



Jan. 3, 2012

Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

The New Year always offers us an opportunity for reflection. 2011 saw significant change on the education landscape. Illinois State Board of Education agency staff led the negotiations on Senate Bill 7, working with legislators and stakeholders to pass groundbreaking reform tying performance to major employment and certification decisions of educators. We also were successful in landing nearly \$43 million in Race to the Top funding, which will assist us in implementing many aspects of our reform agenda.

Funding delays from the state continued to plague districts, although the backlog was not as great as the previous years due in large part to a major tax increase passed by lawmakers earlier this year. One billion of federal grant funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act expired during 2011. In addition, Regional Offices of Education were severely impacted by the governor's veto and we will need to address our regional delivery system next year.

We know that funding will continue to be a challenge for the foreseeable future, as most of the increased revenue from the tax increase will be consumed by increased pension and Medicaid costs. However, as we look back at 2011, there are plenty of milestones of which we can be proud.

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- **Illinois ACT score remains at top of the class for states that test at least 90 percent of students:** The graduating Class of 2011's composite ACT score is the highest of the 10 states that test 90 percent or more of their students. In addition, Illinois' average ACT composite scores for the past five years has improved, rising to 20.9 in 2011 from 20.5 in 2007.
- **State testing trends show improvement:** The statewide composite score for students meeting and exceeding on the ISAT saw an increase, going from 80.9 in 2010 to 82 percent in 2011. In addition, the 2011 Report Card showed the achievement gap is narrowing at the elementary level, largely attributed to gains made by African American, special education and low-income students. The results come as Illinois' public school minority and low-income student populations have been on the rise.
- **Record number of Illinois students take AP exams:** In addition to showing a record number of Illinois students took AP exams in 2010, the annual AP Report to the Nation showed Illinois ranked in the upper half of state (16th) for the number of seniors who scored a 3 or higher on an AP exam. Participation is up among all categories, including ethnicity and economic class.
- **College Board recognizes 27 Illinois school districts:** ISBE announced in March of 2011 that 27 school districts made the AP Achievement List for maintaining or improving their participation and performance on the rigorous AP exams used for college credit and placement. The list of honored districts included the City of Chicago School District 299, which ranked as the largest district award winner.

- **More than 800 schools make the Illinois Honor Roll:** ISBE recognized 834 high-performing schools on the annual Illinois Honor Roll in January of 2011. This 2010 Illinois Honor Roll included 71 schools that were recognized for the seventh or eighth consecutive years. The roster included elementary, middle and high schools and represented 364 school districts.
- **School Improvement Grants making a difference:** The seven low performing high schools in four districts that received federal School Improvement Grant funds in fall 2011 posted significant improvements on the Prairie State Achievement Exam. The seven schools receiving SIG funds posted little to no gains in the years prior to receiving the federal grants. The schools were selected for the grants after a rigorous application and review process.
- **Illinois secures nearly \$43 million in Race to the Top competition:** As 2011 came to a close, the U.S. Department of Education announced that Illinois earned a \$42.8 million grant in the federal Race to the Top program. The grant will be used to target Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) education and efforts to close the achievement gap. About \$21 million of the funds will go directly to local districts that agree to accelerate education reform. Illinois was one of seven states to be awarded a portion of the \$200 million in federal funds in the third round of the competition.
- **Illinois takes on education leadership roles at the national level:** Early in 2011, four State Board of Education members were selected to serve on National Association of State Boards of Education committees and a study group to assist in steering the development of education policy at the national level. Former ISBE Chairman Jesse H. Ruiz was chosen to serve on the NASBE Governmental Affairs Committee. ISBE Vice Chair Dr. Christopher J. Ward was chosen to serve on NASBE's Teacher Preparation, Evaluation, Continuation and Compensation Study Group. Board member Lanita J. Koster is serving on NASBE's Public Policy Positions Committee and board member Dr. David L. Fields now serves on NASBE's Distinguished Service Award Committee. In addition, I served as the President of the Council of Chief State School Officers.
- **ISBE proposes new rules for evaluating teachers and principals:** In November, the State Board of Education presented new rules that incorporate student growth in teacher and principal evaluations in Illinois. The rules come in response to the Performance Evaluation Reform Act of 2010 and its amendments made in 2011 by Senate Bill 7, which require new evaluations to address both professional practice and, for the first time, student achievement growth, and tie the results of performance evaluations to employment decisions such as tenure acquisition and reductions-in-force/layoffs.
- **Illinois continues progress in building the Longitudinal Data System:** ISBE continues to make progress in building the infrastructure and systems that support the Illinois Longitudinal Data System. The collection of early childhood data has been expanded to include children 0 to five years of age who participate in early childhood programs. The Student Information System is now collecting courses and grades for all students in public high schools, and the capability to collect the information needed to link students and teachers together to report student growth and to support the evaluation of teacher preparation programs has been implemented. In cooperation with the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, the capability for high schools to submit electronic student transcripts is being offered free to all public and private high schools and postsecondary institutions throughout Illinois.
- **High School to College Success Report initial version published:** By sharing data between multiple parties, the High School to College Success Report was produced, shared with stakeholders and made available for public access as part of the Illinois Interactive Report Card. Additional improvements are under way based on stakeholder feedback, targeting to improve the linking of secondary and postsecondary data in order to provide a comprehensive picture of how well Illinois students are transitioning to postsecondary education.
- **Illinois selected as an early implementer of the Shared Learning Initiative:** Illinois has been selected as a Phase 1 participant for the design and implementation of the Shared Learning Environment. The initiative is working to provide teachers with access to the high-quality tools and content they need to create rich and

