

ISBE'S WEEKLY MESSAGE

June 21, 2023

WHAT'S INSIDE

- Learning Renewal
- Early Childhood
- Finance
- Safe & Healthy Climate
- Special Education
- Standards & Instruction
- Teaching & Learning
- Research & Evaluation
- In Brief



Dear Colleagues:

First, I want to note how much I love serving our state and our students in the capacity of state superintendent. The ability to tour this beautiful state and meet with educators, legislators, and so many others has been uplifting and energizing.

I have updated the members of the State Board of Education on the listening and learning sessions I held during my first 90 days in this role, and I would like to share key takeaways with you.

I spent these first few months in office meeting with leaders from multiple organizations, including the Illinois Education Association, the Illinois Federation of Teachers, the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA), the Illinois Association of School Boards, the Illinois Principals Association, the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools, the Large Unit District Association, the Illinois Association of School Business Officials, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Chicago Teachers Union, and union leadership within ISBE. I held one-to-one meetings with State Board members. Thanks to Dr. Brent Clark and the IASA, I joined school superintendents from across the state at regional meetings in north, south, and central Illinois. In addition, I attended another 35-plus public events and meetings, during which I was able to gather additional feedback, within the first 90 days.

Some common themes (listed below in no priority order) that will inform major areas of work for the agency emerged from my listening tour.

Teacher Shortage – The teacher shortage continues to challenge many school districts. ISBE successfully advocated for several legislative initiatives aimed at addressing such shortages, including the \$45 million Teacher Pipeline Grant that you will see us implement and support over the next year.

Assessment – Our Illinois system of assessments, especially the recommendations that have been made by the Center for Assessment, needs additional attention. As I noted in my June 6 message (<https://isbe.net/Pages/Weekly-Message-Display-Form-V4.aspx?ItemId=351>), I have reunited data, assessment, and accountability into the same center within ISBE. We also have extended our partnership with the Center for Assessment as we develop a theory of action pertaining to the purpose of our statewide assessments. We will continue to prioritize this work around on assessments, including their utility for instruction and accountability and our current cut scores, in collaboration with our various assessment committees, such as the Technical Advisory Committee and the State Assessment Review Committee.

Statewide System of Support – I observed a strong desire among superintendents, our Regional Offices of Education, and within the leadership at the State Board to rethink our statewide system of support with the goal of focusing on continuous school and district improvement. The work of imagining a new statewide system of support began internally last week when I held a two-day retreat with many of our instructional leaders within the agency. We will share information and request feedback as this work continues.

Partnerships with ISBE – Many organizations and districts want to partner with ISBE in creating networks of communication and learning pertaining to a variety of topics. I look forward to working with entities that share our vision and passion of serving the 2 million schoolchildren in Illinois. I also heard a desire for me to continue to be visible in school districts and communities, which I will try to prioritize to the best of my ability.

ISBE Systems – Our internal systems need time and attention. By systems, I mean both our back-office software solutions (which is why we have a Chief Information Officer position created on the new organization chart), as well as working to reduce or eliminate the silos that exist in any organization structure.

Equity – We must uphold equity principles in all of our work as an agency. We must continue to invest in and promote the Equity Journey Continuum (EJC). I recently met with diversity, equity, and inclusion leaders from across Illinois to request their help in organizing a symposium on the EJC and on equity. We need to empower leaders to have conversations within all communities. This will not be “one and done” but rather the start to a continuing conversation.

These 90 days of listening and learning will inform the next several months of planning. I mentioned our instructional retreat from last week. The ISBE team will meet again in advance of a State Board of Education retreat in September to discuss the next iteration of our Strategic Plan. Once the Board has that conversation, I will schedule feedback sessions across Illinois. The final Strategic Plan will then result in the Board setting new goals for me in January.

Thank you for all the input you have given me so far. I look forward to hearing more from you and to the work we will accomplish together.

Pictured: Students of multilingual specialist Monique (Muñiz) Brandonisio celebrated “crazy hair day” at Cicero District 99 summer school this week.

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>).

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 how you are investing federal relief funds (<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=hv5kA8ZJ9Eq1LDNameV30Ufi4KgH87ICv6FRRQI8cvlUNTdHWktDS1NJWjJZVDFaQ09RVINCUVdMRI4u>) to help students recover.

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR POSTSECONDARY SUPPORT AT PROVISO TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 209

Proviso Township High School District 209 began working with the OneGoal Postsecondary Leadership Network (<https://www.onegoalgraduation.org/solutions/onegoal-leadership-network/>) in 2022 through a partnership funded with ISBE's federal pandemic relief funds. The district was matched with Postsecondary Leadership Coach Julie Fregien. Julie facilitates learning experiences for school and

district leaders like Proviso’s deputy superintendent of schools Dr. Sharon Williams, providing one-on-one coaching to build capacity to create systemwide solutions to support postsecondary success for all students.

