



Weekly Message

January 6, 2009

Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Happy New Year and welcome back from the holiday break. I hope everyone had a wonderful time over the holidays. We've closed the chapter on 2008 and are now moving forward into 2009.

While I can't foresee the future with a great degree of certainty, I do believe that 2009 definitely will provide some excitement. We know that the election of Barack Obama will likely mean significant changes to federal education policy. The President-elect has already made that clear by appointing Arne Duncan, Chief Executive Officer of Chicago School District 299, to the post of Education Secretary. Arne will be bringing invaluable experience and knowledge to his cabinet post that he culled from the day-to-day challenges he tackled at a diverse urban school district.

While we are working to ensure that schools are included in any economic stimulus package proposed by the new administration, we, along with others in the education community, are keeping a watchful eye on efforts to reauthorize the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. This imperfect piece of legislation is one that affects us all, and I believe having a school leader from Illinois working to improve the law will be a definite plus not just for Illinois kids but for all of our nation's students.

In addition, 2009 will prove to be quite challenging on the financial level. As you know, Illinois already faces a large deficit in its FY 2009 budget and work is already under way on a FY 2010 proposal. The members of the State Board will be making their recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly within the next several weeks. Given the national economic slowdown and how it is currently affecting Illinois, the prospect of an increase in education funding is not as promising as it has been in the past few years. The board, however, has expressed its interest to establish clear funding priorities and we will continue to be vigilant with regard to existing and proposed mandates for school districts in 2009.

In addition, as I told you before the break, the state of Illinois was able to issue \$1.4 billion in bonds to help pay down some of its \$3 billion in bills. Most districts should have received at least some of the payments that they had been expecting. Keep in mind that this is just a short-term fix and it is likely that the backlog of bills will begin climbing again.

Finally, congratulations to Kyle O'Malley of Highland Park, a student at Red Oak Elementary, and Marcos Rodriguez of Chicago, a student at the Illinois School for the Deaf in Jacksonville. They were chosen as student winners of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial envelope design contest. You can see their designs at www.lincoln200.net/envelope_art_final.asp.

Have a super week!

Chris

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Upcoming Dates & Deadlines

- **The 2010 school year annual commodity order period** – January 2 – February 1
- **Textbook Loan Program requests entered online** – January 6 – March 15
- **Waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly during Spring 2009 session** – January 9
- **Petition to opt out of the summer mandate (Public Act 095-0155)** – January 15
- **Estimated Best Three Months Average Daily Attendance** – January 15
- **National School Lunch Program Verification Summary Report** – January 16
- **Part 1 (Public Schools Evaluation, Recognition and Supervision) and Part 25 (Certification):** Public comment ends – January 20
- **School Breakfast Survey** – February 6
- **Looking for Your Lincoln Hero submissions** – March 1
- **History Teacher of the Year Award first round nominations** – March 2

Department of Public Health

Whooping Cough Cases on Increase

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) reports that Illinois has seen an increase in whooping cough (pertussis) cases this winter. Lake, Cook, McHenry, Stephenson, Whiteside, Winnebago and Macon counties, and the City of Chicago have reported clusters of pertussis in school-aged children.

Pertussis is highly contagious and is easily spread from person-to-person through coughing and sneezing. An infected person is contagious from just before the onset of symptoms and up to three weeks after symptoms start.

Symptoms are similar to those of a cold, including runny nose, sneezing, low-grade fever and a cough that gradually worsens. If the disease is diagnosed in a student, household contacts and other close contacts are considered at high risk for contracting the disease. Infants under 1 year and other immunocompromised persons are at high risk for contracting severe disease. They may be offered appropriate antibiotics as prophylaxis.

Immunizations are the single most protective factor against pertussis. There are four combination vaccines used to prevent diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis: DTaP, Tdap, DT, and Td. Two of these (DTaP and DT) are given to children younger than 7 years, and two (Tdap and Td) are given to older children and adults.

Children should get five doses of DTaP. One dose at each of the following ages: 2, 4, 6, and 15-18 months and 4-6 years. DT does not contain pertussis and is used as a substitute for DTaP for children who cannot tolerate pertussis vaccine.

Td is a tetanus-diphtheria vaccine given to adolescents and adults as a booster shot every 10 years, or after an exposure to tetanus under some circumstances. Tdap is similar to Td but also containing protection against pertussis. A single dose of Tdap is recommended for adolescents 11 or 12 years of age, or in place of one Td booster in older adolescents and adults age 19 – 64.

