



Jan. 23, 2012

Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

The members of the Illinois State Board of Education will meet Wednesday and Thursday this week in Springfield. First and foremost, they will be tackling their budget recommendation for FY 2013. The forecast for state spending continues to be grim in 2013, with predictions showing that nearly all growth in revenue will be absorbed by increased pension and Medicaid costs and the cost of paying down existing debt.

During the past three years we have seen a decrease in state education funding of \$650 million. The Governor’s office has indicated that many agency budgets will be reduced during the coming fiscal year, however, earlier this month they noted their commitment to education and indicated they would like to maintain level funding. You can listen to the budget discussion at the agency’s website (http://www.isbe.net) at 1 p.m. Wednesday.

In addition to the budget discussion, the Board will be updated on our efforts to develop and submit a successful waiver application to the U.S. Department of Education, due in mid-February, to relieve Illinois school districts from some requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. Our focus as we’re developing the waiver proposal is on the Board’s goals, especially in advancing college and career readiness. While accountability will remain high, schools will also receive credit for closing the achievement gap and making progress based on a growth measure to be approved by the Board. Board discussion on the waiver request will follow their discussion of the budget Wednesday afternoon.

Finally, I know many of you are interested in participating in our Race to the Top grant. Under Illinois’ plan, local districts will serve as “reform exemplars” and share in the \$21.4 million that has been set aside specifically for local districts. We will provide more information about how you may become a participating district tomorrow via IWAS and will post that information on our Race to the Top page on our website at http://www.isbe.net/racetothetop/default.htm.

Have a great week!

Chris

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Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- Part 50 (Evaluation of Certified Employees under Articles 24A and 34 of the School Code) – Public comment period ends Jan. 17
ISBE’s Family Engagement Webinar, “Improving High School Family Engagement through Parent Support Centers” – Jan. 26 (https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/173019656)

- **Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education’s Winter Conference** – Jan. 26-27 in Springfield
- **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
- **Part 30 (Programs for the Preparation of Principals in Illinois)** – Public comment period ends Feb. 14
- **Illinois New Teacher Collaborative’s Induction and Mentoring Conference** – Feb. 22-23 in Springfield
- **2011-12 Eye Examination Data Collection deadline** – June 30

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## Funding and Disbursement Services

### Fiscal Year 2012 Supplemental ARRA Education Jobs Funds Final Allocations

The U.S. Department of Education notified the Illinois State Board of Education that supplemental American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Education Jobs (Ed Jobs) funds in the amount of \$6,136,142 are available for eligible Illinois local education agencies (LEAs). The Supplemental Ed Job funds are in addition to the initial Ed Jobs grant award of \$415,397,841 that was allocated in August 2010 and must be used to pay salary and benefits of school building level employees.

For more detailed information regarding the supplemental funds, including final allocations for all LEAs that accepted the funds, see the following link at [http://www.isbe.net/arra/pdf/arra\\_ed\\_jobs\\_supp\\_final\\_all\\_oc\\_msg\\_fy12.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/arra/pdf/arra_ed_jobs_supp_final_all_oc_msg_fy12.pdf).

The Supplemental Ed Jobs funds are subject to the same requirements as the initial Ed Jobs funds. U.S. Department of Education guidance on the allowable use of Education Jobs funds can be accessed at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/educationjobsfund/governors-ed-jobs-guidance-revised-4-13-11.doc>.

The FY 12 Supplemental ARRA Ed Jobs program has been assigned revenue code 4880 and is being paid on a reimbursement basis – i.e. to receive reimbursement, the LEA must submit a cumulative (year-to-date) electronic expenditure report via the Electronic Expenditure Reporting system in IWAS reporting the total amount expended on a cash basis in the appropriate function and object code. Detailed reporting procedures are at [http://www.isbe.net/arra/pdf/arra\\_ed\\_jobs\\_supp\\_rptg\\_req\\_fy12.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/arra/pdf/arra_ed_jobs_supp_rptg_req_fy12.pdf).

Questions regarding the ARRA Education Jobs program can be directed to Jim Mathes ([jmathes@isbe.net](mailto:jmathes@isbe.net)) or Marj Beck ([mbeck@isbe.net](mailto:mbeck@isbe.net)) in the Division of Funding

and Disbursement Services at (217) 782-5256.

