



Weekly Message

Jan. 12, 2016

Message From State Superintendent Tony Smith, Ph.D.

Hello,

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) met last Wednesday and approved its fiscal year 2017 budget recommendation. Thank you to those who took time to participate in this year's public budget hearings. Your feedback was greatly valued and essential to this process. We believe our proposed spending plan reflects the Board's strong commitment to equitably distribute state funding to school districts based on their unique student populations, the availability of local resources, and the need for services to ensure the whole child is supported from grades K-12.

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This year's budget recommendation is groundbreaking as our staff worked to find creative ways within statutory constraints to prioritize dollars toward the most equitable distribution formula that exists in current law for our school districts. Since FY 10, Illinois has cumulatively lost roughly \$3.8 billion in education funding compared to FY 09 funding levels. Our budget recommendation calls for a package fully funding General State Aid (GSA), plus \$2.548 billion for FY 17. (Total amounts will be finalized when the FY 17 forecast for GSA is completed.)

We realize that the GSA formula is not ideal; however, by funneling as many funds as possible through this formula, the state will be closer to achieving the goal of equitable funding while awaiting major statutory change necessary to fully and finally accomplish this landmark goal. GSA has not been fully funded at the statutory Foundation Level of \$6,119 per student since FY 12, meaning the state has paid only a percentage of the amounts owed to school districts. Additionally, the \$6,119 Foundation Level for GSA is still far less than the Education Funding Advisory Board's recommended Foundation Level of \$8,899 per student.

The Board's FY 17 budget recommendation to fully fund GSA is in two parts:

- Fully fund the GSA claim at the statutory Foundation Level of \$6,119.
- Reallocate the appropriation for the Special Education - Funding for Children Requiring Special Education Services line (\$305.2 million) into the GSA appropriations to increase the Foundation Level.

The estimated new Foundation Level after the influx of funds is \$6,327 per student (based on FY 16 data). It will be the first time the Foundation Level has been increased since FY 10. Funding for Children dollars are distributed using a formula based on a district's Average Daily Attendance and low-income student population. In accordance with statute, Chicago Public Schools receives 29.2 percent of these funds as part of the Educational Services Block Grant. We believe reallocating these funds to GSA ensures the money will be distributed on a more equitable basis based upon GSA's two measures of need.

Seventy-seven percent of all Illinois students would benefit from the recommended GSA increase and these students reside in communities with the least amount of wealth and the greatest concentration of low-income students. Under our recommendation, districts with greater local resources and lower concentration of low-income students would receive fewer state funds. The maximum loss has been calculated at \$106 per pupil and no district loses more than 0.9 percent of its operating revenue. (Note these figures are based on FY 16 state fund distribution data and FY 16 budget data from school districts.)

Our budget request also includes an increase of \$262.1 million in new dollars from FY 16. More than 91 percent of the total increase is attributable to six areas:

- Mandated Categorical Reimbursements (\$115.5 million or 44 percent of the increase)
- Early Childhood Education (\$75 million or 29 percent of the increase)
- Focus on the Community (\$15 million or 6 percent of the increase)
- Bilingual Education (\$11.9 million or 5 percent of the increase)
- Regional Safe Schools & Truant Alternative and Optional Education (\$11 million or 4 percent of the increase)
- Educator Quality and Support (\$9 million or 3 percent of the increase)

We are seeking \$53.1 million to pay for administering the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), a federally required science assessment, and a college entrance exam for grade 11. I would also note the requested budget line item for ISBE administration costs represents one-third of 1 percent, or 0.33 percent, of FY 17 appropriation levels to provide high-quality service and support to school districts.

Our budget request includes a new Healthy Community Incentive Fund, which would support a competitive grant process to help coordinate, align, and leverage efforts to solve complex social problems within communities aimed toward serving the needs of the "whole child." The grant would enable school districts to take a lead role in cross-organization collaboration and become centers of collective impact and responsibility to the children of the community. Addressing these issues would help ensure that students are present, focused, and ready to learn in the classroom. I am excited about this new opportunity for school districts and believe it will further support their role as centers of healthy communities.

The Board's budget proposal will be posted at www.isbe.net/budget.

