



Weekly Message

Jan. 20, 2016

Message From State Superintendent Tony Smith, Ph.D.

Hello,

Preparations are underway for the next administration of state assessments this spring and I know many of you have questions about our plan for testing science. In compliance with federal testing requirements, Illinois will administer an online science assessment to students in grades 5, 8 and once at the high school level.

The high school assessment will be course-based and correspond to the content of Biology I. The test will be aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards and use an open-source technology platform known as TAO.

The testing window is expected to be open throughout May. That said, we hope to open the window in April, if possible, to give your schools added flexibility. Illinois has an item-sharing agreement with the Office of the State Superintendent in the District of Columbia and will work in partnership with D.C. to build our science assessment. We are currently finalizing forms for this spring and expect to provide additional details about the assessment early next month.

I understand that concerns exist about introducing a new test while schools continue to adjust to the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) exam and prepare for a potentially new college entrance exam. We want to be as clear and helpful in this process as possible and encourage you to reach out to our office with any questions.

You all are doing an exceptional job of leading your staff and students through these new and better aligned assessments, which I believe will ultimately improve teaching and classroom engagement. We remain strongly committed to minimizing testing and reducing test prep time, both of which take away from valuable classroom instruction. We welcome your feedback on how best to accomplish this goal.

Have a great week,
Tony

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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
- **Deadline to apply for “Schools of Opportunity” Recognition Program** – Jan. 20
(<http://opportunitygap.org>)
- **Final extended window to opt in to the 5Essentials Survey of Learning Conditions** – Jan. 22
- **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 nominations for the Governor’s Volunteer Service Awards** – Jan. 29
(Serve.Illinois.gov)
- **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
- **Deadline for districts to review the Financial Profile Report and verify the Operating Expense per Pupil (OEPP)/Per Capita Tuition Charge (PCTC)** – Feb. 5
- **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

Center for Performance

Final Extended Window for 5Essentials Survey of Learning Conditions

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has reopened the window to opt in to the 5Essentials Survey of Learning Conditions until Jan. 22. **This will be the final extension.**

For the 2016 survey administration, both teacher and student rosters will be collected. **To roster teachers, ISBE has created a template that participating districts must fill out.** The template is available for download at www.isbe.net/5essentials/excel/5e-teacher-roster-template.xls.

Please include the following information in your roster. **Note that it is unnecessary to include the actual position codes in the template, as they are only listed here for your reference.** Note these codes correspond to codes found in the Employment Information System (EIS):

- 200-251- General Teachers
- 309 - Librarian/Media Specialists
- 311- Reading Specialists
- 601-611- All Resource Teachers

Within the template, you will be asked to provide the following material for each included employee:

- First and Last Name
- IEIN
- School-level RCDTS

- School email address (not personal email addresses)

In the body of the email, please also provide the following information to ISBE:

- District Name
- District RCDTS
- Name of your district's appointed survey coordinator
- Survey coordinator's email address

The completed teacher roster must be returned as an .xls file (no Google documents) or your file will be unreadable.

If your district is interested in participating, please download, fill out, and return the teacher roster file to 5Essentials@isbe.net no later than 5 p.m. Jan. 22. If you have any questions filling out the template, please call (217) 782-3950 or email 5Essentials@isbe.net.

School Business Services

School District Annual Financial Report Review Process

All district superintendents should have received an email broadcast asking them to review their preliminary Financial Profile Report and verify the Operating Expense per Pupil (OEPP)/Per Capita Tuition Charge (PCTC) by no later than **Feb. 5**. District administrators may submit comments regarding their district's finances that will be published along with their Financial Profile Report (500 characters max). The comments must be submitted no later than **Feb. 5**.

The email included links to the memorandum, instructions, and definitions to assist with the review process. These documents are also available in [IWAS](#) and on the [School District Financial Profile Score & OEPP/PCTC Verification Information webpage](#).

The email broadcast and Superintendent's Weekly Message will be the only notices sent to the district. If you have not received the email, please contact ISBE at (217) 785-8779. If you have given another person authority to review these reports, please forward the email to them. Since the financial profile designation will be approved and publicly released by ISBE, it is crucial that districts review their financial profile data and score. Any district that wishes to include comments

that support the Financial Profile Report may do so directly in IWAS beneath the report. Although comments are optional, they are encouraged; this is an opportunity for districts to explain significant financial circumstances.

