



# Illinois State Board of Education

## Weekly Message

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State Superintendent

**Jan. 24, 2011**

### Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

This weekend I had the opportunity to meet with other state superintendents to discuss our shared priorities during the upcoming Congressional session. The past few years have been an incredible time of change in education across the nation and the climate for reform continues to intensify. We know there will continue to be calls for new and more expansive reforms and I think we all agree that it's better to be a part of driving that reform than to have those reforms imposed upon us without any input.

Our main goal this year on the federal level will be to improve and reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). While we are hopeful this is possible, given the bi-partisan support education receives in Congress, we must also be cognizant of political factors that may derail reauthorization. To that end, as a secondary strategy, we are also planning on pursuing expanded "waiver" authority that can be granted to the states under ESEA so that we can effectively implement growth models and make other necessary changes to our system of accountability.

Our discussions around a newly reauthorized ESEA are not so much to focus on minor tweaks to reduce the punitive nature of the law, but rather to focus on a new state-federal policy for shared accountability. We need to move away from a one-size-fits-all approach that focuses solely on snapshots in time and instead move towards an accountability system that prepares all students to succeed after high school, no matter what their post-secondary plans may be. Congress should provide states and local districts with more flexibility to improve student growth and close achievement gaps. We need to focus on a system that promotes and rewards innovation, improving school and classroom leadership. Every child deserves a quality education.

As we pursue a new and improved ESEA, we will also be working with federal policy makers to provide states with additional authority to pursue innovative measures through flexibilities already encompassed in law. The U.S. Department of Education has the ability to provide states with "waivers" to pursue more educationally sound reform measures that move beyond the confines of the law that enhance student growth. It's not a matter of letting states "opt out" of certain requirements, but rather a thoughtful system that requires peer review and approval by the Secretary.

We believe there are other, better ways to measure student growth and progress than those currently outlined in No Child Left Behind. We also believe that either through a new, reauthorized ESEA or through the waiver process that the U.S. Department of Education has the authority to exercise, we need to move forward with accountability systems that are more educationally sound and reward innovation.

As we continue to move forward towards reauthorization, I look forward to hearing about possible ways to address changes to accountability. We do have information from many responders to our statewide survey on the Elementary

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and Secondary Education Act earlier this year. I will be seeking additional guidance from statewide stakeholder groups as our work progresses.

Have a great week.

Chris

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## Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- **Receipt deadline for ordering PS AE Day 1 ACT-Approved accommodations test materials** – Jan. 27
- **Deadline for ordering PS AE Day 2 standard time and accommodations test materials** – Jan. 28
- **Illinois New Teacher Collaborative Induction and Mentoring Conference registration deadline** – Jan. 31
- **2010-11 Teacher Salary Study Form deadline** – Feb. 1
- **2010-11 Noncertified Staff Salary Study deadline** – Feb. 1
- **Econ Illinois' Illinois Personal Finance challenge registration deadline** – Feb. 1
- **Econ Illinois' Economics Challenge registration deadline** – Feb. 1
- **School Employee Wellness Program Grant application deadline** – Feb. 1
- **Mathematics and the Common Core: Helping Illinois Educators Prepare for New Standards conference in Chicago** – Feb. 16
- **Part 151 (School Construction Program)** – Public comment period ends Feb. 18.
- **Registration deadline for Econ Illinois' The Stock Market Game** – Feb. 18
- **PSAE Pre-ID labels sent to ACT for printing** – Feb. 25
- **Illinois New Teacher Collaborative's Induction and Mentoring Conference in Springfield** – March 1-2
- **Receipt deadline for ordering PS AE Day 1 State-Allowed accommodations test materials** – March 11
- **Part 226 (Special Education)** – Public comment period ends March 16
- **Illinois Young Authors' Conference** – May 21
- **2010-11 Eye Examination Data Collection deadline** – June 30

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## Funding and Disbursement Services

### FY 2012 Districts Eligible for Alternate PTELL Adjustment

Per the requirements of Public Act 96-0152, school districts that receive voter approval for an increase to their limiting rate are subject to an alternate adjustment in General State Aid (GSA) calculations. For such districts, the Equalized Assessed Value used in GSA calculations is the lesser of the real EAV for that district or the EAV used in the prior year's GSA calculations, multiplied by 1 + Consumer Price Index, + New Property EAV + Annexed Property EAV + Recovered TIF EAV – Disconnection EAV. The table provided lists all districts known at this time to be eligible for this adjustment in FY 2012 GSA calculations. The EAV values as reported by the appropriate County Clerk are listed in each of the four categories.