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## Student Assessment

### Upcoming Dates and Deadlines for the 2012 PSAE

Please see the 2012 PSAE Checklist of Dates for a complete list of PSAE activities, online at [http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/2012/psae/checklist\\_of\\_dates.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/2012/psae/checklist_of_dates.pdf).

- **Jan. 25, 2012:** PSAE Question and Answer Webinar, 3 p.m. Register at [http://www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/psae\\_webinar.htm](http://www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/psae_webinar.htm)
- **Jan. 27, 2012:** Deadline for ACT to **receive** applications for ACT-Approved accommodations for PSAE Day 1.
- **Feb. 6, 2012:** PSAE Question and Answer Webinar, noon. Register at [http://www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/psae\\_webinar.htm](http://www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/psae_webinar.htm)
- **Feb. 10, 2012:** Deadline for finalizing PSAE Day 2 orders on PSAE TestSites Online website.
- **Feb. 21, 2012:** PSAE Question and Answer Webinar, 9 a.m. Register at [http://www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/psae\\_webinar.htm](http://www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/psae_webinar.htm)
- **Feb. 24, 2012:** PSAE Pre-ID file sent to ACT for label production
- **March 9, 2012:** Deadline for ACT to **receive** requests for State-Allowed accommodations for PSAE Day 1.

### Upcoming Training Modules/Q&As for the 2012 IAA

The 2012 Illinois Alternate Assessment training modules and Power Points will be available Jan. 18 on the IAA webpage, <http://www.isbe.net/assessment/iaa.htm>. These modules are pre-recorded webinars to allow viewing at your convenience. These modules are designed to provide detailed training information on coordinator and

teacher responsibilities of the IAA. The Illinois State Board of Education will have separate live Q&A sessions, for coordinators and teachers to address further questions you may have regarding the 2012 IAA.

Training modules for IAA Coordinators:

- Packaging & Distribution
- SchoolSuccess for Coordinators

Registration for a Live Q&A Session for Coordinators

- Wednesday, Feb. 1, 9-10 a.m., Reserve your webinar seat now at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/374071481>
- Wednesday, Feb. 1, 1:30-2:30 p.m., Reserve your webinar seat now at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/862090985>

Training modules for IAA Teachers

- SchoolSuccess for Teachers
- Test Administration

Registration for a Live Q&A Sessions for Teachers:

- Thursday, Feb. 2, 9-10 a.m., reserve your webinar seat now at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/306236096>
- Thursday, Feb. 2, 1:30-2:30 p.m., reserve your webinar seat now at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/570416968>

### PSAE Testing: Clarification Concerning Testing of Part-time Students

For accountability purposes, students who are enrolled only part time in a public school (e.g., private school or homeschooled students) and are receiving instruction from the public school in both reading/English and mathematics must participate in the entire PSAE.

Grade 11 students who are enrolled part time in a public school and who are not receiving instruction from the public school in both reading/English and mathematics should not take PSAE. Districts should code these students' records with a not tested reason of "Part-Time Enrollment" during the PSAE Assessment Correction window after testing. All not tested reasons are defined and posted at [http://www.isbe.net/sis/pdf/not\\_testing.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/sis/pdf/not_testing.pdf).

If you have any questions, please email [psae@isbe.net](mailto:psae@isbe.net).

### Call for Teachers to Help with ACCESS Development

WIDA and CAL, the developers of ACCESS for ELLs, are currently accepting applications for participation in field tryouts of speaking and writing items. Field tryouts are an important step in preparing items for use on ACCESS for ELLs tests. During the Field Tryouts, teachers administer test items to their students, and then give feedback to test developers via an online survey. The speaking items are slated to appear on Series 301 (2012–2013), while the writing items are expected to appear on Series 302 (2013–2014).

- **Eligibility:** Any licensed teachers in WIDA states who are currently teaching;
- **Task:** Administering field test items to students and recording feedback and observations per instructions received from CAL (tasks will be identified after all applications have been received);
- **Tryout window:** March 5 to March 16, 2012; and
- **Remuneration:** \$75 to \$200 (depending on the number of items tested). If you are unable to accept payment, a donation in the form of a gift card will be made to your school (redeemable for books or school supplies).

Please note that the application deadline is Jan. 27, 2012. Interested educators can apply by visiting <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/fieldtryoutsapplication>.

