



Weekly Message

Jan. 12, 2015

Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Most schools are now back in full swing after the winter holidays and extremely cold weather. Hopefully, you, your students and staff are all settling into a routine for the second half of the year. The New Year offers us opportunities and challenges as we move forward with our goal of preparing all students for college and career readiness. The New Year also provides an opportunity to reflect on the successes we've accomplished together in 2014. Working together, we are improving outcomes for students and our success is being noticed. What follows is a list of just a few of the accomplishments we can celebrate together. Please feel free to share within your school communities.

Illinois receives flexibility waiver: In April 2014, the U.S. Department of Education approved our waiver to many aspects of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The waiver went into effect this school year (2014-15) and outlines the state's plan to ensure all students are on track to succeed in college and careers through differentiated accountability, informative data, strong leaders and instructors and support for the neediest schools.

Illinois recognized for improving preparation and licensure of school principals: The Education Commission of the States recognized Illinois in July with its Frank Newman Award for State Innovation for our work to improve the preparation and licensure of school principals. The Illinois School Leader Task Force, established in 2007, brought together leaders from pre-K-12 schools, higher education, business and state agencies to develop policy recommendations. As a result of the task force's work, the legislature passed Public Act 096-0903 in 2011, which mandated that universities redesign their programs to align with policy recommendations aimed at increasing the quality and effectiveness of school leader preparation programs. All of this work will lead to higher quality candidates for P-12 principal preparation programs, and ultimately develop more instructional leaders who create powerful teaching and learning environments for educators and students.

Illinois Report Card ranks best in the nation for accessible accountability reports: In May, the Education Commission of the States identified Illinois as having the best report card out of all 50 states and the District of Columbia for its accessible accountability reports, according to both researchers and parents. The research report, "Rating States, Grading Schools: What Parents and

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Experts Say States Should Consider to Make Accountability Systems Meaningful,” measures the accessibility, ease of understanding and adequacy of the data. Illinois was chosen as the clear winner. The 2014 Report Card was released in October with new metrics and capabilities that build on the functionality and enhanced features of the redesigned Report Card, which was introduced last fall. (www.isbe.net/news/2014/oct15.htm)

Revamp underway for arts and social studies standards: In August, we launched a review of the state’s arts and social studies education standards to build on our work to update the Illinois Learning Standards and better prepare students for success after graduation. Two committees were formed to study the current standards, review the standards of other states, and make recommendations for improvements. This latest review follows the Board’s approval to implement new learning standards for math, English language arts, physical education and science. (www.isbe.net/news/2014/aug27.htm)

Illinois students participate in pilot tests to prepare for new PARCC assessments: Students in nearly half of Illinois schools participated last spring in a limited amount of field testing to prepare for this year’s new, more rigorous Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment system. These practice tests helped them become familiar with the new exams in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics and provided state policymakers and educators with valuable feedback before the tests were finalized. (www.isbe.net/news/2014/mar24.htm)

Illinois’ ACT score ranks among the best: The Class of 2014 achieved a composite score of 20.7 on the ACT, giving Illinois the second-highest score among the 12 states that tested 100 percent of their graduates. In addition, the percentage of students meeting all four of ACT’s College and Career Readiness Benchmarks increased to 26 percent from 25 percent last year. (www.isbe.net/news/2014/aug20.htm)

Illinois closes equity gap for Latino students on AP exams: According to the 10th Annual AP Report to the Nation, the percent of Latino graduates who took the rigorous Advanced Placement exams during high school surpassed the total percent of Latino graduates statewide, continuing a decade-long trend of continued Latino participation in these accelerated college-prep courses. (www.isbe.net/news/2014/feb11.htm)

Illinois students’ participation and performance on AP exams continues to show gains: Illinois Hispanic and African American student participation in Advanced Placement tests exceeds the national average, helping a new and more diverse generation of students move into more advanced classes in their postsecondary institution or gain college credit – or both, according to the 2014 College Board Program Results. Illinois ranked 13th in the nation for the percentage of 2013 graduates – 21.5 percent – who scored at least a 3 on an AP exam during their high school career. The national average is 20.1 percent. (www.isbe.net/news/2014/oct7.htm)