We are asking that school districts listed at the link [http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/alt\\_PTELL\\_adj\\_elig\\_dis\\_t12.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/alt_PTELL_adj_elig_dis_t12.pdf) verify the effective years of the limiting rate

increase and also the EAV amounts listed in the four categories. We also ask that any district that believes it qualifies for this adjustment – having a voter-approved limiting rate increase in effect for the 2009 tax year – but does not find itself listed, please contact ISBE and report this information. You may contact Jason Hall at [jhall@isbe.net](mailto:jhall@isbe.net) or 217-782-0249 or Jim Mathes at [jmathes@isbe.net](mailto:jmathes@isbe.net) or 217-782-5256 if you have any questions or wish to report a correction to the data provided. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

### New Census Estimates Released for FY 2012 Title I Low Income

The U.S. Department of Education has released the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) for income year 2009. These estimates will be used to calculate FY12 Title I Allocations. A file of 2009 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 at [http://www.isbe.net/funding/excel/FY12title\\_I\\_prelim\\_elig.xlsx](http://www.isbe.net/funding/excel/FY12title_I_prelim_elig.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 and EFIG grant 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, <http://www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/index.html>, provides various aspects of the SAIPE count. We will be using the 2009 data to calculate SY 2011-12 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 FY11. ISBE neither controls nor generates the data.

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 on the information provided in this message, please contact Sally Cray at [scray@isbe.net](mailto:scray@isbe.net) or Kim Lewis at [klewis@isbe.net](mailto:klewis@isbe.net) in the Division of Funding and Disbursement Services at 217-782-5256.

## 2012 Federal Grants – Reimbursement Policy Change Webinar Posted Online

On Jan. 13, 2011, the Division of Funding and Disbursements conducted a webinar to explain the cash management changes that will be implemented for FY 2012 Federal grants. For those that were unable to attend the webinar, it is posted and can be viewed on the Division of Funding and Disbursements web page at <http://www.isbe.net/funding/default.htm> under “Current News.”

If you have further questions, please contact Kim Lewis at [klewis@isbe.net](mailto:klewis@isbe.net) or Sally Cray at [scray@isbe.net](mailto:scray@isbe.net) at 217-782-5256.

## 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 interest amounts up to \$100 per year for administrative purposes.

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 7-9 of the State and Federal Grant Administration Policy and Fiscal Requirements and Procedures which can be accessed at [http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/fiscal\\_procedure\\_handbk.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/fiscal_procedure_handbk.pdf).

Interest should be returned using the following guidelines:

- Checks for interest earned should be made payable to the Illinois State Board of Education.
- Checks should not include the return of unexpended disbursements from the Illinois State Board of Education. Even though unexpended disbursements and interest payments are made payable to the Illinois State Board of Education, separate checks should be issued for both.
- Checks should be accompanied by a statement identifying the program and the program year from which the interest was earned.

All checks must be mailed to: Illinois State Board of Education, Funding and Disbursements Services Division (E-320), 100 N. First St., Springfield, IL 62777-0001.

## Innovation and Improvement

### Lead Partner RFSP Release for FY 2012 School Improvement Grants

The Innovation and Improvement Division is seeking applications for entities to serve as an Illinois State Board of Education approved Lead Partner to offer services and programs designed to assist school districts [local educational agencies (LEA)] with school improvement efforts in Illinois' persistently lowest schools.

The Lead Partner RFSP is available at the Illinois Procurement Board (<http://www.purchase.state.il.us>) under the Illinois BID link. The reference number is 22020656: SBE – Lead Partners to Support District and School Improvement Efforts. Registration is necessary to download the document. Complete Lead Partner applications are due by 4 p.m. Feb. 25, 2011. Questions related to the RFSP are to be directed to Tricia Leezer at [tleezer@isbe.net](mailto:tleezer@isbe.net).

A Bidders Webinar will be conducted on Thursday, Feb. 3, 2011, from 1 to 3 p.m. CST to discuss the FY 2012 SIG 1003(g) Lead Partner RFSP and answer questions from potential applicants. Pre-registration is required at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/580311904>.

Institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, not-for-profit or for-profit entities are eligible to apply provided they have evidence of their demonstrated record of success in supporting academically underperforming schools and districts and demonstrate the qualifications defined in the RFSP. The successful bidders for this solicitation may be contracted for these services in one of two ways:

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

A separate Request for Proposals (RFP) will be used to identify LEAs with eligible Tier I and Tier II schools that will receive Section 1003(g) School Improvement Grants [SIG 1003(g)] in spring 2011 for FY 2012. Detailed information on the SIG 1003(g) grants, including the list of eligible LEAs and schools, access to the USDE SIG Federal Guidance (11//10), and school improvement

resources, are available on the ISBE School Improvement Grant web page at [http://www.isbe.net/sos/htmls/sip\\_1003.htm](http://www.isbe.net/sos/htmls/sip_1003.htm).

Should you have any questions related to the Bidders Webinar for the Lead Partner RFSP or the FY 2012 SIG 1003(g) grant, contact Marti Woelfle at [mwoelfle@isbe.net](mailto:mwoelfle@isbe.net) or 217-524-4832.

### ISBE Requests Waivers Regarding School Improvement Grants Rules

As part of the School Improvement Grants (SIG), authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Title I or ESEA), the Illinois State Board of Education is applying for the following waiver that will be applicable to those local education agencies (LEAs or districts) and schools that apply for and are approved for the competitive subgrants. The State believes that the requested waivers will increase its ability to implement the SIG program effectively in eligible schools in the State in order to improve the quality of instruction and raise the academic achievement of students in Tier I, Tier II and Tier III.

In order to enable the State to generate new lists of Tier I, Tier II and Tier III schools for its FY 2010 competition, waive paragraph (a)(2) of the definition of “persistently lowest-achieving schools” in Section I.A. 3 of the SIG final requirements and incorporation of that definition in identifying Tier II schools under Section I.A.I (b) of those requirements to permit the State to include, in the pool of secondary schools from which it determines those that are the persistently lowest-achieving schools in the State, secondary schools participating under Title I, Part A of the ESEA that have not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) for at least two consecutive years or are in the State's lowest quintile of performance based on proficiency rates on the State's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics combined.

The final requirements for the School Improvement Grants are published in the October 2010 notice of the Federal Register. If additional waivers are prepared, we will include a notification in the Weekly Message. Please send any comments or questions on this matter to [nclb@isbe.net](mailto:nclb@isbe.net) by Jan. 31, 2011.

### Grant Readers Request for Illinois FY 2012 School Improvement Grants

The Illinois State Board of Education's Innovation and Improvement Division is seeking grant readers for the



FY 2012 School Improvement Grant (SIG) – Section 1003(g) competition. Selected candidates must participate in web-based trainings on the SIG 1003(g) requirements and Illinois' application assessment process prior to receipt of the district/school applications. ISBE anticipates that readers will need to devote approximately 100 hours to this process over a two to three week period in late March/early April 2011. Readers will complete the review process and submit their scoring results electronically. Following the individual application reviews, readers must attend one face-to-face consensus meeting in Illinois.

**Required Qualifications and Skills:** A minimum of four years in the field of education. Candidates must have knowledge about turning around low performing schools, high school administrative/teaching experience and familiarity with the SIG grant requirements. Applicants with work experience in low-performing schools that were effectively turned around are preferred.

**Compensation:** ISBE will issue a \$4,200 honorarium to readers selected for their service and a maximum of \$800 approvable travel reimbursement based on Illinois state guidelines (transportation, hotel and per diem).

**Contact Information:** Interested candidates should e-mail Marti Woelfle at [mwoelfle@isbe.net](mailto:mwoelfle@isbe.net) to receive the required grant reader application documents.

### Apply for the Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children

The Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children is seeking members to fill four positions. The role of the council is to provide ISBE advice regarding all rules and policies to be adopted by the State Board relating to the education of gifted and talented children. The council meets three times a year.

To apply to be a member, send a letter of application along with your resume/curriculum vitae to the Illinois State Board of Education 100 N. First St. N-242, Springfield, IL 62777.

An applicant can be from organizations of educators and parents of gifted and talented and other groups with an interest in education of gifted and talented children. The members appointed shall be residents of Illinois and will be selected on the basis of their knowledge of or experience in programs and problems of the education of gifted and talented children.

Applications are due Feb. 4, 2011. For more information, contact Marci Johnson at [marjohns@isbe.net](mailto:marjohns@isbe.net).

## Nutrition

### Applications Available for the Summer Food Service Program

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is designed to provide nutritious meals during the summer months to children from areas where at least 50 percent are eligible for free or reduced-priced meals during the school year through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. Does your area meet the above criteria? If so, consider becoming a sponsor to help bridge the gap for the children in your community. All sponsors will be required to submit the program application and monthly claims for reimbursement through the Illinois State Board of Education's Web Application Security (IWAS).