### Career Development and Preparation

#### Meeting Scheduled for Feb. 9 to Launch Illinois Pathways

On Feb. 9, 2012, the State of Illinois will launch Illinois Pathways, a Race to the Top funded Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education initiative designed to support college and career readiness. Join Gov. Pat Quinn and Lt. Gov. Sheila Simon in Bloomington from 1 to 3 p.m. as they convene public-private partners for a launch announcement. This event is hosted by State Farm and the Illinois Business Roundtable and will be attended by:

- Director Warren Ribley of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
- State Superintendent Chris Koch of the Illinois State Board of Education

- President/Chief Executive Officer Geoffrey Obrzut of the Illinois Community College Board
- Executive Director George Reid of the Illinois Board of Higher Education
- Director Jay Rowell of the Illinois Department of Employment Security

During the meeting we will review the State's Round 3 Race to the Top award and the selection process for STEM Learning Exchanges. To register, go to <http://ilpathways.eventbrite.com>. Once registered, check your email for event updates and details.

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## Green Ribbon Schools

### Applications Sought for New Award Program

The Illinois State Board of Education launched its Green Ribbon schools award program, joining 32 other states in the U.S. Department of Education's pilot program. Later this spring, Illinois will nominate up to three public schools and one private school for consideration based on excellence in the three pillars of the program: reduced environmental impact, improved health and environmental literacy.

Applications for nominating Illinois schools can be found on the Illinois Green Ribbon Schools page at [http://www.isbe.net/green\\_ribbon](http://www.isbe.net/green_ribbon). Applications are due to ISBE by Feb. 12, 2012, and Illinois nominees will be announced in March. Following the U.S. Department of Education's announcement of winners in April there will be an award ceremony in Washington, D.C., in late May. The national ceremony will be followed by local ceremonies at each of the winning schools in fall 2012. For more information about the federal program, visit <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools/index.html>.

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## Nutrition

### Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Grant Application Webinar Coming Up

We are ready to kick off the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) grant application process for School Year 2012-2013. Staff with the Nutrition Programs Division of the Illinois State Board of Education will present a webinar for National School Lunch Program sponsors that are interested in applying for the FFVP grant for school year 2012-2013 on Tuesday, Feb. 7,

2011, from 9-10:30 a.m. Reserve your Webinar seat now at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/639443265>.

The webinar will provide an overview of the FFVP and details about the grant application. The webinar is highly recommended for all schools that would like to apply for the grant. There will be limited time for questions during the webinar. The application will be available online ([http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/ffv\\_program.htm](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/ffv_program.htm)) in early February 2012. The deadline to apply for FFVP (School Year 2012-2013) is March 15, 2012.

If you have any questions regarding the FFVP, please contact Lindsay Blough ([lblough@isbe.net](mailto:lblough@isbe.net)) or Roxanne Ramage ([rramage@isbe.net](mailto:rramage@isbe.net)) at (800) 545-7892.

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## P-20 Council

### Governor to Sign Bill on Redesigned IL School Report Card Into Law

House Bill 605, codifying the redesigned IL School Report Card, will be signed into law by Gov. Pat Quinn at 10:00 a.m. immediately preceding the P-20 Council meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 24.

The celebratory occasion can be viewed via live stream at <http://multimedia.illinois.gov/press/press-012412.asx>. Go to <http://multimedia.illinois.gov/press/press-012412a.asx> for audio only.

The bill signing comes after more than seven months of stakeholder deliberations and nearly 60 community focus groups. The P-20 Data, Assessment and Accountability Committee with the assistance of the Family, Youth and Community Engagement Committee successfully steered the new IL School Report Card through a unanimous vote of the IL General Assembly.

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## Data Analysis and Progress Reporting

### Regional Safe Schools Program (RSSP) Student Reporting on IWAS

A new Regional Safe Schools Program (RSSP) IWAS system will open for school year 2011-12 data entry on Feb. 1, 2012. All regional offices of education and the City of Chicago School District 299 are required to report student data to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). The deadline for reporting is July 31, 2012. The user guide for RSSP student reporting on IWAS is



available at [http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/rssp\\_iwas\\_user\\_guide.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/rssp_iwas_user_guide.pdf).

A webinar on RSSP end-of-year student data reporting is scheduled for 1-3 p.m. Jan. 31, 2012. An invitation to register for the webinar has been sent via email to all RSSP program directors. RSSP program administrators and/or data-entry personnel are encouraged to participate in the webinar.