State Board approves 'Seal of Biliteracy': In September, the State Board of Education moved forward with an initiative that aims to promote mastery in two or more languages. The state is among the first in the country to allow school districts to award a State Seal of Biliteracy for students who demonstrate a high level of proficiency in one or more languages, in addition to English. The seal would be placed on a student’s academic transcript and diploma. (www.isbe.net/news/2014/sept2.htm)

Illinois leads the Midwest in the USDA’s HealthierUS School Challenge: Illinois leads the Midwest region in the number of schools that have earned federal certification for programs and practices that promote healthy habits, primarily physical exercise and nutrition. As of December, 266 schools in Illinois had earned certification through the HealthierUS School Challenge and another 31 were awaiting final notification from the USDA on the national level. (www.isbe.net/news/2014/aug4.htm)

Illinois among five states selected to work with CEEDAR Center: This past spring, a panel of education experts selected Illinois as one of five states to work with the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform, or the CEEDAR Center, to better prepare educators to serve Illinois public school students with disabilities and ensure those students are ready to succeed in college and the workforce. (www.isbe.net/news/2014/apr2.htm)

Teacher of the Year and Those Who Excel in education recognized: More than 230 educators and school staff members were recognized Oct. 25 at ISBE’s 40th annual Those Who Excel banquet in Normal. The award ceremony included the announcement of Steven Elza, an automotive technology teacher at William Fremd High School in Palatine, as the 2015 Illinois Teacher of the Year. (www.isbe.net/news/2014/oct21.htm)

Award-winning educators recognized: The Illinois State Board of Education, along with the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) and the Illinois Education Association (IEA), honored educators from across the state at the fourth annual Exemplary Teacher Recognition Award Luncheon on June 11. The educators were recognized for receiving awards from various professional education organizations during the 2013-14 school year. (www.isbe.net/news/2014/jun11.htm)

Illinois school named a U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School: Woodland Primary School in Gages Lake was named a Green Ribbon Schools award winner by the U.S. Department of Education. Woodland was one of three Illinois Green School award winners. Also named as Illinois Green Schools were Oak Lawn-Hometown Middle School in Oak Lawn and Evanston Skokie School District 65 in Evanston. (www.isbe.net/news/2014/apr23.htm)

More than 200 Illinois schools participating in Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program: For the sixth year, the Illinois State Board of Education is administering the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP). In the last five school years, Illinois has seen FFVP funds increase steadily from \$3.34 million in 2010-11 to this year’s \$5.18 million. ISBE approved 218 schools to participate in the program this school year. (www.isbe.net/news/2014/sept10.htm)

Illinois to receive grants to bolster school safety: On Oct. 2, it was announced that Illinois will receive nearly \$2 million in federal grants that aim to improve safety in the classroom through both emergency management and comprehensive prevention efforts that address students' social and emotional needs. The funds, funneled through two U.S. Department of Education grants, reflect ongoing state and national efforts to better prepare for school emergencies as well to improve methods of discipline and support for struggling students. (www.isbe.net/news/2014/oct2.htm)

Illinois receives \$1.9 million to increase mental health awareness and responses: The State Board of Education will expand its efforts to help schools better identify and respond to mental health issues among youth through a \$1.9 million federal grant program called “Project AWARE.” A large portion of the funds will be shared among three Illinois school districts to build relationships with their community health providers to better serve students with behavioral health issues. (www.isbe.net/news/2014/oct28.htm)

State superintendent selected to serve on board of national organization of state education leaders: The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) selected me to join its Board of Directors. The Council, made up of public K-12 education officials from around the country, works with federal and state agencies as well as Congress on national education policy development and decisions. (www.isbe.net/news/2014/nov18.htm)

State Board of Education member receives national award: The National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) presented Dr. Vinni M. Hall, Board secretary, with the NASBE 2014 Distinguished Service Award on Oct. 17. The national award is presented annually to state board of education members in order to recognize exceptional service to public education. (www.isbe.net/news/2014/oct16.htm)

I am excited about the possibilities for 2015 and thank you for all you do for our students every day.
Chris