The deadlines and instructions are important in completing the OEPP/PCTC verification process because once the deadline passes, changes to the 2015 Annual Financial Report (AFR) data are not permitted.

The financial profile scores will be adjusted to reflect any mandated categorical aid payments due to school districts that were not paid by June 30, 2015, and not included in their FY 2015 Annual Financial Report.

If you have questions regarding the school profile score, please contact Christine Kolaz at (217) 785-8779 or ckolaz@isbe.net. If you believe your OEPP/PCTC report is incorrect, please contact Debbie Hemberger in School Business Services at (217) 785-8779 or dhemberg@isbe.net.

Funding and Disbursements

New Census Estimates Released for FY 2017 Title I Low Income

The U.S. Department of Education has released the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) for income year 2014. These estimates will be used to calculate fiscal year 2017 Title I allocations. A file of 2014 Poverty Data by Local Education Agency (LEA) is provided in an alphabetical listing of LEAs, Poverty Count, 5-17 Population, Poverty Percentage and Total Population at www.isbe.net/funding/excel/title1-census-fy17.xlsx.

With this data, LEAs can determine their potential eligibility for Basic, Concentration, Targeted and Education Finance Incentive grants (EFIG).

Basic Grant eligibility: An LEA must have at least 10 poverty children and the number of poverty children must be greater than 2 percent of the LEA population of children ages 5-17.

Concentration Grant eligibility: An LEA must have at least 6,500 poverty children or the number of those children exceeds 15 percent of the total 5-17 population.

Targeted Grant and EFIG qualifications: An LEA must have at least 10 poverty children and that number must be at least 5 percent of the 5-17 population.

The following link to the Census Bureau, www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/index.html, provides various aspects of the SAIPE count, including the data sources and methodology used to prepare these data. We will be using the 2014 data to calculate school year 2016-17 Title I, Part A allocations because they are the most recent available data.

Superintendents, business managers, and Title I directors should carefully examine the data for their LEA as this will be the first indication as to whether your LEA may be gaining or losing in eligibility for Title I funds in FY 2017. ISBE neither controls nor generates the data. The challenge period for the 2014 estimates ends March 8. Refer to the Census Bureau link at www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/contact/challenges.html, if interested.

Note that this preliminary data does not include other non-census information, such as foster, neglected, or delinquent counts that may be used to calculate Title I allocations.

If you have questions, please contact Sally Cray in the Division of Funding and Disbursements at scray@isbe.net or (217) 782-5256.

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.

Serve Illinois Commission on Volunteerism & Community Service

Nominations Sought for Annual Governor’s Volunteer Service Awards

The Serve Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service is accepting nominations for the annual Governor’s Volunteer Service Awards. These awards recognize individual volunteers and businesses that support community service. The awards honor those who provide selfless service to the state and highlight the importance of volunteerism and community service in Illinois.

Nominations are due to Serve Illinois by Jan. 29. A ceremony to honor recipients will be held on April 13

at the Old State Capitol in Springfield. Visit Serve.Illinois.gov for information about individual awards, past recipient bios, and nomination forms.

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 increase 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>.

In Brief

School Opportunities

- **The Great Kindness Challenge** will take place during the last week of January. Students in grades K-12 are asked to devote one week to performing as many acts of kindness as possible. The nationwide campaign is a proactive and positive bullying prevention initiative that improves school climate and increases student engagement. It is also a statewide initiative of the Illinois School Counselor Association. Schools can visit <http://greatkindnesschallenge.org/> and register through Jan. 22.
- **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.

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.

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 noon 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.

Educator Recognition

- **National School Counseling Week**, sponsored by the American School Counseling Association (ASCA), will be celebrated Feb. 1-5 to focus public attention on the unique contribution of professional school counselors within the U.S. school system. The event aims to highlight the tremendous impact school counselors can have in helping students achieve school success, plan a career, make postsecondary plans, address personal/social skills, and provide support to the district and community.

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>.