

ISBE'S WEEKLY MESSAGE

October 17, 2023

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Dear Colleagues,

I want to extend my deepest sympathies to the family of 6-year-old Wadea Al-Fayoume, who was murdered in Plainfield in a horrific act of hate.

With all that's going on in our world, I want you to know that we support the work of educators, mental health professionals, and administrators, as you work to sustain students processing war, conflict, and tragedy around the globe. To that end, we wanted to share a few resources that might offer helpful guidance:

- The National Association of School Psychologists (<https://www.nasponline.org/>) has a downloadable flyer called Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Families and Educators (<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-safety-and-crisis/school-violence-resources/talking-to-children-about-violence-tips-for-families-and-educators>), strategies for each grade level, and suggested talking points.
- From Common Sense Media (<https://www.common sense.org/20-years-of-impact/>), an article called How do I talk to my kids about violence in the news? (<https://www.common sensemedia.org/articles/how-do-i-talk-to-my-kids-about-violence-in-the-news>) reminds us to get a sense of what children know before launching into an explanation, by using open-ended questions, like "What did you hear?" or "What do you know?" and "What do you think about it?"
- UNICEF (<https://www.unicef.org/>) offers How to talk to your children about conflict and war: 8 tips to support and comfort your children (<https://www.unicef.org/parenting/how-talk-your-children-about-conflict-and-war>). One of the tips is to keep the conversation calm and age-appropriate and to focus on the people who are helping.
- Learning for Justice (<https://learningforjustice.org/>) has published Discussing War and Conflict: Resources for educators, parents and caregivers (<https://www.learningforjustice.org/discussing-war-and-conflict-resources-for-educators-parents-and-caregivers>), that provides a list of articles full of advice.
- For older students, Facing History offers lesson plans on Fostering Civil Discourse: How Do We Talk About Issues That Matter? (https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/fostering-civil-discourse-how-do-we-talk-about-issues-matter?check_logged_in=1) to help students engage in reflective conversations.

As uncomfortable as it may be to touch such sensitive topics, these topics are consuming many of our students' social media feeds. As the authors of Handle With Care: Supporting Young People During Crises (<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/handle-with-care-supporting-young-people-during-crises>) point out: "When something bad happens, it's of immediate importance to young people to share their feelings or thoughts, so it will occupy their minds whether you discuss it or not. Hold space for conversations and do not dismiss their questions, concerns or comments. Encourage young people to journal and draw to share their thoughts, or allow them privacy if they choose not to express their feelings at the moment."

One tip emphasized in many of these resources is that children will feel better if they have some opportunity to help, no matter how small. Allow them to write a poem, draw a poster, compose a song, send a card – do anything to send positive energy into the world. I'm realizing this tip isn't only for children. In the days and weeks ahead, please take good care of your students, yourselves, and each other.

Pictured: A middle school and elementary student share a story as part of an AVID Service Learning Project at Rock Island/Milan School District.

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>).

Oct. 1-31	National Principals Month
Oct. 15-21	Principal Appreciation Week
Oct. 19	Webinar: Report Card Forum #2 (https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/436260259575978336)
Oct. 19	Webinar: Lessons Learned From Learning Renewal Efforts (https://niu-edu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcrfuGqrTotGdWUUuQSI9FTdVBPcL1kSdQh#/registration)
Oct. 19-20	Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education Fall Conference (https://www.iaase.org/home)
Oct. 20	Deadline for high schools to submit entries in the U.S. Department of Education's Your Place in Space Challenge (https://www.yourplaceinspacechallenge.com/)
Oct. 20	Deadline to submit nominations for the Thomas Lay Burroughs Award (https://apps.isbe.net/surveybuilder/#/client/thomas_lay_burroughs_award)
Oct. 20	Principal Appreciation Day
Oct. 20	Deadline to submit FY 2024 After School Programs - Non-School Districts Grant Request for Proposals (https://www.isbe.net/Pages/After-School-Programs.aspx)
Oct. 24	Illinois Veterinary Exploration Day (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScttjnegxW1LAXNerYZcuWA3539oCUi1VFpwEI-l-qUDqNBGQ/viewform)
Oct. 24	Illinois Literacy Plan Listening Tour (Springfield) (https://www.isbe.net/literacyplan)
Oct. 25	Media and all districts receive preliminary 2023 Illinois Report Card data under embargo (cannot be shared publicly) until 9 a.m. Oct. 30
Oct. 25	2023 Illinois Report Card media call – State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tony Sanders to discuss state-level data under embargo
Oct. 25	Illinois Literacy Plan Listening Tour (Naperville) (https://www.isbe.net/literacyplan)
Oct. 25	Webinar: Arts and Foreign Language Education Planning Assistance Grant (https://arts.illinois.gov/afl)
Oct. 26	Illinois Literacy Plan Listening Tour (Kewanee) (https://www.isbe.net/literacyplan)
Oct. 29	Deadline to submit 2024 Those Who Excel & Teacher of the Year Awards applications/nominations (https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?)