Upcoming ISBE Dates and Deadlines

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

- **PARCC Infrastructure Trial Week** – Jan. 12-16 (<http://parcc.pearson.com/resources/PARCC%20Infrastructure%20Readiness%20Guide.pdf>)
- **Third annual Illinois 5Essentials survey administration** – Jan.12-March 13(<http://illinois.5-essentials.org>)
- **Webinar on Employment Information Systems (EIS) changes for 2015** – Jan. 14 (www.isbe.net/eis/default.htm)
- **Deadline to submit written opt-out petition to regional superintendent of schools for Summer Food Service Program mandate (Public Act 096-0734)** – Jan. 15
- **Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by General Assembly in spring 2015** – Friday, Jan. 16, 2015 (See <http://www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/default.htm> for public notice requirements for all waiver requests.)
- **ISBE offices closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day** – Jan. 19
- **Employment Information System (EIS) open for data submissions** – Jan. 26
- **Deadline to submit District Preschool Plans to the Division of English Language Learning** – Jan. 30 (www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/preschool-ells.htm)
- **IDEA Excess Cost Worksheets timeline for emailing completed worksheets to IDEA grant coordinators** – Jan. 30
- **TECH 2015 application deadline** – Feb. 3 (www.iceberg.org/tech_2015)
- **Annual No Child Left Behind Conference** – Feb. 3-5 (www.thecenterweb.org/nclb/)
- **ISBE offices closed for Lincoln’s Birthday** – Feb. 12

- ISBE offices closed for Presidents' Day – Feb. 16
- Part 25 (Educator Licensure), Part 33 (Programs for the Preparation of Superintendents in Illinois), Part 235 (Early Childhood Block Grant) and Part 252 (Driver Education) – Public comment period ends Feb. 17
- Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment (DLM-AA) testing window – March 23-May 1
- 2015 Illinois Arts Education Week – March 16-22
- Eighth annual Illinois School Wellness Conference – April 23
- TECH 2015 student showcase – May 7
- ISBE offices closed for Memorial Day – May 25
- Deadline to submit data in the Student Health Data –Vision system - June 30
- ISBE offices closed for Independence Day – July 3

Data Analysis and Accountability

Register for Webinar on Employment Information Systems Changes for 2015

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) will launch the Employment Information Systems (EIS) on Jan. 26 with innovative changes and updates designed to streamline the data submission process.

To provide a more in-depth explanation of these changes and to answer any questions you may have, ISBE is hosting an EIS webinar at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 14. In addition to going over what's new in EIS, we will also open the floor for questions. Please click [here](#) to register for the webinar and to download a copy of the presentation.

For immediate EIS assistance, please contact the EIS Help Desk at (217) 782-3950 or email datahelp@isbe.net. For technical assistance, please contact the ISBE Help Desk at (217) 558-3600.

Funding and Disbursements

Final FY 2015 Mandated Categorical Prorations Now Available

Final prorations and payments have been calculated for all 2013-14 school year categorical claims that will be vouchered in fiscal year 2015. 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 – 97 percent
- Special Education Funding for Children Requiring Special Education Services – 100 percent

- Special Education Summer School – 75 percent
- Special Education Orphanage – 100 percent
- Special Education Transportation – 97 percent
- Regular/Vocational Transportation – 72 percent
- Regular Education Orphanage – 100 percent

Final 2013-14 IDEA Room and Board Claim Payment Information

The 2013-14 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Room and Board program is now complete.

Final 2013-14 school year claims exceeded the amount of IDEA Room and Board funds available. Proration was calculated at 71 percent of the final claims. Claims reimbursed from federal IDEA Part B grant funds have been escalating at a rate beyond the set aside amounts the agency retains from our annual IDEA Part B award. The following link provides a graph demonstrating the increase of claims over the available IDEA Part B funds utilized for the Room and Board program in the past few years:

www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/sped-rb-history-graph.pdf

The final 2013-14 school year voucher was processed by ISBE on Dec. 22 and released by the Office of the Comptroller on Dec. 29.

2014-15 School Year: Due to the projected increase of claims and available IDEA funds for the 2014-15 school year, the estimated proration will be approximately 77 percent; therefore, to avoid potential overpayment, submitted monthly claims will be paid at 60 percent during the year. Once all claims are

finalized in December 2015, final claims and proration will be calculated and paid at that time.

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

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 www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/fiscal_procedure_handbk.pdf.