For additional information on whooping cough, call IDPH at 800-526-4372.

Student Assessment

2009 IAA Regional Training Registration

Regional training for the spring 2009 Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) will take place from **January 26 – February 6**. Online registration opened **Monday, January 5**.

New teachers and all IAA Coordinators are especially encouraged to attend one session. All sessions will cover the same material.

Registration can be accessed through the www.pearsonaccess.com/il website. The training registration schedule with times, locations and contact information for questions is also available on this webpage.

Funding & Disbursements

Final FY 2009 Mandated Categorical Prorations

Final prorations have been calculated for all 2007-08 school year categorical claims that will be reimbursed in FY 2009. For questions regarding this information, contact the Division of Funding and Disbursement Services at 217-782-5256.

- Special Education Personnel 96.6 percent
- Special Education Private Facility 96.6 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 96.9 percent
- Regular/Vocational Transportation 100 percent

State and Federal Grant Administration Policy and Fiscal Requirements and Procedures Update

Revisions to the [State and Federal Grant Administration Policy and Fiscal Requirements and Procedures](#) have been made to incorporate several changes/updates. A summary of the major changes are listed below.

- Policies #8, #9 and #10 have been clarified (pages 3 and 4);
- A new section on “Supporting Documentation for Salaries and Wages” has been added (page 20);
- Function and Object descriptors have been updated based on changes to the Illinois Program Accounting Manual (pages 23 and 24); and
- Return of Grant Funds section has been updated (page 25).

Please use these policies/requirements/procedures to ensure sound accounting practices in the administration of grants through ISBE. Specific questions should be referred to the appropriate program area for guidance.

Estimated Best Three Months Average Daily Attendance Due

The annual "Estimated Best Three Months Average Daily Attendance" application is now available on IWAS. We request that districts submit the estimate to

ISBE on or before **Thursday, January 15**. The figure you will report is the estimated best three months average daily attendance for the 2008-09 school year.

District estimates will be used as a resource by the General Assembly to determine the General State Aid (GSA) appropriation level for the 2008-09 claim year payable during Fiscal Year 2010. Accurate estimates are critical for district level budget purposes, as *projected* GSA entitlements will be based on these estimated figures.

For question regarding this system, contact **Toni Waggoner** at 217-782-0249 or twaggon@isbe.net or **Jim Mathes** at 217-782-5256 jmathes@isbe.net.

Fiscal & Procurement

2009 Illinois Textbook Loan Program

The 2009 Illinois Textbook Loan Program (ITLP) is targeted for students in grades 7-12. Schools may start entering their requests online **January 6**, with a deadline of **March 16**.

More than 100 publishers/vendors have listed their educational resources. Schools have the flexibility to select curriculum needs from thousands of items including textbooks, multimedia, manipulatives, and instructional computer software.

Districts and schools will receive a letter regarding the district/school's 2009 allotment and ordering instructions. [School allotment](#) information has also been posted via the ITLP website. The appropriation for this year is \$42,826,500. The amount allotted per pupil is approximately \$40 with the ITLP paying shipping charges.

More information can be obtained in the ITLP website at <http://isbe.net/htmls/textbook.htm>. For questions, contact the Illinois Textbook Loan Program staff at 217-782-0734.

Standing Up for Illinois - Office of Lt. Governor Pat Quinn

Sustainable Schools Compact

The Illinois Sustainable Schools Compact program launched on [January 31, 2008](#), features best practices

that K-12 schools can voluntarily pursue to achieve greater environmental sustainability. Lt. Governor Quinn wants to challenge all Illinois schools to consider and pursue these practices, helping our communities and our state lead the way to a greener, cleaner future. Click [here](#) to view the Illinois Sustainable Schools Compact.

[Find out more about the Illinois Sustainable Schools Compact program.](#)

[2009 Sustainable Schools Symposium in Joliet, IL - Register Online](#)

[Illinois grant project on neighborhood schools & school siting](#)

Green Cleaning Schools Act

The Green Cleaning Schools Act (Public Act 095-0084) became effective **August 13, 2007**, making Illinois the second state in the nation (after New York) to require the purchase and use of environmentally sensitive cleaning supplies in schools. The purpose of the Act is to protect students, teachers, staff, and other school building occupants by improving indoor air quality and reducing harmful exposure to chemicals in cleaning products.

[Find out more about the Green Cleaning Schools Act](#)

Nutrition

Verification Summary Report Due January 16

Verification is the confirmation of eligibility for free and reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP).