Last week, the 2016 edition of Education Week's Quality Counts report, "[Called to Account: New Directions in School Accountability](#)," was released. This year's report gives overall grades for the nation and states and also includes grades for individual states in three areas monitored by the report on an ongoing basis: the Chance-for-Success Index, K-12 Achievement Index, and School Finance. Illinois earned a grade of C-plus and an overall score of 76.7 out of 100 points, ranking 17th among all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Illinois earned a B-minus and ranks 20th in the Chance-for-Success

category, a C-plus and ranks 16th in School Finance, and a C-minus and ranks 20th for the K-12 Achievement Index. You may review the report online at www.edweek.org/go/qc16.

Thanks,
Tony

Upcoming ISBE Dates and Deadlines

Please note this is not a complete list of events, meetings, and deadlines. For questions, call the Illinois State Board of Education at (866) 262-6663 or (217) 782-4321 or visit the agency's official website at <http://www.isbe.net>.

- **2016 Illinois 5Essential Survey administration window** – Jan. 11-March 11
- **Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly in spring 2016** – Jan. 15 (See www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/default.htm for public notice requirements for all waiver requests.)
- **Deadline to submit written opt-out petition for the SFSP mandate (Public Act 096-0734) to regional superintendents of schools** – Jan. 15
- **ISBE offices closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day** – Jan. 18
- **Deadline to apply for “Schools of Opportunity” Recognition Program** – Jan. 20 (<http://opportunitygap.org>)
- **Rescheduled standard testing window for all districts using paper materials on the ACCESS for ELLs assessment** – Jan. 25 to Feb. 26
- **“Overview of Flexible Delivery Models for the Gifted/Talented” webinar** – Jan. 27 (<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8183144248605751297>)
- **Deadline to submit IDEA excess cost worksheets to the Special Education Services Division** – Jan. 29
- **Deadline to submit proposals for the Educator Equity Program Development Grant** – Feb. 1 (http://isbe.net/funding_opps/htmls/rfp.htm)
- **Deadline to complete and submit the 2015-16 Noncertified Staff Salary Study data survey** – Feb. 1
- **Deadline to complete and submit the 2015-16 Teacher Salary Study data form** – Feb. 1
- **Illinois Association for Gifted Children's 21st Annual Gifted Convention** – Feb. 7-9 (www.iagcgifted.org/committees/twenty-first-iagc-convention.html)
- **ISBE offices closed for Lincoln's Birthday** – Feb. 12
- **ISBE offices closed for Presidents' Day** – Feb. 15
- **2016 Illinois Arts Education Week** – March 14-20
- **Ninth annual Illinois School Wellness Conference** – April 28
- **ISBE offices closed for Memorial Day** – May 30
- **Deadline to submit data in the Student Health - Vision system** – June 30

Funding and Disbursements

Final FY 2016 Mandated Categorical Prorations Now Calculated

Final prorations and payments have been calculated for all 2014-15 school year categorical claims that will be vouchered in FY 2016. If you have questions, contact ISBE's Division of Funding and Disbursements at (217) 782-5256.

- Special Education Personnel – 100 percent
- Special Education Private Facility – 94 percent
- Special Education Funding for Children Requiring Special Education Services – 100 percent
- Special Education Summer School – 84 percent
- Special Education Orphanage – 100 percent
- Special Education Transportation – 96 percent
- Regular/Vocational Transportation – 70 percent

- Regular Education Orphanage – 100 percent

Final 2014-15 IDEA Room and Board Claim Payment Information

The 2014-15 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Room and Board program is now complete. Final 2014-15 school year claims exceeded the amount of IDEA Room and Board funds available. Proration was calculated at 95 percent of the final claims. Claims reimbursed from federal IDEA Part B grant funds have escalated beyond the set-aside amounts the agency retains from the annual IDEA Part B award. The following link provides a graph demonstrating the increase of claims over the available IDEA Part B funds utilized for the Room and Board program in the past few years: www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/sped-rb-history-graph.pdf.

The final 2014-15 school year voucher was processed by ISBE on Dec. 23 and released by the Office of the Comptroller on Dec. 28.

2015-16 School Year: Due to the leveling of claims this past school year, the projected increase of claims and available IDEA funds for the 2015-16 school year is estimated at a proration of approximately 95 percent; therefore, to avoid potential overpayment, submitted monthly claims will be paid at 90 percent during the year. Once all claims are finalized in December 2016, final claims and proration will be calculated and paid at that time.