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Oct. 30	FY 2025 budget hearing (virtual) (https://isbe.net/budget)
Oct. 30	ISBE publishes 2023 Illinois Report Card at IllinoisReportCard.com (https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/)
Oct. 31	Deadline to submit FY 2025 budget requests (https://isbe.net/budget)
Oct. 31	FY 2024 School District Budget forms due (https://www.isbe.net/Pages/School-District-Joint-Agreement.aspx)
Nov. 6	Webinar: Newly Designated Schools (https://register.gotowebinar.com/rt/4444121979713581918)
Nov. 6	Illinois Literacy Plan Listening Tour (Marion) (https://www.isbe.net/literacyplan)
Nov. 7	Illinois Literacy Plan Listening Tour (Edwardsville) (https://www.isbe.net/literacyplan)
Nov. 8	Webinar: Newly Designated Schools (https://register.gotowebinar.com/rt/4444121979713581918)
Nov. 8	ACCESS test material ordering closes in WIDA AMS (https://www.drcedirect.com/all/eca-portal-v2-ui/#/login)
Nov. 8	Illinois Literacy Plan Listening Tour (Champaign) (https://www.isbe.net/literacyplan)
Nov. 10	ISBE offices closed
Nov. 15	Annual Financial Reports due (https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Annual-Financial-Report.aspx)
Nov. 15	Limitation of Administrative Cost Worksheets due (https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Annual-Financial-Report.aspx)
Nov. 23-24	ISBE offices closed
Nov. 28	Webinar: FY 2024 School Improvement Planning Grant Application for schools newly designated Targeted, Comprehensive, or Intensive (https://register.gotowebinar.com/rt/5163291644876376156)
Nov. 29	Webinar: FY 2024 School Improvement Planning Grant Application for schools newly designated Targeted, Comprehensive, or Intensive (https://register.gotowebinar.com/rt/5163291644876376156)
Dec. 5-7	Multilingual Illinois 2023 Statewide Conference (https://irc.thecenterweb.org/events/essa-conference)
Dec. 5	Deadline to apply for Arts and Foreign Language Education Planning Assistance Grant (https://arts.illinois.gov/afl)
Dec. 8	Seventh Annual Mastering KIDS Summit (Tinley Park) (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdcqudlccTst9c9vXOViVgSRfeyeP4JM5Ga6yOHohRhHPPsfQ/viewform)
Dec. 13	Seventh Annual Mastering KIDS Summit (Carbondale) (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdcqudlccTst9c9vXOViVgSRfeyeP4JM5Ga6yOHohRhHPPsfQ/viewform)
Dec. 15	Annual Statement of Affairs due (https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Annual-Statement-of-Affairs.aspx)
Dec. 22	Deadline to apply for the Illinois Green Ribbon Schools Award (https://illinoisgreenalliance.org/green-ribbon-schools/)

Dec. 25	ISBE offices closed
Dec. 26	Certificate of Tax Levy due (https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Certificate-of-Tax-Levy.aspx)
Jan. 1, 2024	ISBE offices closed
Jan. 8, 2024	Evidence-Based Funding Property Tax Relief Grant applications due (https://www.isbe.net/proptaxrelief)
Jan. 19, 2024	Deadline to apply for Illinois National Board Maintenance of Certification Fee Subsidy (https://nbrc.illinoisstate.edu/renew/)
Jan. 19, 2024	Deadline to apply for Illinois National Board Retake Candidate Fee Subsidy (https://nbrc.illinoisstate.edu/candidates/retake/)
Feb. 20, 2024	Illinois Social Emotional Learning Conference (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfkhFEsukOkHCXPRHOy1EINv0b5t2WBV1p7qKhBYnRnA9M-Bg/viewform)
Feb. 23, 2024	Deadline to apply for National Board Certified Teacher Intent to Mentor (https://nbrc.illinoisstate.edu/mentor/)
Mar. 1-2, 2024	Illinois Teacher Leadership Summit (https://sites.google.com/view/ilteacherleadershipsummit/home)
May 18, 2024	Those Who Excel & Teacher of the Year Awards Banquet
June 18, 2024	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=hv5kA8ZJ9Eq1LDNameV30Ufi4KgH87ICv6FRRQI8cvlUNTdHWktDS1NJWjJZVDFaQ09RVINCUVdMRi4u>) how you are investing federal relief funds to help students recover.