Annually, each local education agency (LEA) participating in the NSLP and/or SBP must select and verify a sample of household applications approved for benefits. The LEAs must submit a Verification Summary Report (summarizing the results of verification efforts) electronically through ACES to ISBE by **Friday, January 16**.

As a reminder, LEAs are only to report the required sample size and should not include any verification completed for this report.

Instructions for accessing and completing the Verification Summary Report and a sample form are available at

<http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/instructions.htm>.

For questions on the verification process, visit

http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/forms_sbn.htm.

2009 National School Lunch Program Workshops Available

Registration is available for the following free workshops offered by the Nutrition Programs Division. For workshops descriptions, visit

<http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/workshops.htm>

- Basic Training—A Guide to School-Based Child Nutrition Programs
- Menu Planning and Dietary Guidelines Training
- Certification and Verification
- Civil Rights Compliance and Enforcement/ Accommodating Children with Special Dietary Needs
- Developing a Food Safety Plan, Process Approach to Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Principles (HACCP)

Phase 1 School Meals Report Released

The Institute of Medicine has described the approach proposed to make recommendations for revisions to the Nutrition Standards and Meal Requirements through its release of “Nutrition Standards and Meal Requirements for National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs: Phase I, Proposed Approaches for Recommending Revisions.”

The Phase 2 report, which is expected in October 2009, will include the recommendations for revisions to the Nutrition Standards and the Meal Requirements for the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program.

- Interested parties may participate in an open forum on **Wednesday, January 28**, in Washington, D.C.
- For details, visit www.iom.edu/fnb/schoolmeals.
- Public comments may be e-mailed until **Saturday, January 31**, to FNBschoolmeals@nas.edu.
- The report may be downloaded at <http://www.iom.edu/?ID=54064>.

2010 Annual Commodity Order Period

The 2010 school year annual commodity order period is **January 2 – February 1**. The Illinois Commodity System (ICS) began accepting orders **Friday, January 2**, for next school year. Due to time constraints placed on states by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, ISBE must require districts to complete orders by **Sunday, February 1**.

Starting in February, schools choosing to divert commodities to processors should watch the ICS Message Board carefully for important news regarding processors receiving trucks of commodities. You may change your orders placed with processors that do not receive a truck to processors that are receiving trucks from **February 6 – 13**. If you place an order with a processor that does not receive a truck and you do not change to a processor that is receiving a truck, ISBE will delete that order.

For questions regarding the annual order process, call Food Distribution Program staff at 800-545-7892 or 217-782-2491.

Excess USDA Commodity Inventory at Further Processors

USDA regulations require commodity inventories held at further processors to be monitored. Based on a processor's average monthly usage, regulations do not allow processors to maintain more than a six-month inventory level.

To help districts meet this requirement, ISBE implemented procedures to address the excess inventories at further processors. The procedures are on ISBE's Food Distribution Program website at http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/pdf/FDP_Inventory_Level_Procedures.pdf.

If you have questions regarding these procedures or about processing USDA commodities, contact Food Distribution Program staff from the Nutrition Programs Division at 800-545-7892 or 217-782-2491.

Awards & Grants

Apply for Earth Day in the Parks

Earth Day in the Parks is an event to promote stewardship of our natural resources by Illinois

children. During one day in April, students and their teachers will go to participating Illinois state parks to take part in outdoor activities that help the environment and wildlife. Students will also increase their fitness and learn that their actions can make a difference in the world.

For an application form, a list of participating parks and general information go to:

<http://dnr.state.il.us/education/CLASSRM/EDITPinstruct.htm>.

One class at each participating state park will be selected as a winner. Applications will be accepted **January 1– February 28**.

Student Opportunities

Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Scholarship

Illinois high school students are encouraged to apply for the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange scholarships. This year, scholarships will be awarded to 50 high school students who wish to spend a year as an exchange student in Germany (July 2009 – July 2010).

Youth For Understanding USA is helping to spread the word about the Congress-Bundestag scholarships. This congressionally funded youth exchange program has been preparing young people to live in a global society since 1983. Recipients live with a host family, attend the local high school and receive a four-week orientation and language course before the start of school.

For applications and additional information, go to www.usagermanyscholarship.org, or www.yfu-usa.org. For additional information, call 1-800-TEENAGE to speak with an admission counselor.

All applications must be postmarked on or before **Tuesday, January 13**.

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/2009/newsclips/090102.htm>