engaging learning experiences for their students. When fully developed, one core function of the SLI will be its ability to support the educational equivalent of a GPS navigation system, with “learning maps” for each student. These maps will be able to plot the knowledge and skills students have already mastered and recommend routes to their next learning destination, based on Common Core and other important bodies of knowledge. Pilot work is currently under way in Bloomington School District 87 and McLean County Unit School District 5.

- **Illinois joins collaborative effort to write Next Generation Science Standards:** Illinois is one of 26 states working with the National Research Council, the National Science Teachers Association, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and Achieve, a non-profit education reform organization, on a mission to develop new science standards that will clearly define what students need to learn from kindergarten through high school graduation. The new science standards should be completed by the end of 2012.
- **Illinois a leader with high numbers of National Board Certified Teachers:** In December, ISBE was proud to announce that Illinois ranked third nationally for the number of teachers who achieved National Board Certification in 2011. It was the sixth consecutive year that Illinois has ranked among the top 10 states for the number of new teachers achieving the profession’s highest credential. Chicago Public Schools District 299 ranked second nationally among districts with the most new National Board Certified Teachers last year. Illinois now ranks sixth in the country for its cumulative total of NBCTs.
- **ISBE facilitates growing Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program:** In July of 2011, ISBE announced that 215 schools in Illinois will participate in the federal Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) during the 2011-12 school year. The public and private schools will share equally in more than \$4.7 million, up from last year’s grant amount of \$3.3 million that served 186 schools.
- **Illinois picked to expand access to free school meals for children in need:** Illinois was one of the first three states selected for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s launch of a universal free meal option that aims to expand access to free breakfast and lunch. The Community Eligibility Option will allow schools with a high percent of low-income children to eliminate the use of applications and parental income verification in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. Under this option, schools utilize preexisting data to determine the amount of reimbursement they can claim from USDA.

These are just a few of the highlights from 2011 and I know there are many more. You have much to be proud of and I’m grateful for everything you do on behalf of our students every day.

Thanks and a Happy and Healthy New Year,

Chris

Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- **Webinar for the Illinois Innovation Talent Project** – Jan. 5 (3:30-4 p.m.)
- **Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by General Assembly in Spring ’12** – Jan. 13
- **Deadline to submit written opt-out petition to regional superintendent of schools for Summer Food Service Program mandate (Public Act 096-0734)** – Jan. 15
- **Part 50 (Evaluation of Certified Employees under Articles 24A and 34 of the School Code)** – Public comment period ends Jan. 17
- **Part 1 (Public Schools Evaluation, Recognition and Supervision) and Part 235 (Early Childhood Block Grant)** – Public comment period ends Jan. 30
- **2011-12 Teacher Salary Study data form deadline** – Feb. 1
- **2011-12 Noncertified Staff Salary Study survey** – Feb. 1

- **Illinois New Teacher Collaborative’s Induction and Mentoring Conference** – Feb. 22-23 in Springfield
- **2011-12 Eye Examination Data Collection deadline** – June 30

Funding and Disbursement Services

Final FY 2012 Mandated Categorical Prorations

Final prorations and payments have been calculated for all 2010-11 school year categorical claims that will be vouchered in FY 2012.