“Our OneGoal coach has been very persistent and has kept us on track in meeting our goals. Because of her experience as a high school leader, she understands those minute details that help us get over some humps,” said Dr. Williams. “Developing systems for tracking data, having the experience of leading a group of counselors ... it’s all been very valuable. We needed someone to help us clarify our thoughts about how we should engage with and energize our counselors. Now we have an action plan that keeps us on track, and she encourages us to use our time wisely in order to complete those action steps.”

Partner applications (<https://www.onegoalgraduation.org/solutions/onegoal-leadership-network/onegoal-isbe-partnership/isbe/>) are due **June 30** for districts to apply to the OneGoal Leadership Network for the 2023-24 school year. Learn more about how OneGoal is supporting postsecondary success on the OneGoal blog. (<https://www.onegoalgraduation.org/about/blog/>)

NEW

EARLY CHILDHOOD

FY 2024 EARLY CHILDHOOD BLOCK GRANT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WEBINAR

The FY 2024 Early Childhood Block Grant application deadline has been extended to **4 p.m. June 30**. The FY 2024 state budget includes an additional \$75 million to expand access to preschool across the state. The application prioritizes providers in identified preschool deserts (</Pages/ECBG-Preschool-Deserts.aspx>) where low-income children lack sufficient access to publicly funded preschool. Access the application, technical assistance webinars, and other resources on the ISBE website (<https://isbe.net/preschool>). A wide range of providers -- from school districts, to child care centers, to community-based organizations -- are eligible to apply. Help ISBE spread the word about these available funds for preschool by utilizing the communications toolkit (</Pages/ECBG-Communications-Toolkit.aspx>).

ISBE will host a technical assistance webinar to give applicants an overview of the application process at **4 p.m. June 21**. Register for the technical assistance webinar here [🔗](https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/5374882759889673309) (<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/5374882759889673309>).

Providers that need assistance meeting the program requirements for licensed staff can learn more about the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity Scholarship Program (<https://www.isac.org/ECACEScholarship>). Scholarships are available for undergraduate and graduate study. Eligible applicants are individuals currently working or who have worked in the early childhood field, including in home-based or center-based child care; who have obtained membership with the Illinois Gateways to Opportunity Registry (<https://www.ilgateways.com/credentials>); and who are enrolled or accepted to enroll in an eligible program at a participating institution in pursuit of an associate, bachelor’s, or master’s degree in early childhood or an additional license or endorsement in the field.

ISBE also offers temporary licenses called short-term approvals (<https://isbe.net/Pages/educator-licensure-approvals.aspx>) for qualified individuals to start teaching immediately while working toward permanent licensure.

NEW

FINANCE

FY 2024 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

Do you need support with your budget development for the upcoming fiscal year? ISBE can help! Please contact Eileen Turanchik at eturanch@isbe.net (<mailto:eturanch@isbe.net>) or 217-785-8779 if you would like to connect with one of our regional financial consultants in person or virtually. We can help with new fiscal year budget development, future projections, cash flow analysis, or any other school finance questions you may have.

GRANTS 101: NEW ISBE-IASA WORKSHOP ON GRANT APPLICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

Register for this free online webinar to deepen your understanding of the nuances of the grant application process and various grant program requirements. The webinar will cover budget development, expenditure reporting, and periodic reporting among other topics. The webinar also will discuss GATA approval and accessing SAMS number approval and share other resources available from ISBE regarding grant programs.

Participants will receive an Evidence of Completion Form for three professional development hours; this workshop is not eligible for Administrator Academy credit.

- Register - 9 a.m. June 28 (https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_S80aHPVLQImTxVhYq4DUKg#/registration)
- Register - 9 a.m. July 25 (https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_z8glw-cWRESqkAv2IDbC8g#/registration)

Contact Kristy Ponsler at kponsler@iasaedu.org (mailto:kponsler@iasaedu.org) or 217-753-2213 with any questions.

NEW SAFE & HEALTHY CLIMATE

ACTION NEEDED: MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SCREENING SURVEY

ISBE is administering a one-time landscape scan of all school districts in Illinois regarding mental and behavioral health screening of students, pursuant to Recommendation 9 in the February 2023 Blueprint for Transformation: A Vision for Improved Behavioral Healthcare for Illinois Children  (<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/gov/Documents/childrens-health-web-021523.pdf>) report and in accordance with Senate Bill 724 (<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?DocNum=724&GAID=17&DocTypeID=SB&SessionID=112&GA=103>). This feedback is an opportunity for districts or other public entities that provide school programming to public school students in Illinois to offer input about mental and behavioral health screening in schools. This feedback form is short - 14 questions if a district already administers some form of screening and three questions if a district currently does no form of mental health screening. The survey is available to all districts and ROEs and ISCs in the IWAS system listing under “surveys” and will remain open until early September. Please email mentalhealth@isbe.net (mailto:mentalhealth@isbe.net) with any questions.

