fellow of the Year.

NEW

## CTE & INNOVATION

## ILLINOIS CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION STUDENT SURVEY

The Northern Illinois University Illinois CTE Project is excited to announce that the ISBE CTE and Innovation team and the Illinois Community College Board CTE team are collaborating on a National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE) Action Research Project. These teams were selected to participate in this initiative to amplify student voice for CTE students in the state of Illinois. The purpose of this project is to promote CTE enrollment, conduct a needs-based analysis of students' priorities, and work to improve programming to better serve current and future CTE students.

We want to hear from students! The Illinois Career and Technical Education Student Survey ([https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeO\\_eeAuAjq6fQd62\\_nMoxLAV2m1lIGuSbkspSk0JvPK16izQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeO_eeAuAjq6fQd62_nMoxLAV2m1lIGuSbkspSk0JvPK16izQ/viewform)) is to be completed by students by **March 15**. It will take no more than 10 minutes to complete. The NIU Illinois CTE Project will be reviewing feedback and recommendations from students, and presenting the information on behalf of the state of Illinois at the NAPE meeting on **March 28**.

If you have any questions, please contact Shavina Baker at [sbaker1@niu.edu](mailto:sbaker1@niu.edu) (mailto:sbaker1@niu.edu).

2023 SUMMER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CALENDAR

The calendar (<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VnDxNz8z-19vsnOS4Y0viGILQlu1FB6f4Ma8k19Zlvs/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 website (/cte).

NEW

FINANCE

ISBE OFFERS GUIDANCE FOR FY 2024 STATE OR FEDERAL GRANT APPLICANTS

Prior to applying for fiscal year 2024 state or federal grants, grantees must ensure all Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) requirements are met. ISBE will not approve FY 2024 grant applications – nor process awards – without:

1. Active public SAM.gov (<https://sam.gov/content/home>) profile. Renewal assistance is available through the Federal Service Desk ([https://www.fsd.gov/gsafsd\\_sp](https://www.fsd.gov/gsafsd_sp)) at 866-606-8220.
2. Approved current fiscal year Internal Control Questionnaire (ICQ) in the GATA Grantee Portal (<https://grants.illinois.gov/portal/>).
3. Approved current fiscal year Organizational Risk Assessment in IWAS.

Unique Entity Identity (see SAM.gov (<https://sam.gov/content/home>)) and Federal Employee Identification Number must be verified before ICQ scores can be imported into the Organizational Risk Assessment and grant applications. Mismatches may cause delays/errors in processing the grant application.

Additional information and updates are available on the ISBE GATA webpage (/gata) under “News and Updates.” Questions may be directed to [GATAICQ@isbe.net](mailto:GATAICQ@isbe.net) (<mailto:GATAICQ@isbe.net>).

DATA STRATEGIES & ANALYTICS

DATA COLLECTION Q&A WEBINAR

ISBE will host a webinar at **10 a.m. March 9** 📅 (<https://register.gotowebinar.com/rt/2174502371330329612>) to give school districts a chance to ask any questions they have about the ISBE data collections listed here 📅 (<https://register.gotowebinar.com/rt/2174502371330329612>). If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at 312-814-9192 or [datahelp@isbe.net](mailto:datahelp@isbe.net) (<mailto:datahelp@isbe.net>).

SPECIAL EDUCATION

INCLUDED: TECHNOLOGY AND TEACHING SUPPORTS FOR ALL STUDENTS

The Learning Technology Center is looking for presenters for the IncludED (<https://www.ltcillinois.org/included/>) Conference on **June 20-21** in Addison. The event’s central themes are assistive technology and special education, and all sessions will focus on using technology to support all learners. Session strands include executive function, Universal Design for Learning, accessibility tools, augmentative and alternative communication, assistive technology in the core curriculum, and assistive technology for data and assessment.

Interested presenters with experience in special education and/or assistive technology are encouraged to submit a proposal (<https://www.ltcillinois.org/included/included-rfp/>).

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

#### Ed Leaders Network

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

- **3 p.m. April 18:** Fostering a Systematic Approach for Family Engagement (<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/91234567890>) - Families play a crucial and unique role in a child's academic, social-emotional, and behavioral development and the establishment of effective family engagement strategies ensures that families have the skills and resources necessary to support and advocate for their children. The evaluation of these family engagement strategies, programming, and efforts is necessary to continuously improve and expand upon these practices. Participants will work during this training to understand the varying types of family engagement data, collection methods, and the components of a successful family engagement system.

### NEW EDUCATOR OPPORTUNITIES

#### Spring 2023 IATD Conference

The Illinois Association of Title I Directors (IATD) will host the 2023 IATD Spring Conference **April 17-18** at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield. This year's theme is "Prepared for Success: Spring '23" and is designed to help Title I directors prepare for the coming fiscal year. Visit the event webpage to register (<https://www.eventsquid.com/event.cfm?id=18960>).

#### Job Fair for ESL, Bilingual, & Dual Language Teachers, Aides, & Administrators

The annual Illinois Resource Center Job Fair (<https://irc.thecenterweb.org/events/irc-job-fair>) will bring together more than 50 preK-12 school districts across Illinois to share information on bilingual education approaches and available positions. The job fair will be held from **8 a.m.-noon March 18** at the DoubleTree by Hilton (<https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/chioadt-doubletree-chicago-oak-brook/>) in Oak Brook.

### STUDENT RECOGNITION

#### 2023 Prudential Emerging Visionaries

Nikita Agrawal and Mia Fritsch-Anderson, students at Whitney M. Young Magnet School in Chicago Public Schools, were named 2023 Prudential Emerging Visionaries 🏆 (<https://media.gractions.com/1672/2023/Prudential/News-Releases/Illinois.pdf>). Nikita and Mia were selected for their inspiring commitment to improving the lives of others. This is an extraordinary honor, with only 25 young people chosen from across the country.

Each will receive \$5,000 in funding as well as an invitation to participate in an awards summit at Prudential's headquarters in Newark, New Jersey, from April 22 - 25, which will include skills development, coaching, and special recognition events. During the summit, select winners will have an opportunity to participate in a pitch-off where a grand prize winner will receive an additional \$10,000 in funding.

Congratulations, Nikita and Mia!

### NEW STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

#### Study.com Scholarships

Study.com wants to help empower traditionally underrepresented students by helping them reach their education goals. To do that, it's offering several Study.com Student Scholarships (<https://study.com/resources/student-scholarships#0715>) for female and Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) students who are pursuing college degrees. Study.org has doubled the award for these scholarships this year to \$2,000 to provide even more financial relief for the high cost of college. The application deadline is **May 1**.

**FEATURED ISBE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES**

- Finance Admin Assistant (Administrative Assistant III #393) (</Lists/ISBECareers/CareerDisplayForm.aspx?ID=799>)
- State Authorized Charter School Performance Monitor (Principal Consultant #1737) (</Lists/ISBECareers/CareerDisplayForm.aspx?ID=798>)
- Special Education Data Specialist (Principal Consultant #1850) (</Lists/ISBECareers/CareerDisplayForm.aspx?ID=787>)

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