Interest should be returned using the following guidelines:

- Checks for interest earned should be made payable to the Illinois State Board of Education.
- Checks should not include the return of unexpended disbursements from ISBE. Even though unexpended disbursements and interest payments are made payable to ISBE, 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.

New Census Estimates Released for Fiscal Year 2016 Title I Low Income

The U.S. Department of Education has released the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) for income year 2013. These estimates will be used to calculate fiscal year 2016 Title I Allocations. A file of 2013 Poverty Data by Local Education Agency (LEA) is provided in an alphabetical listing of LEAs, Poverty Count, 5-17 Population, Poverty Percentage and Total Population online at www.isbe.net/funding/excel/fy16preliminary-eligibility.xlsx.

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

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

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

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

The following link to the Census Bureau, www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/index.html, provides various aspects of the SAIPE count, including the data sources and methodology used to prepare these data. We will be using the 2013 data to calculate school year 2015-16 Title I, Part A allocations because they are the most recent available data.

Superintendents, business managers and Title I directors should carefully examine the data for their LEA as this will be the first indication as to whether your LEA may be gaining or losing in eligibility for Title I funds in FY 2016. ISBE neither controls nor generates the data. The challenge period for the 2013 estimates ends March 17. Refer to the Census Bureau link at

www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/contact/challenges.html, if interested.

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

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

Special Education Services

IDEA Excess Cost Worksheets due Jan. 30

IDEA excess cost worksheets are due to the IDEA grant coordinators on Friday, Jan. 30.

Resources are available on the IDEA grant webpage at www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/idea_part-b.htm, and the IDEA grant coordinators are available for specific questions regarding the process at (217) 782-5589 or dcamacho@isbe.net, tgreco@isbe.net and fmalloy@isbe.net.

No Child Left Behind

No Child Left Behind Conference Scheduled for Feb. 3-5 in Chicago

Please join ISBE and the Illinois Resource Center for the annual No Child Left Behind Conference at the Chicago Sheraton on Feb. 3-5. Attendees will hear from six excellent keynote speakers, select from more than 200 presentation and panels and participate in practical workshops.

The conference title – “Lead, Focus, Connect: Beyond NCLB” – was chosen because it indicates that we are in a time of educational change as we move forward with addressing the needs of all students in Illinois. Each day of the conference will address a particularly important approach to attaining

college and career readiness for our students: high impact instructional strategies, successful family and community engagement, and highly effective district and school-wide strategies.

To review the preliminary conference materials, get more information and register, please go to: www.thecenterweb.org/nclb/. The registration deadline is Jan. 23.

English Language Learning

Applications for Summer Migrant Education Services Funding Available

The Division of English Language Learning is accepting applications for fiscal year 2015 federal Migrant Education Program funding for summer school programs in districts with qualifying migrant children under Title I, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act. The application is available at www.isbe.net/bilingual/pdfs/20-37A-migrant-summer-app.pdf. The application deadline is Friday, March 20.

Students who are 21 years old or younger and have not graduated from high school may be eligible if they have moved within the past three years across state or school district lines with a parent or guardian or on their own to seek or obtain temporary or seasonal work in agricultural production, fishing or food processing industries. A certified recruiter must document that children qualify as migrant students.

The State Board can assist districts in identifying eligible migrant children. To request assistance or more information, contact Beth Robinson at berobins@isbe.net or (312) 814-3850.

District Preschool Program Plan For Serving English Learners

A recent amendment to administrative rules provides districts with additional time – until July 1, 2016 – to ensure that individuals assigned to provide instruction in English as a Second Language (ESL) and/or instruction in a student’s home language in a preschool setting to meet the applicable requirements for bilingual education teachers and ESL teachers (23 Ill. Adm. Code 228.35 (a) & (b)).

Staffing is one significant component of establishing Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) or Transitional

Programs of Instruction (TPI) to serve preschool English learners, as required under part 228 since July 2010.

In order to ensure that preschool English learners are receiving language support services and districts are making progress toward development of their TBE/TPI preschool programs, districts that have any attendance centers that offer preschool programs and currently do not meet the staffing requirements under 228.35 (a) & (b) have to submit a plan to ISBE's Division of English Language Learning (DELL), pursuant to 228.35(c)(3).