FAITH'S LAW RESOURCES

Faith's Law was passed by the 102nd General Assembly as two separate pieces of legislation. The first piece of legislation, Public Act 102-0676 (<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/102/102-0676.htm>), took effect on Dec. 3, 2021. The second, PA 102-0702 (<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/102/102-0702.htm>), will take effect on **July 1, 2023**. Both public acts created new requirements that take effect at different dates.

ISBE has created the following resources to assist school districts, charter schools, and nonpublic schools with implementing the various requirements of Faith's Law:

- Faith's Law Webinar  (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttsbYf0uoc4>) (Please review this first as it explains the following documents.)
- Sexual Abuse Response and Prevention Resource Guide  (/Documents/Faiths-Law-Resource-Guide.pdf)
- Faith's Law Guidance and FAQ  (/Documents/Faiths-Law-Guidance-FAQ.pdf)
- Template 1 - Sexual Misconduct Disclosure Form for Applicant  (/Documents/Temp1-ISBE-Sexual-Misconduct-Disclosure-Form-Applicant.pdf)
- Template 2 - Authorization for Release and Former Employer Response re: Sexual Misconduct Information  (/Documents/Temp2-Auth-Release-Sexual-Misconduct-Related-Info.pdf)

Please take time to review the documents above prior to July 1. Should you have questions after reviewing the information above, please reach out to faithslaw@isbe.net (mailto:faithslaw@isbe.net) for assistance.

SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION SURVEY

Public Act 102-0522 requires ISBE to survey all public school districts on comprehensive personal health and safety and comprehensive sexual health instruction annually for five years. The survey for school year 2022-23 has been released to all districts in IWAS under “System Listing.” The “Surveys” category will remain open until **July 21**. The survey is titled "PA102-0522 Sexual Health Education Survey." All districts must complete this short survey, even if they are opting not to provide sexual health instruction. Please ensure the survey is completed by the person in your district who oversees sexual health education instruction.

Additional information about sexual health education is available on ISBE’s Sexual Health webpage (/sexualhealth). Please contact sexualhealtheducation@isbe.net (mailto:sexualhealtheducation@isbe.net) with any questions.

NEW

SPECIAL EDUCATION

STATE-APPROVED DIRECTORS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

ISBE is updating the directory of state-approved special education directors  (/Documents/sped_admin_directory.pdf) for the 2023-24 school year. If your district or special education cooperative has appointed a new director, please notify our office by sending an email to ISBESpecEd@isbe.net (mailto:ISBESpecEd@isbe.net). Additional information regarding the requirements and the process for approving a new director are described in this memo on State-Approved Special Education Director Change Procedures.  (/Documents/sped_director_changes.pdf)

NEW

STANDARDS & INSTRUCTION

ILLINOIS LITERACY PLAN LISTENING TOUR

ISBE is in the process of developing a first draft of an Illinois Literacy Plan  (/Documents/Illinois-State-Literacy-Plan-Draft.pdf). Literacy experts from throughout the state have contributed to this initial draft. The dedicated writing team is composed of education and literacy experts, who brought diverse perspectives to ensure a comprehensive and effective plan.

We are now entering the initial phase of public comment. ISBE is accepting feedback via an online form (https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=hv5kA8ZJ9Eq1LDNameV30U22bIFZ_jVHhvLFEGAFpwpUODNQNEVDSIJHUEkxMU9KU0RLUDBMT05PUy4u) as well as through multiple in person and virtual events. We recognize that providing multiple opportunities for input – and your expertise – will be crucial in developing a plan that provides guidance to support the assets each child brings into her or his classroom.

The listening tour kicks off on **June 28** in Springfield, and will stop in Chicago on **July 10**, Rockford on **July 11**, and Mount Vernon on **July 27**. A virtual event will be held on **July 31**. Visit the Illinois Literacy Plan webpage (/Pages/Illinois-Literacy-Plan.aspx) to provide feedback via the online form and for more information. We look forward to seeing you at a listening tour stop!

NEW

TEACHING & LEARNING

TEACHER VACANCY GRANT PILOT PROGRAM

The Teacher Vacancy Grant pilot program provides the state's most understaffed districts with resources to attract, hire, support, and retain teachers. The grant allows districts maximum flexibility to use allocated funds in innovative, creative, and evidenced-based ways. This may include signing bonuses, housing stipends, down payment assistance, or loan repayments; tuition and fees or funds for residencies or apprenticeships; or materials, supplies, coaching, and school culture supports to sustain employment of current teachers.