If you have questions, please contact Lisa Willhoit in the Funding and Disbursement Division at lwillhoi@isbe.net or (217) 782-5256.

Federal Interest Income – Quarterly Reminder

The Code of Federal Regulations, Title 34-Education, Part 80 Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, Subpart C-Post Award Requirements, Section 80.21 Payment, requires grantees and subgrantees to promptly, but at least quarterly, remit interest earned on advances to the appropriate federal agency. The grantee or subgrantee may keep actual interest amounts up to \$100 per year gained on federal deposits per bank account, if applicable, for administrative purposes. Grant

recipients have discretion to set up account(s) that are non-interest bearing to avoid returning interest.

To ensure compliance with federal administrative requirements, local education agency fiscal officials should develop internal controls and a sound methodology to calculate and return, at least quarterly, interest earned in excess of \$100 on federal program funds. Interest calculation methodologies must be based on actual, not estimated, interest earnings on federal funds. Further details as to how federal interest should be calculated and remitted can be found on pages 10-12 of the “State and Federal Grant Administration Policy and Fiscal Requirements and Procedures,” which is at www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/fiscal_procedure_handbk.pdf.

Interest should be returned using the following guidelines:

- Checks for interest earned should be made payable to the Illinois State Board of Education.
- Checks should not include the return of unexpended disbursements from ISBE. Even though unexpended disbursements and interest payments are made payable to the Illinois State Board of Education, separate checks should be issued for both.
- Checks should be accompanied by a statement identifying the program and the program year from which the interest was earned.

All checks must be mailed to: Illinois State Board of Education, Funding and Disbursements Services Division (E-320), 100 N. First St., Springfield, IL 62777-0001.

Charter Schools

Charter Schools Program Grant Request for Proposal Intent to Apply Available

Design teams interested in applying to the Charter Schools Program Grant need to complete the FY 2016 Request For Proposal Intent To Apply in order to access the secure online RFP to be released in early 2016. The form is posted at

www.isbe.net/charter/pdf/43-48A-charter-rfp-16-intent-to-apply.pdf.

Letters of intent must be submitted by Jan. 31. For any questions, please contact Claudia Quezada at cquezada@isbe.net or (217) 524-4832.

Family Engagement

Illinois PTA Offers Free Parent Trainings on Learning Standards Through January

The Illinois PTA, in partnership with the Learning Heroes and the National PTA, is offering to conduct or fund parent trainings on the Illinois Learning Standards throughout the month of January, at no cost to school districts. The trainings are an opportunity to build parents' understanding of the Illinois Learning Standards as well as how to support at-home learning. Schools or districts interested in setting up a parent training or learning more about the opportunity may e-mail Matthew Rodriguez (subject line: Training) at mrodriguez@illinoispta.org.

Those Who Excel

2016 Illinois Teacher of the Year Available for Speaking Engagements



Are you looking for a speaker who adds energy, multiplied by enthusiasm, and divided by student learning success strategies? If so, the solution to your problem is Kim Thomas, the 2016 Illinois Teacher of the Year.

Kim has taught in Peoria Public Schools District 150 for 23 years. For the past two years, she's taught math to seventh- and eighth-grade students at Woodruff Career and Technical Center. Students at Woodruff frequently feel the school is their last chance to succeed in middle school. Kim helps them not only understand math but often like the subject as well. She is a positive role model who helps each and every one of her students believe they can be "mathlicious," too!

Contact Kim at www.psd150.org/kimthomas.

U.S. Department of Education

Letter Encourages Safe, Non-Discriminatory Learning Environments

In light of recent world events, including the Syrian refugee crisis and violent attacks in the United States and abroad, former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and acting Secretary of Education John King have written a letter encouraging school districts to foster safe, respectful, and non-discriminatory learning environments for all students.

The letter is posted at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/secletter/151231.html>.

Assessment and Accountability

ACCESS 2016 Testing Window Adjustment

Paper testing materials for the ACCESS for English Language Learners (ELLs) assessment will not be shipped to Illinois districts and schools as originally scheduled due to data system complications. Paper ACCESS materials are now expected to arrive by Jan. 19. The testing window is being adjusted accordingly.

