



Jan. 3, 2011

Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

It was a very busy year for education in Illinois. We made major progress in moving forward with what I believe are among the most important reforms in education in decades, while at the same time battling budget uncertainty and an uncertain political climate as competitive statewide elections were contested that will directly impact our classrooms this coming year and into the future.

Many of us were focused on Illinois' efforts to secure Race to the Top funding for the students of Illinois. By all accounts, we put together one of the best applications, but we fell short. I am disappointed that we did not receive the funding, but I am not disappointed with the efforts we invested to prepare the application. The benefits from your efforts will drive education in Illinois for years to come. Thank you.

The state's budget difficulties continued to be a problem for all of us. The backlog of bills in the Comptroller's office was regularly more than \$1 billion, forcing all of us to make some difficult decisions. As a result, some good programs suffered. We were forced to think differently about how we did business, looking to save time and money wherever possible. The budget woes are likely to continue into the future, but despite the challenges we faced and still face together, 2010 turned out to be a great year for our students.

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- Illinois State Board of Education adopts new learning standards:** In June 2010, Board members approved new K-12 Common Core State Standards in English and math. These new benchmarks provide “fewer, clearer and higher” standards that will better prepare Illinois students for success in college and the work force in a competitive global economy.
- Illinois leads efforts to create new student assessment system:** Illinois is one of 11 states serving on the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers’ governing board. These 26 states are pooling resources for an internationally benchmarked assessment system that will greatly increase the number of graduating students who are ready to succeed. The new assessments will be ready for states to administer by the 2014-15 school year.
- State testing trends show improvement:** The overall average score for all state tests increased to 76.4 in 2010, up from 75.5 the previous year. Students in grades 3-8, who take the Illinois Standards Achievement Test, boosted the overall ISAT score to 80.9 from 79.8. And students with disabilities who take the Illinois Alternative Assessment also showed a combined increase, 68.6 in 2010, up from 66.5 in 2009.
- Illinois’ Class of 2010 ACT scores leads all universal ACT states:** Of the eight states that test at least 90 percent of their students, Illinois was No. 1 with a composite ACT score of 20.7. In addition, while the national average composite score has seen a slight dip in the past five years, Illinois has seen a slight increase, from 20.5 in 2006 to 20.7 in 2010.

- **Record number of Illinois students take AP exams:** The sixth annual AP Report to the Nation not only showed a record number of Illinois students taking AP exams among all categories (gender, ethnicity and economic status), but also showed the state in the upper half of the nation (18th) for the number of high school seniors who scored a 3 or higher on an AP exam.
- **Illinois among 11 states to pilot 12th grade NAEP; students led the pilot in reading:** Illinois volunteered to take part in a National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) pilot in reading and math at grade 12 as we implement the more rigorous Common Core Standards to better prepare students for college and career. Results showed that Illinois 12th graders performed at the national average in math but scored higher than the national average in reading. Out of the ten other states that received scores, only one state, Florida, had similar demographics and size as Illinois. In both math and reading, Illinois performed better than Florida.
- **New, rigorous teacher and principal evaluations:** The Performance Evaluation Reform Act of 2010 implements new teacher and principal evaluations statewide that must incorporate measures of student growth and professional practice. The Performance Evaluation Advisory Council is now working to advance these changes, develop a state template, and develop an evaluator training program.
- **Independent alternative teacher and principal preparation programs:** Gov. Quinn signed a bill into law that amended the School Code to allow for alternative certification programs to be offered by either institutions of higher education, not for profit entities, or a combination of higher education and not for profits. All entities, both higher education and not for profits must meet the same standards and be approved by the State Board of Education.
- **Overhaul of the state’s principal preparation and certification requirements:** A new law provides that, beginning on July 1, 2014, the general administrative endorsement shall no longer be issued and instead individuals completing approved programs shall be issued a principal endorsement. All current programs must be redefined to meet new requirements and be approved by the State Teacher Certification Board and the State Board. No new candidates may be enrolled in current programs after Sept. 1, 2012. Highlights include more rigorous selection criteria and assessments and internship requirements as well as increasing the number of years teaching required prior to attaining principal endorsement.
- **Illinois awarded second grant for Longitudinal Data System:** The agency was awarded a second competitive grant to continue development of the Illinois Longitudinal Data System. The grant has four major goals: establish a statewide transcript system for middle and high school students, integrate student-level data with teacher and administrator data, continued expansion and development of postsecondary education data system, expansion of the early childhood data collection system.
- **Illinois recognized for collaborative efforts to build student data system:** The Data Quality Campaign singled out Illinois and its education leaders for work toward ensuring the state builds a pre-K through college data system to better prepare students for success after graduation.
- **Illinois takes on education leadership roles at the national level:** In November, State Superintendent of Education Christopher A. Koch was named president of the Council of Chief State School Officers, and Deputy Superintendent Susie Morrison was named to the CCSSO Deputies Leadership Commission, giving Illinois seats at the table during a crucial time of examining education policy across the country. In addition, ISBE Board Chairman Jesse H. Ruiz was picked to serve on a national panel to make policy recommendations on federal education legislation, and Board Vice Chair Dr. Christopher J. Ward and Board Secretary Dr. Vinni M. Hall were named to national task forces on key educational issues.
- **Illinois celebrates the 25th anniversary prekindergarten program:** ISBE marked 25 years since the establishment of the state’s Prekindergarten Program for Children at Risk of Academic Failure. The nationally-recognized program has offered services to more 800,000 3- and 4-year-olds across the state through the years and remains a top priority.