ISBE has identified 170 school districts in Evidence-Based Funding Tiers 1, 2, and 3 (as calculated for fiscal year 2023) as eligible to receive awards, based on the highest counts of unfilled teaching (not administrative or school support) positions and to ensure that 60 percent of awards go to rural districts and 40 percent to urban districts. The 60/40 split is aligned to the composition of all Tier 1, 2, and 3 districts in the state. National Center for Education Statistics (<https://nces.ed.gov/programs/edge/Geographic/LocaleBoundaries>) locale classifications were used to determine which districts were rural and which were urban.

Districts in Tier 4 and those that reported having no unfilled teaching positions at the beginning of the 2022-23 school year are ineligible for this program.

Eligible districts  (</Documents/TVG-Methodology-District-List.pdf>) have received direct communication from ISBE. Get more information regarding the grant and requirements at the Teacher Vacancy Grant Webinar  (<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/1364215085510343767>) from **10-11 a.m. June 27**.

RESEARCH & EVALUATION

IAR, SAT, AND DLM-AA NOW AVAILABLE ON MY DATA DASHBOARD

We are excited about the recent release of new My Data Dashboard screens, which focus on the Illinois Assessment for Readiness (IAR), SAT, and Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment (DLM-AA). The new screens include historical data from school year 2018-19 to SY 2021-22 and will be updated with SY 2022-23 data after the release of the 2023 Illinois Report Card this fall.

Join us for a webinar at 11 a.m. July 18 to learn more about My Data Dashboard  (<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/5936597960780507743>) and these new visualizations. Additional details, including resources such as quick start guides and videos on My Data Dashboard, can be found here (</ed360>).

IN BRIEF

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Free Educator Workshop: Unvarnished: Housing Discrimination in the Northern and Western United States

The Naperville Heritage Society will host a free workshop for middle and high school educators on **June 27, July 12, and July 17** featuring the *Unvarnished: Housing Discrimination in the Northern and Western United States* (<https://napersettlement.org/teachingunvarnished>) online exhibit and digging deeper into Illinois housing history. Please fill out this brief application and interest statement (https://napersettlement.org/DocumentCenter/View/8265/Unvarnished_Workshop_ALL-051723) and send the completed form to Donna Sack at sackd@naperville.il.us (<mailto:sackd@naperville.il.us>) to join a workshop.

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. July 11:** Creating an Inclusive and Diverse Space with Classroom Media Content (https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_9zX7JKWARTm_UFa1yQZ2pQ?_x_zm_rtaid=1yiYm26mQJyUyb65G62maQ.1686589760334.6fd042d90e699f2e53d179394a5871a5&_x_zm_rhtaid=277#/registration) – The presentation begins with data showing the strong impact of visuals on children’s perceptions and behaviors. All visuals a child is exposed to send a message to the child, so classroom visuals should be chosen with intentionality. Further, classroom visuals should be seen as an opportunity to build inclusion and identity with students. The presentation then reviews best practices for the types of visuals teachers should include in their classrooms taking into account differences in various factors, such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, body type, and abilities.

The presentation ends with resources for teachers to increase diverse representation in their classroom content, as well as a personal call to action to 1) continuously increase their exposure to different types of people, and 2) keep an open mind to recognize and address their own biases.

IRC Hosts Multilingual Mini-Conference EmpowerCon

The Illinois Resource Center (IRC) will host a one-day mini conference **July 18 or July 20** for English learner/bilingual/dual language educators that will support attendees to feel empowered and equipped to lead in their schools and districts. This free, in-person conference will provide teachers with an empowering keynote session as well as multiple breakout sessions centered around serving and supporting multilingual learners and their families. All participants will receive five professional development credit hours. Register for EmpowerCon 2023 here (<https://irc.thecenterweb.org/events/empowercon-2023>).

EDUCATOR RECOGNITION

Lockport Township High School Teacher Receives William and Mildred Jackson Teacher Recognition Award

Congratulations to Lockport Township High School District 205 teacher Bridget Hope for receiving the 2023 William and Mildred Jackson Teacher Recognition Award! Hope has served in the district's Special Education Department for nearly 19 years. The award honors an educator who has exhibited special skills in the art and science of teaching.

FEATURED ISBE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

- Chief Information Officer #1864 (</Lists/ISBECareers/CareerDisplayForm.aspx?ID=836>)
- Senior Software Developer (Senior Systems Administrator # 1844, 1845) (</Lists/ISBECareers/CareerDisplayForm.aspx?ID=830>)

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