id=hv5kA8ZJ9Eq1LDNameV30Ufi4KgH87ICv6FRRQI8cvlUNTdHWktDS1NJWjJZVDFaQ09RVINCUVdMRi4u) how you are investing federal relief funds to help students recover.

DECATUR PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM SUPPORTS PANDEMIC RECOVERY

Decatur Public Schools (DPS) District 61 utilized federal pandemic relief funds to offer a free Extended Day program with the goal of bolstering students' academic success and well-being. The DPS Extended Day program has yielded remarkable results, including higher attendance, improved reading scores, and reduced disciplinary issues. Available at 13 site locations throughout the district, the program is a lifeline for both students and their families. The Extended Day program operates from 6 a.m. until the start of the school day and resumes after school until 5:30 p.m., including early release days.

One of the program's primary aims is to provide a safe, secure, and supportive environment for students before and after school hours. Academic assistance is a core component, with dedicated time for homework support or skill-based work. The Extended Day program also offers enrichment and physical fitness opportunities, encompassing a diverse array of services and activities, such as service/project-based learning, art, music, physical fitness, and STEM activities. This invaluable resource is offered free to parents, removing barriers for those who may not have access to alternative care options.

Districts across the state and country are looking at how to sustain effective programs that were established or expanded with pandemic relief funding. DPS is exploring alternative funding sources and grants to ensure that the positive impact on students' education and the community can continue. Read more about Decatur's Extended Day program in this recent article (<https://ipmnewsroom.org/decaturn-public-schools-increases-literacy-and-school-attendance-with-extended-day-program/>). Do you have a story to share about how pandemic relief funds have supported recovery? We'd love to hear from you (<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=hv5kA8ZJ9Eq1LDNameV30Ufi4KgH87ICv6FRRQI8cvlUNTdHWktDS1NJWjJZVDFaQ09RVINCUVdMRi4u>).

WEBINAR: LESSONS LEARNED FROM LEARNING RENEWAL EFFORTS

What have we learned from the learning renewal efforts? How can we make plans for sustainability? The Success Network invites you to a free webinar (<https://niu-edu.zoom.us/join/9tGdWUuQSI9FTdVBPcL1kSdQh#registration>) at **2 p.m. Oct. 19** to hear from Success Network Leadership Communities about lessons learned in addressing learning renewal. Attendees will hear from Peoria Public Schools about their engagement with the Illinois Tutoring Initiative, a program developed with higher education institutions. East St. Louis School District 189 and Buffalo Grove High School will discuss their credit recovery efforts. Q&A time is included.

NEW

COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

SY 2023-24 CTE CAREER GUIDES


The Illinois State Board of Education Career Guides (<https://www.ilcareerguide.com/>) for the 2023-24 school year are now available and ready for purchase, with both High School and Middle School Editions available.

Help your students, parents, counselors, and teachers better understand the many benefits of career and technical education and career pathways right here in Illinois. Fully updated with fresh content, imagery, and employment statistics, the ISBE Career Guide is perfect for:

- Course registration
- Counselor one-on-one meetings
- Career exploration
- Open houses and parent nights

For pricing and ordering instructions, please click here (<https://www.ilcareerguide.com/price>). ISBE Career Guides are in stock and ready to ship immediately. Please reach out to our partner, CareerTech Media, at sales@careertechmedia.com (<mailto:sales@careertechmedia.com>) if you would like a sample copy or for a quote.

FY 2023 COLLEGE AND CAREER PATHWAY ENDORSEMENT RECIPIENTS

Nearly 1,100 high school students across the state received College and Career Pathway Endorsements (</pathwayendorsements>) in the 2022-23 school year. Students earn endorsements by completing an individualized learning plan, a career-focused instructional sequence, and professional learning opportunities. See the list of FY 2023 College and Career Pathway Endorsement recipients here  (</Documents/FY23-College-and-Career-Endorsement-Recipients.pdf>).