- **Illinois leads nation in bilingual services for Pre-K:** The Illinois State Board of Education approved rules requiring language support services for English language learners in public preschools. The rules stem from a 2009 law that requires bilingual education extend to preschool. Illinois is the first to mandate such services to better prepare English Language Learners for success in school and help bridge the achievement gap.
- **School Improvement Grant helps pave the way:** Illinois, which secured \$146 million to help carry out interventions in its lowest-performing schools, is a leading state in a partnership with Mass Insight Education and Research Institute to identify and implement strategies to turn around struggling schools.
- **Nearly 1,000 schools recognized on Illinois Honor Roll:** ISBE recognized 975 high performing schools on the annual Illinois Honor Roll. The Spotlight Schools award went to 425 high-poverty, high-performing schools that are showing gains in overcoming the achievement gap. Academic Excellence awards went to 438 schools that have maintained high-performance over at least three years. And 147 schools were honored for showing substantial gains over three years, earning the Academic Improvement award.
- **Agency distributes nearly \$1.5 billion additional federal funds:** The agency distributed more than \$1.34 billion in funding to schools from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act during 2010, bringing the total additional funds distributed by the agency under ARRA to \$3 billion. In addition, staff distributed almost \$120 million to schools through the Education Jobs Fund Program.

2010 was a great year and even though it has just started, I have high hopes for 2011. Thank you for all you do every day for our students. Their success is yours.

Happy New Year,
Chris

Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- **Emancipation Proclamation Week** – Jan. 3-9
- **Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly in Spring** – Jan. 7
- **Econ Illinois K-12 Teacher Conference on Financial Literacy** – Jan. 21
- **HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSCC) mini-grant application deadline (www.kidseatwell.org)** – Jan.14
- **Econ Illinois’ Illinois Personal Finance challenge registration** – Jan. 1-Feb. 1
- **Econ Illinois’ Economics Challenge registration** – Jan. 1-Feb. 1
- **2010-11 Teacher Salary Study Form deadline** – Feb. 1
- **2010-11 Noncertified Staff Salary Study deadline** – Feb. 1
- **Mathematics and the Common Core: Helping Illinois Educators Prepare for New Standards conference in Chicago** – Feb. 16
- **Part 151 (School Construction Program)** – Public comment period ends Feb. 18.
- **Illinois New Teacher Collaborative’s Induction and Mentoring Conference in Springfield** – March 1-2
- **Illinois Young Authors’ Conference** – May 21
- **2010-11 Eye Examination Data Collection deadline** – June 30

Legal

Mandatory Period of Silence Found Constitutional

On Oct. 15, 2010, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit reversed the decision of the U.S. District Court and determined that Section 1 of “The Silent

Reflection and Student Prayer Act” (the “Act”) is, on its face, constitutional. On Dec. 30, 2010, after denying the Plaintiff’s Petition for Rehearing, the Seventh Circuit issued its mandate, which requires the District Court to lift the injunction on the Act’s implementation. It is anticipated that the District Court will lift the injunction this week, at which time the Act will retake effect. ISBE will send notice via IWAS when the injunction is lifted.