The standard testing window for all districts using paper materials is now Jan. 25 to Feb. 26. The date by which to have materials picked up for return to the vendor (DRC) is March 4.

Please note the following provisions that apply only to the 2016 ACCESS testing cycle.

- ACCESS testing with paper materials may actually begin earlier than Jan. 25. If you have materials and are ready, it's not necessary to wait until Jan. 25.
- For online ACCESS testing, there is no schedule delay. It may begin as originally scheduled for your district (as early as Jan. 11), but it may now continue until Feb. 26. This is to accommodate districts that are using both the online and paper formats.
- The window for ordering additional paper materials began on Jan. 6 but now extends to Feb. 19.

This schedule adjustment is not expected to delay the availability of preliminary ACCESS results for data corrections, currently scheduled for May 9-27.

ISBE apologizes for this late change in the ACCESS testing cycle. If you have questions, feel free to contact Barry Pedersen in the Division of Student Assessment at (866) 317-6034 or bpederse@isbe.net.

If any school districts currently scheduled to administer ACCESS on paper are interested in switching to the online format, wholly or partially, DRC is more than happy to work with them toward that end. They may be reached at (855) 787-9615 or wida@datarecognitioncorporation.com.

Data Analysis

2015-16 Noncertified Staff Salary Study Survey Now Available

The 2015-16 Noncertified Staff Salary Study data survey is now available in IWAS. This form must be completed and submitted by Feb. 1. It is the district administrator's responsibility to review the completed survey for accuracy and submit it to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

Districts with 1,000 or more enrolled students as of the last school day in September of 2015 must submit this survey. The district administrator or a district document author may complete this survey.

Reference the following documents for assistance:

- User Guide: <ftp://help.isbe.net/webapps/NoncertStaffSalStudy/UserGuide.pdf>
- Example for completing the survey: www.isbe.net/research/pdfs/ncss-instructions-12.pdf
- Worksheet: www.isbe.net/research/pdfs/ncss-worksheet-07.pdf

For further assistance, please contact the Data Analysis Division at (217) 782-3950.

For technical assistance accessing IWAS, please contact the ISBE Help Desk at (217) 558-3600.

2015-16 Teacher Salary Study Form Now Available

The 2015-16 Teacher Salary Study data form is now available in IWAS. These forms must be completed and submitted by Feb. 1. If your district didn't employ teachers this school year, disregard this message.

In addition to completing the form, please send a copy of your salary schedule/policy and negotiated agreement to the address below. This is not necessary if you provided copies of the schedule/policy and agreement previously and they are still in effect. Send updated schedules and policies to:

Data Analysis Division
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street, S-284
Springfield, Illinois 62777

For further assistance, please contact the Data Analysis Division at (217) 782-3950.

For technical assistance accessing IWAS, please contact the ISBE Help Desk at (217) 558-3600.

College and Career Readiness

Curriculum Revitalization Project Update

The Curriculum Revitalization Project (CR Project) provides curriculum, resources, and professional development for career and technical educators throughout the state of Illinois. The CR Project is grant-funded by ISBE. To provide service to all career and technical education (CTE) teachers in Illinois, staff are employed in the following areas:

- Business, Marketing & Computer Education
- Family & Consumer Sciences
- Technology & Engineering Education
- Health Science Technology
- School Counseling

Recently, the CR Project has added the December newsletter, Illinois InCITE, with special school features, and new Career Profiles to the website at www.ilcte.org. For more information, please contact the CR Project Coordinator Rod McQuality at rmcquality@cwd.siu.edu.

Note: To ensure that the CR Project emails are being received by all CTE teachers and administrators within your district, please check with your tech specialist to allow emails to come through unfiltered. The email communications for the CR Project come from ctecurriculumproject@cwd.siu.edu.

Gifted Education

Gifted Education Webinar Set for Jan. 27

Every class has at least one child who is gifted and talented, and these children need the opportunities to learn something new every day. The Illinois Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children is hosting a webinar, titled “Overview of Flexible Delivery Models for the Gifted/Talented,” from 9 to 10 a.m. Jan. 27.

The webinar is for teachers and administrators to learn about different methods of working with gifted children. Register at <https://attendeegotowebinar.com/register/8183144248605751297>.