The District Preschool Plan is available on the DELL website at www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/preschool-ells.htm. As part of the plan, district must address various required components. Districts are encouraged to use the "Service and Staff Template" to satisfy this requirement, which is also available on the DELL website. Plans should be developed and completed in collaboration with the preschool administrator.

This plan, including all required components, must be submitted electronically to DELL by **Jan. 30, 2015**. Completed plans can be submitted to dell@isbe.net.

Please note that the updated "Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): Serving English Language Learners in Preschool Programs in Illinois Public School Districts 23 Ill. Adm. Code Part 228" is also available on the DELL website at www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/preschool-ells.htm.

Please contact DELL at (312) 814-3850 with questions.

Illinois 5Essentials

Third Annual 5Essentials Survey Set For Today through March 13

From today through March 13, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) will conduct its third annual survey of learning conditions, the Illinois 5Essentials Survey. The 5Essentials Survey, a diagnostic tool developed by researchers at the University of Chicago, provides schools with fine-grained data on five leading indicators for school improvement: Effective Leaders, Collaborative Teachers, Involved Families, Supportive Environment and Ambitious Instruction.

Twenty years of University of Chicago research has shown that schools that were strong on at least three of the 5Essentials were 10 times more likely to make substantial gains in reading and math.

All district schools, including alternative schools that fall under the district's domain, are required by legislation to participate in the survey at least every other year. In 2015, only districts participating in Race to the Top and those that did not participate in the survey last year will be required to participate by ISBE. Chicago District 299 will also require its schools to participate. All districts will have the option to participate and are strongly encouraged to do so.

Survey results will be released in May to principals and superintendents. A summary of the 5Essential results will be reported publicly on the State School Report Card website at <http://illinoisreportcard.com>. Detailed survey reports will also be publicly released. Survey results for 2014 and beyond will be normed using the 2013 statewide results so that all schools can demonstrate progress over time on the survey measures.

Several projects are underway to further improve the implementation of the Illinois 5Essentials Survey. These include a pilot in 62 districts to enhance survey security through use of teacher rosters. This year all 6-12 students throughout the state whose districts are registered for the 2015 administration of the 5Essentials will be rostered.

Be on the lookout for further information on this year's 5Essentials survey from ISBE and the University of Chicago. If you have any immediate questions, please visit <http://illinois.5-essentials.org> or contact us via email at 5essentials@uchicago.edu or by phone at (866) 440-1874.

Early Childhood

Update on KIDS: Illinois' Statewide Observational Assessment for Kindergarten

Illinois is in the process of rolling out implementation of the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS). The survey is an important statewide initiative that will provide Illinois with new information about school readiness.

In 2010, ISBE convened a group of educators, advocates and experts to participate in a planning initiative for a statewide kindergarten readiness assessment process. After hearing from national experts and administrators in other states and engaging in much research and discussion, the Kindergarten Readiness Stakeholder Committee recommended the Illinois KIDS process. (See the full 2011 report at www.isbe.net/KIDS/pdf/KIDS_report.pdf)

The survey is an observational assessment process aimed at understanding children’s abilities and learning across multiple developmental domains through frequent teacher observation and documentation. KIDS is not a test. Observations are conducted during instruction, so children are not pulled out to be assessed. Done well, KIDS will have major benefits for students, teachers, families, districts and the state:

- Families can share documentation with teachers to help build a shared understanding of the child’s skills, culture, language or ethnicity.
- Teachers can use the assessment information to guide their instructional planning and report to parents.
- Districts will have concise classroom, school and district-level reports about where their kindergartners are across domains. As part of a comprehensive, balanced assessment system, KIDS can inform professional development, curriculum development, instructional strategies, resource allocation and continuous improvement.
- State education leaders will have uniform statewide data to better design educational pathways for children.

Illinois is now in its third year of implementing KIDS, preceded by two pilot years. Teacher and administrator feedback from the pilot has been utilized to customize, restructure and simplify the KIDS instrument, training and implementation process. This fall, 1,243 kindergarten teachers from 441 schools and 210 districts used the developmentally appropriate KIDS assessment to enter data on 26,544 children. At least 2,303 teachers, administrators and support staff have been trained to date. As outlined in the Illinois Administrative Code 1.420, each school district in Illinois is currently scheduled to administer KIDS beginning in the 2015-16 school year.