Section 1 of the Act states: “In each public school classroom the teacher in charge shall observe a brief period of silence with the participation of all the pupils therein assembled at the opening of every school day. This period shall not be conducted as a religious exercise but shall be an opportunity for silent prayer or for silent reflection on the anticipated activities of the day.”

While Section 1 does not define the length of the period of silence, the Seventh Circuit pointed approvingly to an example of one district that, when the law was in effect, made a school-wide morning announcement that there would be a brief period of silence, and then, after fifteen (15) seconds had passed, the announcer would begin the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Court’s apparent approval of this example does not mandate that the brief period of silence must be implemented in that way, and — unless presented with any evidence that the Act is being implemented in an unconstitutional manner — the State Board of Education has no intention to limit Illinois school districts’ flexibility to implement in a manner that works best for the district and its students.

Innovation and Improvement

Lead Partner RFSP Release for FY 2012 School Improvement Grants

The Innovation and Improvement Division is seeking applications for entities to serve as an Illinois State Board of Education approved Lead Partner to offer services and programs designed to assist school districts [local educational agencies (LEA)] with school improvement efforts in Illinois’ persistently lowest schools. Information (e.g., release date, due date, requirements, related webinars) regarding this RFSP will be available at the Illinois Procurement Board (<http://www.purchase.state.il.us/>).

A Bidders Webinar will be conducted by ISBE on Tuesday, Jan. 18, 2010, from 3 to 4:30 p.m. CST to discuss the FY 2012 SIG 1003(g) Lead Partner RFSP and answer questions from potential applicants. Pre-registration is required at <http://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/580311904>.

Institutions of higher education, community based organizations, not-for-profit or for-profit entities are eligible to apply provided they have evidence of their demonstrated record of success in supporting academically underperforming schools and districts and

demonstrate the qualifications defined in the RFSP. The successful bidders for this solicitation may be contracted for these services in one of two ways:

- Directly by an LEA that has successfully competed for a School Improvement Grant pursuant to Title I, Section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 or;
- Directly with ISBE to support LEA activities or as part of a direct state intervention. This work will include working with ISBE, the LEA, and the school.

A separate Request for Proposals (RFP) will be used to identify LEAs with eligible Tier I and Tier II schools that will receive Section 1003(g) School Improvement Grants [SIG 1003(g)] in spring 2011 for FY 2012. Detailed information on the SIG 1003(g) grants, including the list of eligible LEAs and schools, access to the USDE Federal Guidance, and school improvement resources, are available on the ISBE School Improvement Grant webpage at http://www.isbe.net/sos/htmls/sip_1003.htm.

Should you have any questions related to the Lead Partner RFSP or the FY 2012 SIG 1003(g) grant, please contact Marti Woelfle at mwoelfle@isbe.net or call 217-524-4832.

ISBE Introduces Parent Involvement Webinar Series

The Illinois State Board of Education’s Innovation and Improvement Division has planned a series of four 90 minute Parent Involvement Webinars as part of a statewide parent involvement initiative. The webinars will examine areas of best practices pertaining to parent involvement and provide tools and resources for implementing evidence-based strategies. These sessions are open to district staff, school staff, parent facilitators and parents. Here is the description of the first session:

School-Home Communication, 3:30 to 5 p.m. Jan. 27, 2010: The reliability of a three-legged stool depends on each of its parts and if you were to remove the seat, the function of the remaining pieces becomes subject to speculation. The seat is the piece that joins the three legs and gives it value in its purpose. School-Home Communication is like the seat of the stool – it is the piece that brings the student, the family and the school together in a purposeful relationship. This webinar will offer evidence-based tools, strategies and resources that help schools to develop better communication with

families and help build relationships that support student success. Register at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/552317264>.

Pre-application Needs Assessment for FY 2012 School Improvement Grants

The Innovation and Improvement Division has released the FY 2012 SIG 1003(g) Pre-application Needs Assessment at http://www.isbe.net/sos/pdf/43-45L_pre_app_needs_assessment.pdf. Districts and school teams are guided through a step-by-step process that assists with the analysis of the needs of each eligible school, as well as the selection of a required USDE intervention model. The Needs Assessment must be completed for each Tier I and Tier II school the district plans to include in its FY 2012 SIG 1003(g) application.