Questions about using the RSSP IWAS system should be directed to the ISBE Help Desk at (217) 558-3600. Questions about the data to be reported for individual students should be directed to Dr. Lilibeth Q. Gumia in the ISBE Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division at (217) 782-3950 or [lgumia@isbe.net](mailto:lgumia@isbe.net).

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## School Business Services

### School District Annual Financial Report Review Process

All district superintendents should have received an email broadcast through IWAS asking the district to review their preliminary Financial Profile Report on Jan. 17, 2012. If district administration wants to submit comments regarding their district's finances that will be published along with their Financial Profile Report, the comments must be submitted no later than Friday, Feb. 10, 2012.

The broadcast includes links to the memorandum, instructions and definitions to assist with the review process. These documents are also available in IWAS and on the School District Financial Profile Score Information webpage (<http://www.isbe.net/sfms/afr/verification.htm>).

The email broadcast and this notice will be the only ones sent to districts. If you do not receive the broadcast, please contact ISBE at (217) 785-8779. If you have given another person authority to review these reports, please forward the email broadcast to them. Since the financial profile designation will be approved and publicly released by ISBE, it is crucial that districts review their financial profile data and score. Any district that wishes to include comments that support the Financial Profile report may do so directly in IWAS beneath the report. Although comments are optional, they are encouraged; this is an opportunity for districts to explain significant financial circumstances.

The financial profile will be adjusted to incorporate mandated categorical aid payments due to school districts that were not paid by June 30, 2011.

Any questions regarding the verification process should be directed to a School Business Services consultant at (217) 785-8779. Any questions regarding IWAS should be directed to the Call Center at (217) 558-3600.

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## Innovation and Improvement

### ISBE Introduces a Family Engagement Webinar Series

The Illinois State Board of Education's Division of Innovation and Improvement has planned a series of 60-minute Family Engagement Webinars as part of a statewide family engagement initiative. Each webinar in the 2012 series will feature practitioners from the 2011 Regional Summits. The practitioners will share their experiences in the successful implementation of evidence-based family engagement strategies in their schools or districts. These sessions are open to district staff, school staff, parent facilitators and parents. Information on the upcoming session is below and you may register by clicking on the registration included.

**Improving High School Family Engagement through Parent Support Centers**, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., Jan. 26, 2012: Anne Coffman, Director of Federal and State Programs from Community High School District 218, and the Title I team of district and building administrators will share how this district's high schools have established on-site parent support centers to promote meaningful family engagement. They will explain how their full-time parent liaisons use these centers to welcome and reach out to diverse parent groups, integrate families into the school community, and build connections between parents and school staff. They will share successful strategies in shifting the focus from nominal parent involvement to meaningful family engagement in their high schools. Register at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/173019656>.

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## Those Who Excel Program

### Teacher of the Year Available for Speaking Engagements

Josh Stumpfenhorst, the 2012 Illinois Teacher of the Year, is now available for speaking engagements. Josh teaches language arts and social science to sixth-graders at Lincoln Junior High School in Naperville. He is very

technology savvy and has a huge following on his blog and his twitter account, where he shares his thoughts and ideas about teaching.



Josh says he knew from an early age that he wanted to teach. He is a passionate teacher who is committed to creating learning experiences for his students that help shape them into the people they want to be when they grow up. Josh has presented at numerous professional development experiences and strives to not only teach but to continuously learn from others.

If you would like to schedule Josh for your next workshop or conference, you can reach him via email at [jstumpenhorst@naperville.203.org](mailto:jstumpenhorst@naperville.203.org) or call him at (630) 848-5344.

The Illinois State Board of Education annually recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to elementary and secondary education with the Those Who Excel Awards Program. The top award is for the Illinois Teacher of the Year. Visit [http://www.isbe.net/those\\_who\\_excel.htm](http://www.isbe.net/those_who_excel.htm) for more information.

## Professional Development

### Details Added on English Language Arts Common Core Standards Work Sessions

English Language Arts Common Core Content Specialists from the Illinois State Board of Education along with Kay Dugan, Assistant Superintendent for Learning in Bensenville, and Laura Beltchenko, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction in Wauconda, will present a work session of the English Language Arts Common Core Standards curriculum alignment process as well as suggest resources, tools and implementation options. Teams will then replicate this process within their school districts. Teams of two to five district curriculum coordinators, teacher leaders and teams, administrators, Regional Offices of Education and Statewide System of Support Coaches are invited to attend. Please register for only one set of dates.