ISAC FAFSA SYMPOSIUM REGISTRATION OPEN THROUGH OCT. 18

Registration is now open for this year's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) Symposium taking place at two locations:

- **Oct. 25 - Illinois Central College**
- **Nov. 7 - Moraine Valley Community College**

Register as soon as possible – and no later than **Oct. 18** – as space is limited. Registration for the symposium is \$25 and includes continental breakfast, lunch, and symposium materials. Advance registration is required. Walk-in registration is not available. For more information and to register, visit the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) website (<https://www.isac.org/pd/FAFSA-Symposium/>). For questions, contact isac.outreachtraining@illinois.gov (<mailto:isac.outreachtraining@illinois.gov>).

In addition to the symposium, ISAC is offering several professional development webinars in October on a variety of topics: FAFSA Simplification and New FSA ID Process, Illinois Postsecondary and Career Expectations (<https://www.isac.org/pd/PaCE>) updates, exploring postsecondary options, and the Financial Aid Application Completion Initiative. To register for webinars, please visit the ISAC webinar webpage. Please share these offerings with colleagues and partners. Professional development hours and continuing education credits will be available.


As a reminder, ISAC's College Changes Everything® (CCE) Campaign offers schools and community-based organizations the support and resources needed to host financial aid and college application completion workshops. ISACorps (<https://studentportal.isac.org/web/guest/student/>)

p_p_id=Student_WAR_Studentportlet&_Student_WAR_Studentportlet__facesViewIdRender=/views/isacorpsMemberSearch.xhtml)
 TM members are available to help students and families navigate the college and financial aid process. ISAC looks forward to partnering with your school in supporting your students with the college and financial aid application process.





Questions? Contact 847-831-8634 or isac.initiatives@illinois.gov (<mailto:isac.initiatives@illinois.gov>).

DATA, ACCOUNTABILITY, & ASSESSMENT

2023 REPORT CARD TIMELINE: KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT

Did you know Educator Preview opened Oct. 2? All districts can now preview final 2023 Illinois Report Card data, including preliminary annual summative designations, in the Educator Preview portal of MyIRC. Check out the 2023 Illinois Report Card Timeline  (/Documents/IL-Report-Card-Timeline.pdf) to learn about other key dates.

ISBE has created fact sheets and resources to support you in communicating with your school communities about your Report Card data and summative designation.

- New Summative Designation Visualization – The 2023 Illinois Report Card has more information than ever before about the summative designation. Preview the new visualization and understand how it can help you communicate your designation.
- How to Tell Your Summative Designation Story  (/Documents/How-to-Tell-Your-Summative-Designation.pdf) – Gain tips for building your communications plan and developing messaging for common summative designation scenarios.
- Student Growth Percentiles  (/Documents/Student-Growth.pdf) – Understand how and why ISBE measures student growth and how to talk about your school's Student Growth Percentile.
- Multiple Indicators of Student Success  (<https://isbe.net/Documents/2023-Accountability-Indicators.pdf>) – Learn what indicators contribute to the annual summative designations for 2023.
- Annual Summative Designations  (<https://isbe.net/Documents/2023-Annual-Summative-Designations.pdf>) – Learn about the five summative designations in 2023, including the new Intensive Support designation and updates to the Comprehensive Support designation criteria.

Stay tuned for more resources to come!

NEW

NUTRITION

USDA FARM TO SCHOOL GRANTS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the official release of the fiscal year 2024 Farm to School Grant Program Request for Applications (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/f2s/farm-school-grant-program>) (RFA). The USDA will award up to \$12 million in competitive grants to eligible entities through the grant program this fiscal year. Each grant will help implement farm to school programming that increases access to local food in eligible schools, connects children with agriculture for better health, and inspires youth to consider careers in agriculture.

A wide variety of entities are eligible to compete for funding through this grant opportunity, including schools and other institutions operating the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and/or Summer Food Service Program.