Districts with eligible Tier I and Tier II schools that plan to submit an application for the FY 2012 School Improvement Grant funded under Section 1003(g) were invited to participate in the Pre-Application Needs Assessment webinar that was hosted by ISBE at 2 p.m. Monday, Dec. 13. The webinar, Power Point and related resources will be posted at ISBE School Improvement Grant webpage at http://www.isbe.net/sos/htmls/sip_1003.htm.

On Wednesday, Jan. 5, 2011, ISBE will be conducting an all-day meeting in Springfield for all eligible Tier I and Tier II districts and schools to review the requirements for the FY 2012 SIG 1003(g) Request for Proposals. Information on the time and location will follow.

Ongoing updates and detailed information regarding this federal grant, including access to the USDE Federal Guidance and school improvement resources, are available on the ISBE School Improvement Grant webpage at http://www.isbe.net/sos/htmls/sip_1003.htm. Should you have any questions related to the Pre-Application Needs Assessment or the FY 2012 SIG 1003(g) grant, contact Marti Woelfle at mwoelfle@isbe.net or call 217-524-4832.

Grant Readers Sought for 21st Century Community Learning Center Program

The Illinois State Board of Education's Innovation and Improvement division, is seeking grant readers for the FY 2012 21st Century Community Learning Center Program competition.

Preferred Candidates should have knowledge and experience in after-school programming and community based programming that serves school-aged students.

Candidate finalists should prepare for an ISBE phone interview (exact times to be scheduled), by visiting the following link to review 21st CCLC background information: <http://www.isbe.net/21cclc/default.htm>.

Candidates who are selected will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement and complete a conflict of interest questionnaire.

Readers will be required to:

- 1) participate in a training that will be delivered via a webinar;
- 2) read and score their assigned applications, which will be sent to the readers electronically; and
- 3) readers must travel to Springfield in March to participate in a one- to two-day consensus session. An honorarium and travel expenses will be provided.

To be considered for this opportunity, please send a letter of interest and resume or curriculum vitae by Jan. 14, 2011, to: Tammy Greco, Principal Consultant, Illinois State Board of Education, Innovation and Improvement Division, 100 N. First St., Springfield, IL 62777-0001; or via e-mail at tgrec@isbe.net.

Contact Tammy Greco with questions at (217) 524-4832.

Final Chance to Take a Brief Survey on the No Child Left behind Act

We thank the more than 414 individuals and groups that have participated in the survey about the No Child Left Behind Act. The survey will be closing Jan. 10.

ISBE created this survey to gain a better understanding of stakeholders' concerns, priorities and views on several issues impacting the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, commonly referred to currently as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

The brief survey asks for details on the most pressing issues that should be changed in the next version of ESEA. It also asks for the level of support or opposition to a number of broad proposals that may impact reauthorization.

This survey will allow ISBE to gain a broad understanding of viewpoints on potential changes to

ESEA. Future surveys will be more specific on active proposals. Please take a few minutes and let us know your thoughts on the future of federal education policy. The survey can be accessed at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NCLBSurvey>.

Funding and Disbursement Services

Recalculation of FY 2011 GSA

On Nov. 19, 2010, the General Assembly voted to override Governor Quinn's veto of SB 2499, making the bill law as Public Act 96-1480. The law requires that beginning in FY 2011, for purposes of calculating General State Aid (GSA) for districts subject to the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law "tax caps" and that span more than one county, the limiting rate and operating tax rate used in the calculation must be the rates of the county where the majority of the district's Equalized Assessed Value is located.

This change resulted in a larger payment for district(s) subject to the law and will require a minor proration to all districts' GSA payments. ISBE staff has finalized the change in payments. The total statewide reduction of payments is \$260,407.24, resulting in prorated payments equal to 99.994 percent of each district's claim amount. The effect of this proration will be applied to the final GSA payment scheduled for June 20, 2011, and is now reflected in the GSA and FRIS Inquiry systems.

If you have any questions about this change, please contact either Jason Hall (jhall@isbe.net) at 217-782-0249 or James Mathes (jmathes@isbe.net) at 217-782-5256.

All Federal Grants Moving to Reimbursement Model in FY 2012

The Code of Federal regulations at 34 C.F.R. § 80.21 prescribes the basic standard and the methods under which Federal payments are made to subgrantees. The basic standard is that the "method and procedures for payment shall minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds and disbursement by the grantee or subgrantee . . . Reimbursement shall be the preferred method when the [advance funding] procedures are not met."