- **Jan. 30 -31:** Keller Convention Center, 1202 North Keller Drive, Effingham, IL 62401; (217) 347-5115; Register at <http://www.kidsroe.org/registration/WorkshopDetail.php?id=5401>

[etail.php?id=5401](http://www.kidsroe.org/registration/WorkshopDetail.php?id=5401) (There is a wait list.)

- **Feb. 27-28:** Holiday Inn at the Airport, 3202 E. Empire St., Bloomington, IL 61704; (887) 863-4780; Register at <http://www.kidsroe.org/registration/WorkshopDetail.php?id=5405> (There is a wait list.)
- **April 26-27:** Event to be held at Giovanni's, 610 N. Bell School Road, Rockford, IL 61107; (815) 398-6411. Lodging at Holiday Inn, 7550 East State St., Rockford, IL 61108; (815) 398-2200; Register at <http://www.kidsroe.org/registration/WorkshopDetail.php?id=5406>

More dates will be announced soon.

## Rules and Waivers

### Invitation to Comment on Rules

A rulemaking recently reviewed by the Illinois State Board of Education is available for public comment. The proposal has been posted on the agency's Web site at <http://www.isbe.net/rules>; choose "Proposed Rules and Amendments." Please submit any comments or suggestions to [rules@isbe.net](mailto: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 14, 2012*

## Special Education

### IAASE Winter Conference Scheduled for Jan. 26-27

The Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education (IAASE) Winter Conference is set for Jan. 26-27 in Springfield.

Keynote presenters include Dr. Marilyn Friend, an author and consultant from the University of North Carolina, who will be present "The Promise and Challenges of Co-

Teaching as a Vehicle for Improving Student Outcomes”; Bennett Rodick, attorney with Hodges, Loizzi, Eisenhammer, Rodick & Kohn will deliver “The Special Education Legal Year in Review: The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly”; Dr. Melody Musgrove, the National Director of the Office of Special Education Programs, Washington, D.C., will present “Results Matters”; and Dr. Luann Purcell, Executive Director of the Council of Administrators of Special Education will speak about “The Future of Special Education: A National Perspective.”

The conference will feature numerous breakout sessions focusing on administration, curriculum, autism, early childhood, innovative practices, leadership, legal issues, transition, RtI, and technology. The registration brochure, program guide and registration information can be viewed at <http://www.iaase.org>.

Administrators may also be interested in attending the preconference Administrator Academy workshop on Wednesday, Jan. 25, at the same location. Christina Sepiol will present “An Overview of Laws Impacting Students With Autism Spectrum Disorders.” This workshop will provide educators with a legal overview of special education regulations as they relate to students who have Autism Spectrum Disorders. Go to <http://www.iaase.org> to register.

### **Save the Date: Children’s Mental Health Conference Scheduled for April 27**

A children’s mental health conference is scheduled for Friday, April 27, 2012, at Moraine Valley Community College in Palos Hills, which is in northern Illinois. The conference is titled “Piecing It All Together: How Children’s Mental Health/Mental Illness Affect Home, School & Community.”

For more information, visit the NAMI Illinois website at <http://il.nami.org/piat.htm>. The National Alliance on Mental Illness is a not-for-profit membership organization that aims to improve the lives of individuals and families challenged by mental illness.

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## **Illinois Virtual School**

### **ISBE’s State Virtual School Offers Flexible Enrollment Terms**

Illinois Virtual School (IVS), ISBE’s state virtual school, offers 14 enrollment terms throughout the year. Each

term provides 17 weeks of instructional support from our IL certified teacher.

Flexible enrollment allows students needing to make up credit, wanting to get ahead or wishing to take a course not offered at their school more scheduling options within academic calendar. The next enrollment terms begin Feb. 1, March 15 and April 4.



For more information, contact IVS at (309) 676-1000 or email Barb Closen at [bclosen@ilvirtual.org](mailto:bclosen@ilvirtual.org).

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## **Educator and School Development**

### **Seventh Annual Induction and Mentoring Conference Scheduled for Feb. 22-23**

The Illinois New Teacher Collaborative (INTC) will hold its seventh annual Induction and Mentoring Conference on Feb. 22-23, 2012, in Springfield.