If you have questions regarding this information, contact the Division of Funding and Disbursements at (217) 782-5256.

- Special Education Personnel – 100 percent
- Special Education Private Facility – 87.3 percent
- Special Education Funding for Children Requiring Special Education Services – 100 percent
- Special Education Summer School – 100 percent
- Special Education Orphanage – 100 percent
- Special Education Transportation – 100 percent
- Regular/Vocational Transportation – 74 percent

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 online at http://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 the Illinois State Board of Education. 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.

Dec. 31, 2011, ARRA Data Due Jan. 5, 2012

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs and vendor data for the quarter ending Dec. 31, 2011, is due at the Illinois State Board of Education on or before Thursday, Jan. 5, 2012. This data is required for all ARRA projects that had activity after Sept 30, 2011.

ARRA data reporting includes two primary elements: the number of jobs funded in the reporting quarter with ARRA dollars and a single payment made to a vendor, using ARRA dollars, in the amount of \$25,000 or more. All ARRA data must be reported via the ARRA Reporting System in IWAS. Please refer to the ARRA Reporting Instructions at http://www.isbe.net/arra/pdf/arra_reporting_inst.pdf for detailed reporting procedures.

IMPORTANT: Grant recipients with ARRA projects that had an end date on or before Sept. 30, 2011, but had activity, i.e. liquidated/paid an outstanding obligation, after Sept. 30, 2011, are required to report ARRA data for the quarter ending Dec. 31, 2011. If the project activity after Sept. 2011, paid a salary and/or a vendor payment of at least \$25,000 this would be the

FTE/vendor data reported. If the project activity after Sept. 30, 2011, did not fund any salary or a vendor payment of at least \$25,000, the ARRA data, that must be reported, will be zero.

Please follow these three steps below to properly calculate the jobs FTE that must be reported for the period ending Dec. 31.

- **Step 1:** Determine the number of hours in a full-time schedule for ARRA funded employees between Oct. 1 and Dec. 31 (i.e. an employee works 40 hours a week for 13 weeks, the quarterly hours in a full-time schedule is 520 hours). Note: This figure may change depending on the type of employee.
- **Step 2:** Determine the number of hours employees were paid with ARRA funds for the reporting quarter ending Dec 31.
- **Step 3:** Divide the number calculated in Step 2 by the quarterly hours in a full-time schedule calculated in Step 1. This calculation should be performed for each employee funded with ARRA dollars. The formula for reporting can be represented as:

$$\frac{\text{Total Number of Hours ARRA Funded Within Reporting Quarter}}{\text{Quarterly Hours in a Full-Time Schedule}} = \text{FTE}$$

Dec. 31 ARRA data must be reported for the following ARRA programs if your LEA liquidated/paid an outstanding obligation after Sept 30, 2011:

- Title I Low Income – Revenue Code 4851, CFDA #84.394
- Title I Low Income Neglected – Revenue Code 4852, CFDA #84.394
- Title I Low Income Delinquent – Revenue Code 4853, CFDA #84.394
- Title I School Improvement – Revenue Code 4854, CFDA #84.394
- Title I School Improvement (1003g) – Revenue Code 4855, CFDA #84.388
- IDEA Part B Preschool – Revenue Code 4856, CFDA #84.392
- IDEA Part B Flow Through – Revenue Code 4857, CFDA #84.391
- Title II D Enhancing Education Through Technology – Revenue Code 4861, CFDA #84.386
- McKinney Vento Homeless Education – Revenue Code 4862, CFDA #84.387
- Education Jobs Fund Program – Revenue Code 4880, CFDA #84.410 (If compensation and/or

benefits have been or will be requested for employees from Oct through December)

If you have any questions, contact Funding and Disbursement Services at (217) 782-5256.