Due to recent audit findings issued by the Federal Office of Inspector General regarding ISBE's Federal cash management procedures and excessive cash balances

identified at local education agencies (LEAs), an agency policy decision has been made that beginning with Federal grants approved for FY 2012, ISBE will move to a reimbursement model because it is the "preferred method when the [advance funding] procedures are not met."

MAJOR CHANGES

- LEAs will enter cumulative (i.e. year-to-date) expenditures for reimbursement on a cash basis as Federal funds are needed. LEAs will be reimbursed for actual costs as expenditures are reported for approved grants.
- LEAs are still required to submit quarterly expenditure reports within 20 days following the end of each quarter (i.e. Sept. 30, Dec. 31, March 31 and June 30) but have flexibility to submit interim reports to request Federal funds at the LEA's discretion. LEAs must submit a completion report within 20 days after the project end date.
- LEAs will not be allowed to submit outstanding obligations except on the completion report submitted at the end of the project year (e.g. June 30, Aug. 31 etc.). The current 90 day period is still in effect to liquidate and report outstanding obligations.
- Monthly payment schedules will be removed from Federal grant applications.
- Funding and Disbursement Services staff will voucher more frequently (e.g. once a week) instead of once a month, to ensure the latest submitted expenditures are paid in a timely manner. Federal funds are not delayed and are normally received by the LEA 3-5 business days from the ISBE voucher date.

LEA BENEFITS

- Improves Federal cash management procedures and eliminates LEA excess cash on hand.
- Provides flexibility for LEAs to submit expenditures when reimbursement is needed.
- Eliminates federal interest calculations.
- Eliminates check returns for federal programs.

A webinar held Thursday, Jan. 13, 2011, from 10-11 a.m. will describe the FY 2012 reimbursement process. A question and answer session will follow. Register at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/902148016>.

If you have immediate questions, please contact Kim Lewis at klewis@isbe.net or Sally Cray at

scray@isbe.net in the Division of Funding and Disbursement Services at 217-782-5256.

Estimated Best Three Months Average Daily Attendance IWAS Application

The annual “Estimated Best Three Months Average Daily Attendance” application is available on IWAS. We ask that the estimate be provided to the Illinois State Board of Education on or before Jan. 14, 2011. The figure you will report is the estimated best three months average daily attendance for the 2010-11 school year.

The estimates you provide will be used as a resource by the General Assembly to determine the General State Aid (GSA) appropriation level for the 2010-11 claim year payable during Fiscal Year 2012. Accurate estimates are critical for district level budget purposes, as projected GSA entitlements will be based on these estimated figures.

Any questions regarding this system can be directed to Jason Hall (jhall@isbe.net) at 217-782-0249 or Jim Mathes (jhall@isbe.net) at 217-782-5256.

Rules and Waivers

JCAR, Board Agree to Remove Proposed Changes to Superintendent Employment

On Dec. 14, 2010, the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR) and the State Board of Education agreed to remove proposed changes from rules governing the employment of school district superintendents (see <http://www.isbe.net/board/meetings/2010/oct/rules.pdf>). Although the rules were revised based on public comment to allow for limited part-time employment and the use of interim superintendents in emergency situations, JCAR believed that the State Board lacked statutory authority to set criteria for employment and recommended the agency seek legislative changes in Section 10-21.4 of the School Code to define what is meant by the requirement “to employ a superintendent.”

Therefore the rules (23 Ill. Adm. Code 1.310) will remain unchanged. Unless and until Section 10-21.4 of the School Code is amended, the State Board will not be enforcing its long-held prohibition against a district's use of interim, or retired, superintendents. Regional offices of education will no longer be monitoring for compliance in this regard, and districts contracting with interim or retired superintendents will see no change in their

recognition status. The State Board is not seeking, and at this time has no intention to seek, a statutory change to the School Code to address this issue.

If you have any questions, then please contact Patrick Murphy, Division Administrator, the Educator and School Development Division, at 217-782-2948 or pmurphy@isbe.net.

Notice of Completed Rulemaking

Please be advised that a set of amendments recently adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education are now in effect. These rules have been posted on the agency's Web site at <http://www.isbe.net/rules>. Please choose “Rules Currently in Effect” and scroll to Part 365.