The conference, which is titled “Staying Committed to New Teacher Induction,” will examine how district and school personnel can make a difference in a new teacher’s career, even in tough times. Quality induction programs accelerate new teacher development and assist new teachers in their knowledge, skill, effectiveness and professional development, which, in turn, impact student achievement and success. This conference will provide practical and standards-based ideas about induction resources, evaluation, program goals and design. Conference sessions will help both established and new induction and mentoring programs improve, learn from other programs and develop a network of contacts to pave the way for new teachers’ success.

Conference registration is \$50, and substitute reimbursement and CPDUs are available. For more information or to register for the conference, visit <http://intc.education.illinois.edu/conference>.

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## **Classroom Opportunities**

### **The Stock Market Game Program for Grades 4-12 Teachers and Their Students**

Registration for the spring 2012 sessions of The Stock Market Game is open. Students in grades 4-12 can participate with their classroom teachers in the national program, which is provided by Econ Illinois in our state.

Students participate in teams and manage a simulated investment portfolio. A variety of sessions are available for participation throughout the school year.

The free online education program provides teachers access to grade- and subject-specific lesson plans, tutorials and more for classroom instruction that stress the importance of long-term savings and investment and financial literacy. Lessons are available in both English and Spanish.

For more information, visit <http://www.econed-il.org/icee/smg.shtml> or <http://illinois.smgww.org>. Econ Illinois is a non-profit organization that provides professional development and resources to K-12 teachers.

### Grades 1-8 Can Participate in Economics Poster Contest

Grade 1-8 teachers and their students can participate in Econ Illinois' Economics Poster Contest. In this program, students create an illustration for one of six different economic concepts. There are awards for both regional and state level competition, including a planned calendar produced from the top 12 illustrations in the state.

For more information go to <http://www.econed-il.org/icee/econposter.shtml>. Econ Illinois is a non-profit organization that provides professional development and resources to K-12 teachers.

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## Educator Opportunities

### Nominations Sought for 2012 Agriscience and Life Sciences Awards

The Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation is seeking nominations for its 2012 Agriscience Awards and Life Sciences Awards. **Two high school students, a high school educator and a scientist will be honored** for each competition, which includes monetary awards.

The Agriscience Awards are presented by the foundation in partnership with the American Farm Bureau. Nominations are accepted online only at <http://www.agriscienceawards.com>. The deadline is March 13. Visit the website for more details. The Life Sciences Awards are presented in partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Nominations, along with complete rules, are available at <http://www.ccolumbusfoundationawards.org>. The deadline is March 27.

For questions, contact Judi Shellenberger at (315) 258-0090 or [judithmscolumbus@cs.com](mailto:judithmscolumbus@cs.com). The foundation is an independent federal government agency established by Congress in 1992 to “encourage and support research, study and labor designed to produce new discoveries in all fields of endeavor for the benefit of mankind.”

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## School Opportunities

### Invitation to participate in the EPA's Flag Program

Did you know air pollution is a trigger for asthma? What is your plan of action when the air quality is unhealthy? The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has a program to help. Schools are invited to participate in the School Flag Program, which can help a school and the surrounding community know the air quality conditions each day.

Schools in the Flag Program raise a brightly colored flag each day that corresponds to the air quality forecast. Based on the color of the flag, teachers and coaches can modify outdoor activities when the air quality is unhealthy. More information about the program is available at <http://www.airnow.gov/schoolflag>.

### Lincoln Museum in Springfield Offers Free School Field Trips in February

The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum in Springfield is offering free school field trip opportunities during the month of February. Educators must prearrange the tours. To book a field trip, visit the Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau at <http://www.visit-springfieldillinois.com/tours/youth>. For more information, call (217) 789-2360. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum is online at <http://www.presidentlincoln.org>.

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## Illinois Network of Charter Schools

### INCS 2012 Charter Design Institute Set for Feb. 10-11

The Illinois Network of Charter Schools will hold its 2012 Charter Design Institute on Friday, Feb. 10, and Saturday, Feb. 11, in Richton Park. The event will provide in-depth training on charter school design for those interested in starting charter schools in Chicago and across the state.



The two-day event will include charter school tours, training and presentations from charter experts. For more information and to register, visit <http://charterdesigninstitute.eventbrite.com>.

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## **In the News**

### **Weekly News Clips**

ISBE has posted highlights from last week's education news clips at <http://www.isbe.net/news/2012/newsclips/120123.htm>.

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## **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>.