To guide the state with recommendations, ISBE established a KIDS Advisory Committee in 2011. At the committee’s Dec. 2, 2014, meeting, discussion included feedback from teachers, administrators and local school districts. With less than a year until statewide implementation, there is concern that many districts are not fully prepared. The committee encouraged ISBE to have flexibility with the timeline to plan professional development that allows districts to train administrators and teachers and put supports in place to effectively use KIDS. Districts also need time to inventory existing assessments in relation to KIDS, eliminate those that are duplicative and crosswalk those that complement and inform KIDS.

The state superintendent has heard this feedback and is currently working with stakeholders and implementing districts to revise the state’s KIDS Implementation Plan to allow additional time to support districts in building their capacity. A new plan is expected this month. Updated information will be provided on the website and through this bulletin.

As districts prepare to implement KIDS, there are a range of resources – including half-day administrator trainings, tutorials and webinars, and an administrator implementation checklist – at www.illinoiskids.org/content/kids-administrators-checklist. Teacher trainings continue throughout the school year and summer around the state. Additional guidance on aligning assessments to KIDS and how KIDS reports could be used as report cards will also be forthcoming.

Registration for trainings, downloadable versions of the KIDS instrument, a range of resources and a new FAQ can be accessed at www.illinoiskids.org.

Coaching, local training and other supports are also available. Please contact the WestEd Lombard office at (630) 652-7400 or email at kids@wested.org for any support you need in this process.

Standards and Assessments

PARCC Infrastructure Trial Week Scheduled for This Week

Districts participating in the online Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers

(PARCC) test are highly encouraged to conduct an infrastructure trial.

This “dry run” will test the school’s network as well as provide practice for every group involved in testing (test coordinators, test administrators, technology coordinators and students) by creating a practice environment (complete with practice tests) that is as real as possible. The infrastructure trial can be done at any time prior to testing, but Illinois is putting special emphasis on this week as a way to stress Pearson’s system and identify any potential problems in advance of testing.

The Infrastructure Trial Guide can be found at <http://parcc.pearson.com/resources/PARCC%20Infrastructure%20Readiness%20Guide.pdf>.

Assessment Inventory

ISBE’s Assessment and Accountability Division is seeking to partner with school districts that are currently using, or would like to use, the *Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts*. The *Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts* is a tool district teams can use to take stock of their assessments and assessment strategy from a student perspective. The tool supports a process by which districts evaluate assessments students are currently taking; determine the minimum amount of assessment information necessary for essential diagnostic, instructional and accountability purposes; and work to ensure that every assessment is of high quality and is supported by structures and routines that ensure assessment results are used to benefit students. The *Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts* can be accessed at

www.isbe.state.il.us/assessment/htmls/balanced-asmt.htm.

If your school district is currently using or interested in using this tool and would like additional professional development or support, please contact Dr. Diana Zaleski at dzaleski@isbe.net.

New Version of PARCC Technology Bulletin Now Available Online

A new version of the PARCC Technology Bulletin is now available [here](#). This communication was developed by the Partnership for Assessment of

Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) to help districts and schools prepare for and administer the PARCC assessments by highlighting important technology updates and key information.

In this edition, you will find information regarding the following:

- Upcoming Release Dates
- CRITICAL: Google to Disable NPAPI for Chrome Browser
- Technical Guidelines Update
- Infrastructure Trials
- Reminder – PearsonAccessnext
- Reminder – Computer-Based Assessments Guide
- Reminder - New Proctor Cache Tool
- Reminder – PARCC URLs
- Technology Bulletin
- PARCC Support Center

Department of Children & Family Services

DCFS Accepting Applications for 2015 Scholarship Program

The Department of Children and Family Services is currently accepting applications for the 2015 DCFS Scholarship Program.

The scholarship program provides a minimum of 53 scholarships each year, four of which are awarded to children of veterans. Those eligible to apply are: youth who the department has court-ordered legal responsibility for, youth who aged out of the department’s care at age 18 or older, youth who the department had legal responsibility for prior to the youth’s adoption being finalized and youth who are in the Subsidized Guardianship or KinGap Program.