Part 365 (Children's Low-cost Laptop Program)

Sets forth the requirements for applying for and criteria for review of proposals submitted for grants under the Children's Low-cost Laptop Act [105 ILCS 65].
Affected Section: 365.10, 365.20, 365.30, 365.40, 365.50, 365.60

Effective Date: Nov. 29, 2010

Invitation to Comment on Rules

A proposed rulemaking recently reviewed by the Illinois State Board of Education is available for public comment. The proposal has been posted on the agency's Web site at <http://www.isbe.net/rules>; choose “Proposed Rules and Amendments.” Please submit any comments or suggestions to rules@isbe.net.

Part 151 (School Construction Program)

Sets forth the “green” building standards for any school construction projects for which school districts make application on or after July 1, 2009 (see P.A. 96-37, effective August 25, 2009).

Deadline for Public Comment: Feb. 18

U.S. Department of Education

Resources Available for Efforts to Prevent Bullying in Schools

In partnership with the departments of Health and Human Services, Agriculture, Interior, Defense and Justice, the U.S. Department of Education is developing key strategies to support and encourage efforts to prevent bullying in schools.

In addition to the first Federal Bullying Prevention Summit in August and support of the Stop Bullying

Now! campaign, the Education department launched a bullying-resource Web site: <http://bullyinginfo.org>.

For further technical assistance on addressing bullying, contact the Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-free Schools by calling 202-245-7896 or visiting <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs/index.html>.

School Business Services

Illinois Energy Now Special Lighting Sale Runs until April 15

The State Energy Office at the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) is announcing a special lighting sale for public sector buildings through its Illinois Energy Now program.

The federal government has mandated that T12 lamps be phased out of production in 2012. Approximately 30 percent of all fluorescent lamps sold in the U.S. are still T12 technology. As a result of the T12 phase out, 70 percent of all T12 fluorescent lamps sold in the U.S. will be phased out by July 2012. This means all public facilities will eventually have to upgrade all of their T12 lighting.

To help the public sector and public schools, the State's Illinois Energy Now program is offering its best incentives to upgrade to high-efficiency T8 or T5 lamps. DCEO's Illinois Energy Now special sale is open to municipalities, park districts, fire districts, public k-12 schools, public universities, community colleges and state and federal facilities within ComEd and Ameren electric service areas.

The Illinois Energy Now special sale is from Dec. 13, 2010, to April 15, 2011. Applicants seeking the Illinois Energy Now Special must submit an addendum along with the standard application and follow the Public Sector Electric Efficiency Program Guidelines and specifications posted at <http://www.IllinoisEnergy.org> (follow the Illinois Energy Now link). Incentives cannot exceed 100 percent of project cost.

The Illinois Energy Now program offers a portfolio of electric efficiency programs to achieve targeted annual energy savings goals. The Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard was signed in to law August 2007, giving Illinois among the most ambitious energy efficiency standards in the nation. This initiative required Illinois utilities to reduce overall electric usage by 0.2 percent of demand in 2008, climbing to 2 percent by 2015. This

portfolio creates a substantial budget for programs and incentives to reduce electric energy usage and demand for customers of ComEd and Ameren.

Nutrition

Webinar on Whole Grains for Healthy School Meals Scheduled for Feb. 10

According to the Whole Grains Council, 40 percent of American teenagers do not eat any whole grains. Through a USDA Team Nutrition Training grant, the Illinois Nutrition Education and Training (NET) Program is teaming up with the Whole Grains Council to help schools increase the number of whole grain foods offered to students by providing a free webinar on whole grains from 2-3 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 10, 2011.

The goal of the webinar is to teach foodservice staff ways to easily increase the amount and variety of whole grains served during school meals. Foodservice staff will learn about the benefits of whole grains, how to identify whole grain products, cost-effective menu strategies, whole grain commodities and purchasing specifications. Participants will also learn about how other schools successfully made the switch to whole grains and received valuable resources from the Whole Grains Council.

For more information, contact the Illinois NET Program at 800-466-7998. Register online for the webinar at <http://www.kidseatwell.org>.