EDUCATION JOBS ARRA REPORTING

REMINDER – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY: If the LEA has submitted or plans to submit an expenditure report requesting reimbursement of qualifying expenditures (i.e. compensation and benefit costs) that occurred between Oct. 1 and Dec. 31, the full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs and vendor data must be reported for the period ending Dec. 31 even if an expenditure report for reimbursement has yet to be filed for that period of time. For example, if the LEA is going to submit in mid-January an Ed Jobs expenditure report requesting reimbursement of compensation and benefits expended during the reporting quarter ending Dec. 31, the LEA is required to report FTE jobs and vendor data to ISBE on or before the required ARRA reporting deadline of Jan. 5, 2012 even though the expenditure report has not yet been submitted by the LEA. This is true for any subsequent quarter.

Further, once the LEA begins to request Ed Jobs expenditure reimbursement they are obligated to report ARRA FTE jobs and vendor data via the ARRA Reporting System every subsequent quarter until all Ed Jobs Funds have been requested and reported, even if no expenditure reports for reimbursement have been submitted in the current ARRA reporting quarter. For example, if the LEA requested reimbursement and reported ARRA data through Sept. 30 and after doing so still has unexpended allocation, but has no Ed Jobs expenditures between Oct. 1 and Dec. 31, they must still submit ARRA FTE jobs and vendor data for the Dec. 31 ARRA reporting quarter that reflects that 0 FTE jobs or vendor payments were funded with Ed Jobs dollars during the reporting quarter. Again, the LEA must continue to submit ARRA data reports for each reporting quarter, beginning with the quarter in which the compensation funding start date occurs until all Ed Jobs funds have been requested and reported.

If you have further questions or concerns with the Ed Jobs program, contact Jim Mathes at jmathes@isbe.net or Marj Beck at mbeck@isbe.net. Both can be reached at (217) 782-5256.

Standards and Assessments

Manuals for the 2012 ISAT Administration Available Online

The manuals for the 2012 ISAT administration are posted on the Illinois State Board of Education Web site (<http://www.isbe.net/assessment/isat.htm>). Districts will receive paper copies of all the manuals in February. If district staff would like to review the manuals prior to the shipment of the paper copies, they are now available online.

- **ISAT District and School Coordination Manual (20.64MB):**
http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/2012/isat/ISAT_DSCM_12.pdf
- **ISAT Test Administration Manual for Grades 3-5:**
http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/2012/isat/ISAT_tam3-5_12.pdf
- **ISAT Test Administration Manual for Grades 6-8:**
http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/2012/isat/ISAT_tam6-8_12.pdf
- **Professional Testing Practices for Educators:**
http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/2012/isat/pr_of_test_prac_2012.pdf

PSAE Manuals, Pre-Test Instructions Now Available on the ISBE Website

The manuals and pre-test instructions for the 2012 PSAE administration are posted on the PSAE website (<http://www.isbe.net/assessment/psae.htm>). Schools will receive paper copies of all the manuals and the English pre-test instructions prior to testing. If staff would like to review the manuals prior to the shipment of the paper copies, they are now available online.

PSAE Day 1 Pre-Test Session Instructions

- 2012 Taking the ACT:
<http://www.act.org/aap/pdf/StateTTA2012.pdf>
- 2012 Taking the ACT-Spanish Version:
http://www.act.org/aap/pdf/TakingACT_StateSpanish.pdf

PSAE Day 1 Manuals

- 2012 PSAE Day 1 Manual for Standard-Time Testing:
<http://www.act.org/aap/pdf/SupManStTest.pdf>
- 2012 PSAE Day 1 Manual for ACT-Approved Testing:
<http://www.act.org/aap/pdf/SpecialTesting.pdf>

- 2012 PSAE Day 1 Manual for State-Allowed Testing:
<http://www.act.org/aap/pdf/StateAccomm.pdf>
- 2012 PSAE Day 1 Answer Document Supplement:
http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/2012/psae/PSAE_AD_Supplement.pdf

PSAE Day 2 Manual

- 2012 PSAE Day 2 Manual:
http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/2012/psae/PSAE_d2_manual.pdf

PARCC Newsletter Includes Valuable Information on the Common Core

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers' monthly newsletter – PARCC Place – offers updates on PARCC's major areas of work, resources and meetings.

The PARCC Place newsletter also features contributions from educators across PARCC states sharing their experiences implementing the Common Core State Standards “in their words.”

For more information and to join the monthly newsletter email list, visit <http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-place-newsletter> for more information.