21st Annual Gifted Convention Feb. 7-9

The Illinois Association for Gifted Children will hold its 21st Annual Gifted Convention from Feb. 7-9 at the Naperville Marriott.

Participants can gather together with attendees from throughout Illinois and the country who support the needs of gifted children: classroom teachers, gifted coordinators, administrators, and parents as well as exhibitors, board members, committee chairs, staff, volunteers, and scholarship award recipients. New nationally recognized presenters will also join returning favorites.

Visit the convention webpage at www.iagcgifted.org/committees/twenty-first-iagc-convention.html for complete information about registration, schedule, exhibitors, hotel reservations, and visiting Naperville.

School Health Issues

School Health Update

The Illinois Department of Public Health invites school nurses and others who provide school health

services or assure compliance with student health requirements to attend one of five repeated training sessions this winter. The dates and locations are:

- Feb. 23 - Rend Lake Resort & Conference Center, 11712 E. Windy Lane, Whittington, IL 62897, (618) 629-2211
- Feb. 24 - Northfield Inn & Suites Center, 3280 Northfield Dr., Springfield, IL 62702, (217) 523-7900
- March 1 - Radisson Hotel & Conference Center Rockford, 200 S. Bell School Rd., Rockford, IL 61108, (815) 226-2100
- March 2 - Hyatt-Lisle, 1400 Corporetum Drive, Lisle, IL 60532, (630) 852-1234
- March 3 - Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Chicago, 75 W. Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60005, (847) 364-7600

Registration is now open. Visit www.ipha.com and scroll down to “2016 Illinois School Health Days” to register. Contact Marie Irwin at Marie.Irwin@illinois.gov with questions.

In Brief

District Opportunities

- The deadline for applications to **TECH 2016** is Feb. 3. TECH 2016 showcases how students and teachers across the state use technology in classrooms to enhance student learning and is scheduled for May 10 at the Illinois State Capitol Building in Springfield. Find out more information, including how your district can be one of the 66 schools representing Illinois, at www.iceberg.org/TECH_2016.

School Opportunities

- The **21st Century Learning Exemplar Program** is accepting applications for its 2016-17 Exemplar cohort. The application deadline has been extended to Jan. 20. The program helps the Partnership for 21st Century Learning identify, document, promote, and celebrate examples of successful 21st-century learning. It provides educators and communities a variety of models to draw from and offers policymakers and P21 State Partners local examples to help encourage their support. To learn more, visit www.p21.org/apply.

Educator Opportunities

- The **Illinois Education Association (IEA)**, in partnership with the Springfield Education Association, IEA Region 47, Springfield Public Schools, and Promoting Resiliency of Trauma-Exposed Communities Together (PROTECT), is sponsoring a screening of the documentary [“Paper Tigers”](#) from 4 to 8 p.m. Jan. 25 at Southeast High School in Springfield. The film examines the promise of Trauma Informed Communities – a movement that is showing great promise in healing youth struggling with Adverse Childhood Experiences. For more information and to register, click [here](#).
- P21’s **21st Century Learning Exemplar Program** is seeking members for its Exemplar Evaluation team to help review Exemplar school applicants. An introductory call at 12 p.m. Jan. 25 for veteran and notice reviewers will outline the Exemplar Evaluation process, go over the updated rubric and scoring process, and answer any questions. Join the call at www.uberconference.com/p21skills or by dialing (202) 808-0429.

Student Opportunities

- Fifth- and sixth-grade writers and artists are invited to compete in this year’s **Poster, Poetry, and Prose Contest** sponsored by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This year’s theme contest is “W.A.T.E.R. – What A True Environmental Resource!” Each school can enter up to eight (four posters and four written) works. Entries must be postmarked and sent to the Illinois EPA by Feb. 1. More information is available at www.epa.illinois.gov/topics/education/contest/index or by contacting Kristi Morris, Environmental Education Coordinator for the Illinois EPA, at (217) 558-7198 or by mail at 1021 North Grand Ave. E., P.O. Box 19276, Springfield, IL 62794 9276.

Employment Opportunities

- Watch for vacancy lists and find instructions for applying on ISBE’s Human Resources webpage at <http://www.isbe.net/hr/Default.htm>.