Join The Outlook Newsletter Listserv

The Outlook newsletter is published August through May for school-based Child Nutrition Program staff serving meals in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

To receive monthly notices of The Outlook newsletter link, join the Outlook listserv. E-mail outlook10-join@list.isbe.net and type only the e-mail address to be added in the message section. A confirmation will be sent to the e-mail address provided.

Please note: School staff listed as the contact person on NSLP site and/or sponsor applications are already on The Outlook listserv.

For questions regarding The Outlook newsletter or listserv, e-mail Joan Love at jlove@isbe.net or call 800-545-7892 or 217/782-2491.

Early Childhood

Early Childhood Block Grant – Intent to Submit a Proposal for FY 2012

The notices of intent to submit a proposal for the FY 12 Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) Preschool for All Children Ages 3 to 5 Years and the Prevention Initiative Birth to Three Years programs are posted on the early childhood website under “What’s New” at <http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/default.htm>.

Only school districts and agency/entities that were eligible for funding in FY 10 and/or FY 11 and are currently in good standing may submit a proposal for funding in FY 12. Funding for parental training will not be available.

For FY 12, the Preschool for All Children Ages 3-5 and the Prekindergarten at Risk program will be combined into one grant. If you currently have both programs, you will only need to submit one intent to submit a proposal form for the 3-5.

Submit the form no later than Jan. 12, 2011, to assist ISBE staff in determining the number of reviewers that will be necessary. Submission of this notice is not a prerequisite for submitting a proposal, nor does it obligate the organization to submit a proposal.

If you have questions, call 217-524-4835.

Curriculum and Instruction

Free Financial Literacy Conference Scheduled for Jan. 21 in Chicago

Registration is under way for the third annual K-12 Teacher Conference on Financial Literacy, which is organized by Econ Illinois, a non-profit organization that provides professional development and resources to K-12 teachers.

The free conference is set for Jan. 21 at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, 230 S. LaSalle St. To register, go to http://econed-il.org/icee/prog_pd_w_cofl.shtml. A \$50 participation stipend and up to \$100 in curriculum materials are available for each eligible K-12 teacher in Illinois. Reservations will be accepted through Jan. 14 or until all spots are taken.

Additional information is available at <http://econed-il.org> or by calling 815-753-0356.

Econ Illinois Offers Contests for High School Students

Econ Illinois, a non-profit organization that provides professional development and resources to K-12 teachers, is offering two competitions for high school students.

The Illinois Personal Finance Challenge targets consumer education and personal finance students that compete in teams. Twenty teams advance to the state finals in Chicago and a state championship team will compete at the national stage.

Registration for the preliminary online competition begins Jan. 1 and ends Feb. 1. Go to <http://econed-il.org/icee/ipfc.shtml> to register.

Econ Illinois’ other contest is the Illinois Economics Challenge, an online only competition for high school students. Registration for the preliminary round will be accepted from Jan. 1 to Feb. 1. For more information, visit <http://www.econed-il.org/icee/econchal.shtml>.

Apply for a College Board AP Fellows Scholarship

Applications are available for a 2011 College Board AP Fellows Scholarship. Recipients are awarded \$1,000 to attend a College Board-endorsed AP Summer Institute. Scholarships are for AP teachers at schools that serve a majority of underrepresented minority or low-income students.

AP Summer Institutes attract teachers from around the world to exchange ideas and information about AP courses and exams.

The application deadline is Feb. 15. Visit <http://www.collegeboard.com/apfellows> for more information.

Career and Technical Education

Nomination Forms Available for Governor’s Volunteer Service Awards

The bipartisan Serve Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service presents the second annual Governor’s Volunteer Service Awards. These awards recognize individual volunteers through a statewide award program to highlight the importance of volunteerism and community service in the State of Illinois.

Individual awards will be presented to one youth (18 and under), one adult (19-54 years old) and one retiree/senior (55 and over) in each of the commission's five service regions across the state (Northeast, Northwest, East Central, West Central and Southern Illinois). National Service Awards will be presented to one Learn and Serve, one AmeriCorps and one Senior Corps Member in each of the five regions.

Each category will be asked to meet one of the following focus areas: Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Conservation, Disaster Preparedness/Response, Health and Veterans Affairs.

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2011 awards. Nominations are due to Serve Illinois by Jan. 4, 2011. Recipients will be selected, and notified, by March 6, 2011. For nomination forms and more information, visit <http://www2.illinois.gov/serve/Pages/Volunteer-Awards.aspx>.