The USDA will host two webinars to assist with the application process. Click the links to register:

- Nov. 1 | 2 p.m. | Getting Familiar With the FY 2024 Farm to School RFA (https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJltdOivpj4oE4TEIzEk9q5_CJq0eeu4zqs#/registration)
- Nov. 2 | 1 p.m. | Getting Your Grant Package Together (<https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJlft-ihTkrHAT2m8mvfFOyEfBmmdgAk10#/registration>)

The webinars will be recorded and made available on the Resources for Farm to School Grant Program Applicants webpage (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/f2s/resources-farm-school-grant-program-applicants>). Visit the Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program website (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/f2s/resources-farm-school-grant-program-applicants>) to learn more about grants, technical assistance, and the Farm to School Census. Questions can be directed to sm.fn.farmtoschool@usda.gov (<mailto:SM.FN.farmtoschool@usda.gov>).


CELEBRATING THE 2023 ISBE SCHOOL NUTRITION CHAMPION

Representatives from ISBE and USDA visited Shawnee Community Unit School District 84 in Wolf Lake to present Katie Ford with the 2023 ISBE School Nutrition Champion Award on Oct. 11.

Mrs. Katie, as the students call her, is the head cook for the district, which has one kitchen that serves three schools – Shawnee Elementary School, Shawnee Jr. High School, and Shawnee High School.

Katie was nominated by Shawnee CUSD 84 Superintendent Shelly Clover-Hill. In her nominating submission, she wrote:

“When Katie took over as head cook in 2020, she made it her mission to improve our school meals and that is still true today. She actively seeks the input of the students and staff in the development of the menus Katie takes great pride in offering meals that will be eaten and not thrown in the garbage. She is also a master at getting the students to try new foods and adds those menu items when the vast majority of students ask for it again.”

The award presentation coincided with National School Lunch Week (Oct. 9-13). The nominees and award-winner were announced in May. Read more on the ISBE School Nutrition and Wellness Champions webpage (</Pages/School-Nutrition-and-Wellness-Champions.aspx>) and in the May issue of The Outlook  (/Documents_Nutrition_Newsletter/Outlook-May2023.pdf), ISBE's monthly newsletter for School Nutrition Programs.

ISBE administers federal meal and snack programs such as the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program, and At-Risk After-School Snack/Supper Program, which are funded by the USDA.

NEW

SAFE & HEALTHY CLIMATE

STUDENT HEALTH DATA - IMMUNIZATION COLLECTION DUE NOV. 15

The Student Health Data - Immunization Collection in IWAS opened Sep. 1. Please enter your Student Health Immunization data by **11:59 p.m. Nov 15**. Be sure to allow ample time for all approvals to be made before the deadline, as there are steps of approval required before reaching a status of “Submitted to ISBE.” Please contact schoolnurse@isbe.net (<mailto:schoolnurse@isbe.net>) or 217-782-5270 if you need further information pertaining to the Immunization Data Collection.

FY 2024 AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS – NON-SCHOOL DISTRICTS GRANT RFP DEADLINE EXTENDED


ISBE has extended the deadline for FY 2024 After School Programs Request for Proposals (</Pages/After-School-Programs.aspx>) to **4 p.m. Oct. 20**. The purpose of the grant is to provide opportunities outside of the school day to improve academic outcomes for students; to provide opportunities for enrichment activities in a safe and healthy environment; and/or to provide opportunities to strengthen public, private, and philanthropic partnerships so that quality support services are more durable for students facing the greatest challenges.

ROEs/ISCs, community-based organizations, and Indian tribes or tribal organizations (as defined in the federal Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act) are eligible to apply. School districts and Local Education Agencies are **not** eligible to apply.

Please note that the recorded webinar located on the After School Program webpage still states a due date of **Sept. 29**. As noted above, the due date has been extended to **4 p.m. Oct. 20**.

NURSES EXPANDING THEIR SPECIAL EDUCATION ROLE

Who performs the medical review for your special education students? ISBE is sponsoring an online course **Oct. 25-Dec. 12**, “RNs in Schools – Expanding Your Special Education Role,” for nurses who meet the minimum education requirements (bachelor's degree in nursing, education, or a related field).

Districts and special education cooperatives may request a non-PEL RN to complete this course to comply with special education rule 226.160. To meet compliance with this rule, complete the Non-PEL IEP Designee Administrator Checklist  (</Documents/Non-PEL-IEP-Designee-Admin-Checklist.pdf>) and retain it at the local level.

Nurses who have worked with a district before September of 2023 may coordinate with district administrators or special education cooperatives to request participation in the course. Administrators or their support staff should complete the Request for IEP Designation form (<https://forms.office.com/r/m9bieHMRfd>).