Scholarship recipients receive up to five consecutive years of tuition and academic fee waivers to be used at participating Illinois state community colleges and universities, a monthly grant and a medical card. Youth who graduated from high school in previous years or youth who are currently enrolled in college are eligible to apply for the department scholarship, as long as they will be under the age of 21 on March 31, 2015.

Scholarship recipients will be selected on the basis of their scholastic record and aptitude, community and extracurricular activities and interest in higher

education. Note: Tuition and fee waivers are provided only to scholarship recipients that attend an Illinois state community college or university. Scholarship recipients that attend private Illinois or out-of-state colleges or universities do not receive tuition and fee waivers.

Scholarship applicants are required to submit their applications to the Office of Education and Transition Services (OETS) no later than March 31, 2015. Applications postmarked after that date will not be eligible for consideration. Incomplete applications will be ineligible for consideration and will be returned to the applicant. If time permits, the applicant can resubmit the complete application packet. Applications submitted by facsimile will be ineligible for consideration.

All questions or to request a scholarship application should be directed to either of the following OETS offices: Springfield at (217) 557-2689 or Chicago at (312) 814-5959.

Rules and Waivers

Invitation to Comment on Rules

Four sets of proposed amendments recently reviewed by ISBE are available for public comment. The proposals have been posted on the agency's website at www.isbe.net/rules; choose "Proposed Rules and Amendments." Please submit any comments or suggestions to rules@isbe.net.

Part 25 (Educator Licensure): Addresses changes necessitated by recently enacted legislation (P.A. 98-751, P.A. 98-872 and P.A. 98-917) concerning requirements for the educator license with stipulations endorsed for career and technical educator, the superintendent endorsement and the principal endorsement, respectively.

Public comment period ends Feb. 17, 2015

Part 33 (Programs for the Preparation of Superintendents in Illinois): Makes a technical correction in Section 33.70 to reference the "superintendent" preparation program rather than the "principal" preparation program.

Public comment period ends Feb. 17, 2015

Part 235 (Early Childhood Block Grant):

Incorporates requirements specific to the ExceleRate Illinois quality rating and improvement system, and proposes standards for programs serving children from birth to age 3.

Public comment period ends Feb. 17, 2015

Part 252 (Driver Education): Makes a technical change to update a web address in Section 252.20(e).

Public comment period ends Feb. 17, 2015

Educator Licensure

Application Fee for Licenses

Per 105 ILCS 5/21B-40, the application fee for a Professional Educator License, Educator License with Stipulations or Substitute License is now \$100.

Out-of-State application fees remain at \$150.

College and Career Readiness

Four Illinois Career Centers Nationally Recognized for Elite Hospitality Programs

Four Family and Consumer Sciences Culinary Arts programs in Illinois have been named to the 2014-15 Elite 50, an exclusive group of high schools and career and technical schools from across the country.

The state's honorees are:

- Capital Area Career Center, Springfield, Debbie Burtle
- West Aurora High School, Aurora, Linda Brennan
- Whiteside Area Career Center, Sterling, Joe Hunt
- Wilco Area Career Center, Romeoville, Debbie Bolger

The Elite 50 list is made up of high schools and technical centers that excel in the areas of culinary, baking and pastry arts and/or hospitality management. Some are state and national competition winners from Prostart, SkillsUSA and Family Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA). Research was also conducted to establish schools with strong hospitality enrollment and influence in their community.

Additional criteria for those selected for the Elite 50 included an original recipe with photos or a restaurant management design; two essays from students on the topic “Why I want to pursue a career in hospitality” and video, brochure and additional information about the school’s program. Further considerations were given to schools that operate a restaurant or offer catering service, etc. as part of culinary/hospitality training.

Governmental Relations

Pregnancy Rights Notice Requirement

Public Act 98-1050 amends the Illinois Human Rights Act to make changes regarding pregnancy and pregnancy accommodations. It also requires employers in Illinois to post a notice about pregnancy in the workplace and an employer’s obligation to accommodate pregnancy.

The Department of Human Rights has a copy of the notice in both English and Spanish available on its website. More information on the requirement for posting the notice, as well as copies of both versions, can be found at www2.illinois.gov/dhr/Publications/Pages/Pregnancy_Rights_Notice_Requirement.aspx.