Professional Development

Conference on Common Core State Standards for Mathematics Scheduled

A conference focusing on the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, which have been adopted as the new Illinois Learning Standards, will be held Feb. 16 in Chicago.

Registration for the one-day conference, titled “Mathematics and the Common Core: Helping Illinois Educators Prepare for New Standards,” opens on Jan. 1 for the general public. Register at http://www.regonline.com/mathematics_and_the_common_core.

The conference is being organized by University of Illinois at Chicago’s Learning Sciences Research Institute on behalf of the West Cook Math Initiative and the South Cook Math Initiative, the Chicago Public Schools Office of Teaching and Learning Mathematics, West 40 Intermediate Service Center, and South Cook Intermediate Center.

Keynote speakers include Phil Daro, who co-directed the development of the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics; Diane Briars, president of the National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics; and Doug Sovde and Kaye Forgione, Senior Mathematics Associates at Achieve Inc., which is coordinating development of new assessments to be used in Illinois.

Illinois School Library Media Association Develops New Guidelines

The Illinois School Library Media Association’s third edition of the “Linking for Learning: The Illinois School Library Media Program Guidelines” is now available.

A task force made up of ISLMA members developed the document, which outlines school library program guidelines in the areas of teaching for learning, learning environment and leadership. Training on implementing the new guidelines will be available.

The price for the document is \$20, which includes shipping and handling. Copies of the publication can be ordered at <http://islma.org>. Questions? E-mail islma@islma.org.

Student Opportunities

Poetry for the President Contest Marks 100 Years Since Ronald Reagan’s Birth

A Poetry for the President contest is under way to commemorate the 100th birthday of former President Ronald Reagan, who was born in Tampico, Ill. Elementary, middle and high school students across Illinois are eligible to compete in three divisions.

The deadline for students’ original poetry entries is Jan. 15, 2011. Entries must be submitted to the students’ Regional Office of Education. Local winners will advance to an area-wide competition and then to statewide competition, where the finalists’ poems will be judged by Illinois Poet Laureate Kevin Stein.

The contest is sponsored by the Illinois Reagan Centennial Commission, Illinois Press Association and the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools. For details about the contest, visit <http://www.leeogle.org>. Additional information is available at <http://illinoisregacentennial.com>. For questions, e-mail poetryforpres@leeogle.org or contact your local Regional Office of Education/Intermediate Service Center.

Reagan lived and worked in Dixon, Ill., and attended college in Eureka, Ill., before moving to California to become an actor. He appeared in more than 50 films before serving as governor of California from 1967 to 1975. He served as president from 1981 to 1989 and died in 2004.

Scholarship Program to Honor 25 Scholar Athletes Across the Country

Nominations are being sought for the Scholar Athlete Milk Mustache of the Year 2011 Award Program. Twenty-five senior scholar athletes will be selected from across the country.

Winners in the 14th annual SAMMY awards receive a \$7,500 college scholarship, an invitation to attend an awards ceremony in June and an opportunity to be pictured in a Milk Mustache ad in national publications.

The awards program is presented by America's Milk Processors and USA Today, joined by the American Association of School Administrators, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education, the American School Counselor Association and the National School Public Relations Association.

For the online application and more information, visit <http://www.bodybymilk.com>. The deadline for nominations is March 4, 2011. Students can nominate themselves.

Entries Sought for the Annual Christopher Columbus Awards

The Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation is seeking entries for its annual awards program. The Christopher Columbus Awards challenge students, in teams of three or four with an adult coach, to identify a problem in their community and apply the scientific method to create an innovative solution to the problem.

Students in sixth, seventh and eighth grades across the country are eligible to compete. The deadline to enter the free contest is Feb. 7, 2011. Entry forms, rules and additional information about the contest are available at <http://christophercolumbusawards.com>.

For questions, contact Stephanie Hallman at (800) 291-6020, ext. 3154, or e-mail shallman@mmseducation.com.

Employment Opportunities

ISBE External Vacancy List

An External Vacancy List for the Illinois State Board of Education is available at <http://www.isbe.net/hr/Default.htm>.

In the News

Weekly News Clips

ISBE has posted highlights from last week's education news clips at <http://www.isbe.net/news/2011/newsclips/110103.htm>.