The asynchronous course will be offered twice in the spring semester and a limited number of seats are available. Participation is best for individuals who have worked in a school setting for less than a year. Previous participants report allowing 10-12 hours per week for all course commitments with being online every one or two days. Once the request is received, you will get a confirmation email with details for next steps. If you have additional questions, please contact schoolnurse@isbe.net (mailto:schoolnurse@isbe.net).

NEW

TEACHING & LEARNING

LITERACY PLAN LISTENING TOUR 2.0

ISBE is gearing up for another Listening Tour to get feedback on the second draft of the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan. The tour kicks off **Oct. 24** in Springfield. Dates and details for each listening tour stop can be found on the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan webpage (/literacyplan).

We recognize that providing multiple opportunities for input – and your expertise – is crucial in developing a plan that provides guidance to support the assets each child brings into the classroom. The revised Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan will be presented to members of the Illinois State Board of Education on **Oct. 18**. Following that presentation, the revised plan will be released on our website (/literacyplan). Participation in the Listening Tour will require a careful reading of the revised Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan and the completion of a feedback form prior to attending.

FY 2024 ARTS AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION PLANNING ASSISTANCE GRANT AVAILABLE

The Illinois Arts Council Agency and ISBE are pleased to announce funding is available for school districts and other eligible applicants for the FY 2024 Arts and Foreign Language Education Planning Assistance Grant (<https://arts.illinois.gov/afl>).

The Illinois Arts Council Agency has released a Request for Proposals to solicit proposals from eligible applicants that seek resources to develop district-based plans for initiating, strengthening, or expanding instruction in the arts or foreign languages. Annual grant awards will not exceed \$40,000 depending on programmatic needs, size of district, and level of planning to take place. Proposals are due **Dec. 5**.

An online, informational webinar (<https://arts.illinois.gov/afl>) will be held at **1 p.m. Oct. 25**. For more information, contact Jerome Grand at jerome.grand@illinois.gov (mailto:jerome.grand@illinois.gov).

NEW

FINANCE

EVIDENCE-BASED FUNDING PROPERTY TAX RELIEF GRANT APPLICATIONS OPEN

The fiscal year 2024 Evidence-Based Funding Property Tax Relief Grant application period is now open to interested districts. ISBE will provide up to \$49.3 million in property tax relief grants to eligible school districts. Districts are ranked by their Adjusted Operating Tax Rate divided by the Average Operating Tax Rate by organization type. Grants will be awarded to applicant districts in the order of that ranking. Eligible districts must agree to abate a portion of taxes, up to a statutory limit, in the coming two tax cycles. In return, qualifying districts will receive a state grant in an amount that is a proportion of the tax relief provided.

The following resources are available on the ISBE website (/proptaxrelief):

- Property Tax Relief Grant FY 2024 application - If after reviewing the available resources, you determine you would like to apply for the grant, please complete the grant application via the Evidence-Based Funding system in IWAS.
- FY 2024 Preliminary Property Tax Relief Grant calculation - View this report to determine your district's maximum possible tax relief and possible tax relief grant amount. *Please remember results are not final until all applications are received.*
- Program details and webinar - Consult this document and recording to learn more about eligibility criteria, calculation mechanics, the grant cycle timeline, and district administration responsibilities.

Applications are due at **midnight Jan. 8, 2024**. For questions, please contact sff@isbe.net (mailto:sff@isbe.net) or 217-782-0249.

RECOGNITION OPPORTUNITIES

DEADLINE EXTENDED - NOMINATIONS AND APPLICATIONS FOR 2024 THOSE WHO EXCEL & TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARDS DUE OCT. 29

In response to the massive wave of interest, ISBE has extended the deadline for nominations and applications for the 2024 Those Who Excel & Teacher of the Year Awards (/thosewhoexcel) to **11:59 p.m. Oct. 29**.

All nominees were notified of this extension via email. It is recommended that school leaders support the completion of applications in progress by checking in with nominated staff. Nominations are optional and only upon successful completion of the subsequent application materials will applicants be eligible for an award. Applicants and supporting staff are all encouraged to review the recording of ISBE's TWE & TOY Awards informational webinar <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01SfxvgWp5w&feature=youtu.be> to learn more about the agency's awards process and discover how to integrate ISBE's awards within your school communities. Questions can be submitted to awards@isbe.net (mailto:awards@isbe.net).