Career Development and Preparation

Save the Date: Illinois Pathways Initiative Update Set for Feb. 9 in Bloomington

On Feb. 9, 2012, in Bloomington, the State of Illinois will be convening public-private partners to receive an update on the Illinois Pathways Initiative. During the convening we will review the state's Round 3 Race to the Top award and will also announce the selection process for STEM Learning Exchanges. More information on the event location, time, agenda and RSVP process will be shared prior to the event. Thank you for your continued support of STEM education in Illinois and we hope you can join us next year.

Please mark your calendar and watch for details coming soon.

The Illinois Pathways Interagency Committee:

- Jason A. Tyszko, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

- Susie Morrison, Illinois State Board of Education
- Dr. Elaine Johnson, Illinois Community College Board
- Dr. George Reid, Illinois Board of Higher Education
- Joanne Tolbert-Wells, Illinois Student Assistance Commission
- Amit Singla, Illinois Department of Employment Security

Illinois Innovative Talent Project Grant Announcement

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Transportation hereby issue a Request for Application from schools interested in participating in the 2011-12 Illinois Innovation Talent (ILIT) program.

The goal of the ILIT program is to demonstrate how industry-sponsored problems can exemplify the Race to the Top STEM Learning Exchange functions at the middle and high school level where interdisciplinary teams of students collaborate on real-world problem-based learning (PBL) challenges designed to improve student achievement and increase college and career readiness.

Recognizing the need for students to become globally competitive, a public-private partnership formed in 2008 to design an initiative to promote innovation-centered education and increase student achievement in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. This initiative connected schools with industry, government and community partners to critically examine and solve complex real-world problems as part of a work-based learning experience involving teams of students. ILIT demonstrates one of the work-based learning functions of the STEM Learning Exchanges as described in the State of Illinois' Race to the Top proposal.

There are nine challenge sponsors and statements that applicants are to select from. Up to five applicants will be selected for each challenge.

- **Challenge 1:** Abbott - Neuroimaging as a Tool to Advance the Treatment of Alzheimer's Disease.
- **Challenge 2:** Illinois State University Center for Renewable Energy and Western Illinois University Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs - Renewable Energy Challenge.

- **Challenge 3:** Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council (MCHC) - Preventing Prescription Poisoning.
- **Challenge 4:** Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) - Freeway Interchange Innovations.
- **Challenge 5:** Illinois Department of Transportation and URS Corporation - Sustainable Bridge Design.
- **Challenge 6:** Center Point Properties - Creating More Efficient Supply Chains.
- **Challenge 7:** University of Illinois - Illinois Food System Design.
- **Challenge 8:** Bison Gear - A Working Mechanism Utilizing ServoNOW.
- **Challenge 9 by Invitation Only:** Baxter - Preventing Hospital-Acquired Infections.

Participating teams will receive a \$5,000 stipend to cover project-related costs.

Timeline:

- Jan. 5, 2012: Informational Webinar (voluntary) 3:30-4 p.m. (For details, visit <http://www.isbe.net/grants/html/webinar.htm>.)
- Jan. 20, 2012: Applications are due.
- Jan. 31, 2012: Applicants notified of their selection.
- Feb. 10, 2012: Participants attend professional development day at IMSA for problem-based learning training, meet challenge sponsors, and develop implementation plan.
- February (TBD), 2012: Participants attend professional development day at IMSA or at sponsor's facility to collaborate with sponsor and finalize implementation plan.
- February - April 2012: Participants implement challenges, collaborate with sponsors, and receive on-site training from IMSA.
- May 2012: Participants present their findings to their challenge sponsor and attend a project-sharing event to be organized by IMSA.

Please see <http://www.isbe.net/grants/html/webinar.htm> for the ILIT Request for Application. For more information, contact Jason A. Tyszko at jason.tyszko@Illinois.gov, Marci Johnson at marjohns@isbe.net or Mark Williams at mawillia@isbe.net.

Special Education

Free Learning Ally Membership Opportunity

The Illinois State Board of Education has provided Learning Ally with funding to support Illinois public schools. The funding will cover the cost of membership, equipment and training provided by Learning Ally.

Schools can sign up for this opportunity by visiting <http://www.learningally.org/Illinois>. Also, parents may visit the website to sign their student up for a free at-home membership funded by ISBE. There are a limited amount of memberships available.