Taiwan Ministry of Education

Chinese Language Recruitment Program Available to Illinois School Districts

Taiwan’s Ministry of Education invites district superintendents in Illinois to participate in the 2015 Chinese Language Teacher Recruitment Program. Assistance is available for school districts and schools planning to recruit a Chinese teacher from Taiwan to select potential candidates with interviews.

The Ministry of Education will provide one round-trip ticket to the recruited teacher, and the hiring school will provide the salary and benefits to the recruited teacher as a full-time teacher in the school. The Ministry of Education will assist the recruited teacher to apply for the J-1 visa in Taiwan; however, the hiring school will need to provide the necessary hiring documents (e.g., contract, etc.) and share the processing fee for the DS-2019 document with the recruited teacher. The recruited teacher will follow the

hiring school’s calendars/regulations to give his/her instruction.

Those districts interested in participating should send a plan outline to hire a Chinese language teacher(s) from Taiwan. Please include information such as the name and contact information of superintendents and principals wishing to take part in the interview; how many teachers sought; what qualifications the district is looking for; the teaching load they will be expected to fulfill (e.g., number of courses, hours per week); and what salaries and benefits are provided commensurate with qualifications.

Please contact John Lin of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Chicago at (312) 616-0805 or johnlin@edutw.org to express interest in participating in the program and to request an outline form. The deadline is Feb. 16

In Brief

In the News

- Through the Agricultural Education programs in Illinois schools, the **National FFA Organization** provides leadership, personal growth and career success training to more than 600,000 student members in grades 7 through 12 who belong to one of the 7,570-plus local FFA chapters throughout the United States, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Local Agricultural Education programs/FFA chapters and their students excelled at the recent National FFA Convention & Expo. Illinois boasts of several national winners and top 10 national rankings. Please click on the following links for the results:

[Career Development Event \(CDE\) Teams](#)
[American Degree Recipients](#)
[National Proficiency Results - All Finalists](#)
[National Chapter Award Programs/Chapters](#)

Grant Opportunities

- The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV), University of Colorado Boulder, seeks schools containing grades 6-8 or 7-9 to receive funding to implement the evidence-based **LifeSkills Training (LST) Program**, a middle school substance abuse and violence prevention program consistently proven to reduce alcohol, tobacco and drug use. CSPV

subcontracts with the organization that developed the LST program to deliver expert training and technical assistance to teachers and to provide program sustainability training to administrators. The grant will allow CSPV to provide three years of training and technical assistance and program materials to eligible schools, districts and education agencies, beginning in fall 2016. More information and applications files are available at www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/lst_grant/.

- **Illinois Biodiversity Field Trip Grant** funds are available through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Division of Education and the Illinois Conservation Foundation. Teachers and home-schooling educators may receive up to \$500 each to take their students on a field trip to study Illinois' natural resources. Visit <http://dnr.state.il.us/education/CLASSRM/grants.htm> for details and to access the application form. The application deadline is Jan. 31. **A webinar about the grant has been rescheduled for 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Jan. 13.** Login information will be posted at <http://dnr.state.il.us/education/> on the morning of Jan.13.

Professional Development

- Registration is open for **Wired Wednesday Webinars**, a unique collaboration that focuses on the Common Core State Standards in speaking and listening. The Illinois Reading Council has partnered with the Wisconsin State Reading Association to provide the webinars. All webinars begin at 7 p.m. For more information or to register, visit www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org or call (888) 454-1341. Upcoming presenters include:
 - Jeff Wilhelm: Reading Unbound on Jan. 28.
 - Doug Fisher: Collaborative Conversations and the Speaking and Listening Standards on March 17.
 - Matt Copeland: Facilitating Student Discussion with Socratic Circles on April 15.
- The **20th annual Illinois Association for Gifted Children Convention** will be held Feb. 8-10, 2015, in Naperville. Participants will have the opportunity to gather with classroom teachers, gifted coordinators, administrators, parents and exhibitors for a variety of sessions on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. For complete information –

including the registration form, schedule and online hotel reservations – go to <http://www.iagcgifted.org/committees/twentieth-iagc-convention.html>. The event includes a session for pre-service teachers on Feb. 8 that will address the nature of the gifted child and how to address their needs in the classroom. For more information, click [here](#).

Employment Opportunities

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