IN BRIEF

EDUCATOR RECOGNITION

U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel A. Cardona today announced the recipients of the Terrel H. Bell Award for Outstanding School Leadership (<https://nationalblueribbonsschools.ed.gov/the-terrell-h-bell-award-for-outstanding-leadership/>) for 2023, including Illinois' own Kevin Finnegan (<https://nationalblueribbonsschools.ed.gov/people/kevin-finnegan-prairie-hill-elementary-school-south-beloit-il/>), principal at Prairie Hill Elementary School. All nine school leaders from the 2023 cohort of National Blue Ribbon Schools (<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/index.html>) will be honored during the National Blue Ribbon Schools awards ceremony on Nov. 16.

"Great principals play a pivotal role in building thriving school communities and empowering teachers to meet the diverse needs of every student," stated U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. "As recipients of the Terrel H. Bell Award, you have served as catalysts, fostering positive school cultures, and finding new ways to engage students, parents, families, educators, and staff. You continue to Raise the Bar as school leaders, and your dedication inspires others to bring their best each day. The prestigious Bell Award is our way of recognizing and celebrating your hard work and indispensable leadership."

Named for the second U. S. Secretary of Education, Terrel H. Bell, the Bell Award honors school leaders who are committed to education as a powerful and liberating force in people's lives. The award is part of the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program. Principals are nominated by their school communities during the final stages of the National Blue Ribbon Schools application process.

The U.S. Department of Education, together with the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the Association for Middle Level Education, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals, present the Bell Awards to principals of National Blue Ribbon Schools for their outstanding work and the vital role they play in guiding their students and schools to excellence, frequently under challenging circumstances. Congratulations, Principal Finnegan!

EDUCATOR OPPORTUNITIES

Ag Biology Pilot Phase Two: Schools and Teachers Needed

Innovative schools and educators are being sought for phase two of the Agriculture Biology Curriculum Development Project Pilot, a collaboration of Illinois Science Teaching Association and Illinois Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers. The course utilizes storylining to help students identify phenomena and solve problems (<https://www.nextgenstorylines.org/what-are-storylines>). The course is aligned with the Illinois Science Assessment and explicitly linked to the Next Generation Science Standards.

Writing teams have already developed a semester of storylines that are being piloted currently in 10 Illinois high schools (phase one). The teams continue to work on the second set of storylines to complete the course. Schools and teachers joining for phase two of the pilot will receive access to the curriculum, professional development, and grant funds for implementation of the material.

The expectation is to engage in the professional development, collaborate with the writing teams, and work with the research team to explore the effectiveness of the curriculum. Energetic and forward-thinking schools and teachers will engage in a professional learning community to build capacities using storylining to explore biology in the context of agriculture

The deadline to apply for phase two of the pilot is **Dec. 8**. Additional information and the application are on the Illinois Agricultural Education & FFA website (<https://ilaged.org/page.aspx?ID=5507>).

National Center for Research on Gifted Education Acceleration Study

The National Center for Research on Gifted Education is conducting a study to document and disseminate information on how school districts implement subject acceleration (i.e., advancing students in one or more subject areas without whole-grade accelerating the student; may exist in combination with whole-grade acceleration procedures). The center is seeking responses from school districts who have systematic procedures in place for subject acceleration. The study goal is to describe common procedures in place in districts across the country as guidance for districts considering how to approach this practice.

Participation in the study will involve an online interview of a knowledgeable member of the district staff (e.g., gifted program coordinator, director of advanced academics) with the study team. The center expects the interview to last approximately one hour. Participants will receive questions in advance and will also have the option of submitting responses in writing.

To learn more about the study or to indicate interest in participation, please review the consent form (https://uconn.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dczM9ULuiQUd6ke) or contact Catherine Little at catherine.little@uconn.edu (<mailto:catherine.little@uconn.edu>) or 860-486-2754.

SCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES

ISBE School Visit Program

ISBE's School Visit Program encourages active employees to visit local districts and connect their jobs here at ISBE directly to what is done within Illinois schools. ISBE employees will be able to choose which school they would like to spend their visit in. Please keep an eye out for correspondence from Christie Easton as she will have further information and will be working to schedule these upcoming school visits!

FEATURED ISBE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

- Web Developer (Principal Consultant #1858) (</Lists/ISBECareers/CareerDisplayForm.aspx?ID=885>)
- Receptionist (Program Specialist I #830) (</Lists/ISBECareers/CareerDisplayForm.aspx?ID=877>)

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