Learning Ally is a nonprofit organization dedicated to making reading accessible for all. For more information, contact Ellen Gallagher at egallagher@learningally.org.

English Language Learning

ACCESS for ELLs 2012 Announcements

ELL Inclusion: All students in Illinois public schools, with limited English proficiency are required to participate in the annual ACCESS for ELLs assessment from Jan. 9 until Feb. 10, 2012. For policy questions regarding the ACCESS administration, contact Barry Pedersen in the Student Assessment Division of ISBE at (866) 317-6034, or Boon Lee in the Chicago ISBE office at (312) 814-3850. For questions about materials, contact MetriTech at (800) 747-4868. Technical questions about ACCESS may be addressed to the WIDA Help Desk at (866) 276-7735.

“Do Not Score” Box: School and district staff should be aware that federal law does not allow ELLs to be excused from language proficiency testing for any reason. Illinois public schools are obligated under NCLB to attempt this assessment for all students with limited English proficiency. Do not use the bottom row of squares (SPD) in the box entitled “Do Not Score This Section For This Student” on the back test booklet cover, in the lower right corner. Please, disregard the instructions on Page 29 of the ACCESS Test Administration Manual for using the Deferred Special Education/504 option. ACCESS for ELLs is a consortium product, and not all options apply to all states.

Alternate ACCESS: WIDA is making available a version of ACCESS designed for students with cognitive disabilities called the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs. Unfortunately, the Alternate ACCESS will not be available soon enough for the Illinois 2011-12 administration. Therefore, Illinois will not make use of the Alternate ACCESS until 2012-13. All ELLs assessed during 2011-12 should use the standard version of ACCESS. Late testing with the Alternate ACCESS is not allowed for state accountability.

ACCESS Changes for 2012: ACCESS test administrators need to be aware of changes for the 2011-12 assessment cycle.

New for the Speaking Test in 2011-2012:

- Tier B and C students will now skip T1 tasks on the Speaking Test, unless they fail to meet T2 expectations on Parts A or B. This change was made in order to better communicate to students at higher proficiency levels the amount of language they are expected to produce.
- A comprehensive tutorial that explains changes to Speaking test administration procedures and provides further details of the rationale for the T2 change is available in the ACCESS for ELLs online training course at <http://www.wida.us>.
- The ACCESS for ELLs online test administrator training course will soon include new sound files at each language proficiency level in the speaking test module. These additional examples will help to clarify the scoring process on the ACCESS for ELLs Speaking test.

New for the Writing Test in 2011-2012:

The Grades 3-12 Tier A tests will now feature a Language of Language Arts (LoLA) writing task for Part B, instead of the current Language of Mathematics (LoMA) writing task. Part A remains a Social Instructional (SI) task and Part C an integrated Language of Mathematics (LoMA)/Language of Science (LoSC) task. The number of writing tasks remains unchanged.

The Listening and Reading test procedures are unchanged from 2010-11.

School Business Services

Annual Financial Report Deadline Passes

The Annual Financial Report (AFR) (ISBE Form 50-35) Submission Due Date of Dec. 15, 2011, has now passed

for all School District/Joint Agreements who have not submitted the audited report. This includes those districts/joint agreements with approved extensions until Dec. 15, 2011. According to 105 ILCS 5/3-7 (Failure to Prepare and Forward Information) no further extensions of time are allowed by the Regional Superintendent. Those districts who have not submitted an AFR are now delinquent and are likely to be placed on the 2012 School District Profile in the Watch List category. Furthermore, any districts who have not submitted an AFR may find their federal revenue funds frozen until a completed and acceptable audit report is submitted.

If you have any questions regarding this notice, please contact ISBE's School Business Services Division at (217) 785-8779 or email finance@isbe.net. For more information regarding the AFR, please see the following website: <http://www.isbe.net/sfms/af/af.htm>.

Rules and Waivers

Invitation to Comment on Rules

Several proposed rulemakings recently reviewed by the Illinois State Board of Education are available for public comment. The proposals have 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 30 (Programs for the Preparation of Principals in Illinois)

Amends Section 30.20 in accordance with P.A. 97-607, stating that institutions of higher education can no longer entitle principals with a general administrative endorsement after August 31, 2014; updates Section 30.45 to provide a link to the revised Standards for Professional Learning published by Learning Forward (previously, the National Staff Development Council).

Affected Sections: 30.20, 30.45

Deadline for Public Comment: February 13, 2012

Nutrition

Student Submissions Sought for Picture of Health Calendar

The School-Based Child Nutrition Programs staff is working on next year's Nutrition Programs calendar and needs help from Illinois students. The 2012-13 calendar theme is "Picture of Health." Students are asked to draw a picture of their favorite healthy habit. This could be depicted in the food choices they make or the physical

activities they do. In addition, please write a few words (no more than 15) describing the benefits of the healthy habit.

The deadline for submissions is Jan. 31. Selected drawings will be displayed in next year's calendar (July 2012 – June 2013). For more information, visit http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/pdf/Calling_All_Artists_bro.pdf.

Summer Breakfast and/or Lunch Program Mandate

Public Act 096-0734 (amends Public Act 095-0155), amends Section 20 of the Childhood Hunger Relief Act (105 ILCS 126/20). This amendment requires a school district to implement a summer breakfast and/or lunch program for the duration of the summer school program in all schools where 50 percent or more of the student population is eligible for free or reduced-price meals AND that have a summer school program. This amendment applies to all schools that meet the above criteria, including those schools not currently participating in any federal Child Nutrition Program.

The legislation, along with question and answers, is accessible at <http://www.isbe.net/nutrition> on the Summer Food Service Program webpage under Regulations and Policies or on the National School Lunch Program under Public Act 096-0734 — Summer Food Service Program. Staff from the Nutrition Programs Division is available at (800) 545-7892 or (217) 782-2491 for technical assistance with reimbursement or program operations.

Educator Opportunities

Nominations Sought for History Teacher of the Year Awards

Do you know an outstanding teacher passionate about American history? Gilder Lehrman History Teacher of the Year Award nominations honoring middle and high school teachers can be made now at <http://www.gilderlehrman.org/nhtoy>. State winners each receive \$1,000, and the national winner receives \$10,000. All winners receive an archive of materials for their school library, donated in their honor. All full-time educators who teach American history are eligible.

Nominations can be made by a student, parent, colleague, principal or school administrator familiar with the teacher's work. The nomination deadline for the 2012

award is Feb. 1. The award is sponsored by the Gilder Lehrman Institute, Preserve America and the History channel. One winner will be chosen from each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. Territories and Department of Defense schools. These winners will be considered for the national award.

For more information, visit the website above or contact the National History Teacher of the Year coordinator at nhtoy@gilderlehrman.org or (646) 366-9666, ext. 28.

Free Financial Literacy Conference Scheduled for Next Month in Chicago

Registration is under way for the fourth 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. 20 at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, 230 S. LaSalle St. To register and for more information, go to <http://www.econed-il.org/icee/123.shtml>. A \$50 participation stipend and over \$100 in curriculum materials are available for each eligible K-12 teacher in Illinois. Reservations will be accepted through Jan. 13 or until all spots are taken.

Student Opportunities

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. 15. Go to <http://econed-il.org/icee/ipfc.shtml> to register.

Econ Illinois' other contest is the Illinois Economics Challenge, an online competition for high school students that tests knowledge of economics and economic reasoning abilities. Registration for the preliminary round will be accepted from Jan. 1 to Feb. 15. For more

information, visit <http://www.econed-il.org/icee/econchal.shtml>.

School Opportunities

Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color Offers Grant Opportunities

The Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color is seeking applications for the COSEBOC School Awards, intended to celebrate K-12 schools that are demonstrating success in educating boys and young men of color. COSEBOC Award-winning schools will receive a grant.

COSEBOC welcomes applications from a wide range of schools - K-12; public, private, charter; coed and single gender. Schools do not need to be a member of COSEBOC to apply or be selected.

Guidelines and application forms are available at <http://www.coseboc.org/school-award.htm>. To apply, interested schools must review the guidelines, complete the forms and application, and submit them to schoolawards@coseboc.org by Jan. 12, 2012.

In the News

Weekly News Clips

ISBE has posted highlights from the last two last week's education news clips:

- <http://www.isbe.net/news/2011/newsclips/111227.htm>
- <http://www.isbe.net/news/2012/newsclips/120103.htm>

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>.