If the responsibilities of sponsorship of the SFSP are not possible, you can still participate in the program by operating a site, being a vendor or volunteering your time. Visit our website at <http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/summer.htm> to learn more about this vital program and how you can help.

Training workshops for the Summer Food Service Program will be held at the locations listed below for organizations interested in sponsoring the SFSP during the summer of 2011. Current sponsors can attend either the new sponsor training or the current sponsor trainings. Visit the web site above for workshop details, locations, times and registration.

#### SFSP New Sponsor Training Schedule

- March 15, 2011, in Marion (Williamson County Pavilion)
- March 16, 2011, in Fairview Heights (Four Points Sheraton)
- March 30, 2011, in Alsip (Doubletree)
- April 7, 2011, in Bloomington (Parke Hotel and Conference Center)
- April 13, 2011, in Rockford (Hilton Garden Inn)
- April 14, 2011, in Galesburg (Best Western Prairie Inn)
- May 11, 2011, in Chicago (Midway Four Points Sheraton)
- May 25, 2011, in Springfield (IEA Professional Development Center)

The training sessions are designed to provide a complete overview of the SFSP including ISBE's internet-based

program application and claim system. All new sponsors are required to attend one of the trainings above.

#### **SFSP Current Sponsor Training Schedule**

- March 17, 2011, in Fairview Heights
- March 31, 2011, in Alsip
- May 12, 2011, in Chicago

For additional information, contact Amy Bianco or Deb Collins in the Nutrition Programs Division at 800-545-7892 or e-mail [abianco@isbe.net](mailto:abianco@isbe.net) or [dcollins@isbe.net](mailto:dcollins@isbe.net).

#### **School Employee Wellness Program Grant Application Deadline Feb. 1**

If your district and/or schools offer a school employee wellness program, consider applying for the Directors of Health Promotion and Education (DHPE) awards program. The program recognizes schools and school districts that demonstrate commitment to the health of their employees by implementing school employee wellness programs.

All applications and supporting materials must be postmarked by Feb. 1. Electronic submissions will be accepted. Learn more about the grant opportunity and listen to the archived webinar at <http://www.schoolempwell.org/c/awards.web?nocache@1+s@emgtaMNHNoW>.

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## **Illinois School Purchasing Network**

### **Local Office Supply Dealers Announce Deal With Purchasing Cooperative**

Local business products dealers announced that their buying cooperative, Independent Stationers Inc. (doing business as is.group), was awarded the U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance office supplies contract (replacing Office Depot), which will be available to all public agencies across the country. The contract was awarded by the County of Los Angeles and will be administered by U.S. Communities. U.S. Communities is a national government purchasing cooperative. Independent Stationers, comprised of more than 290 independent business products dealers, was the only supplier awarded this contract.

This contract offers public agencies lower pricing, exceptional customer service, a robust online ordering solution, as well as personal local representation by local dealers in your area. It offers over 27,000 office supplies

that are available for free next-day desk top or dock delivery. Below is a list of Illinois dealers.

- Rogard's Office Plus, PO Box 1280, Champaign, IL 61824; 217-359-1795
- Egyptian Stationers, 107 W. Main St., Belleville, IL 62220; 618-234-2323
- Office Plus of Lake County, PO Box 8758, Waukegan IL 60079; 847-662-5393
- Source One Office Products, 380 Production Drive, South Elgin, IL 60177; 847-429-9999
- Park Ridge Stationers, PO Box 478, Park Ridge, IL 60068; 847-298-6600
- Mid-City Office Products, PO Box 2758, Rockford, IL 61132; 815-633-6789
- Modern Office Interiors, 538 W. Fifth St. Naperville, IL 60568; 630-754-0030
- Warehouse Direct, 1601 W. Algonquin Road, Mount Prospect, IL 60056; 847-952-1925

For more information is available at <http://www.uscommunities.org/isg/> or by calling Sherri Sullivan at 217-785-8777.

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## **Early Childhood**

### **Support and Technical Assistance Regional Network Request for Proposals**

ISBE has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) titled "Support and Technical Assistance Regional Network (STAR NET)." As detailed in the RFP (see link below), STAR NET provides training and technical assistance to local education agencies and special education cooperatives in an effort to improve educational outcomes for young children with disabilities.

The RFP and application forms are posted at [http://www.isbe.net/funding\\_opps/htmls/rfp.htm](http://www.isbe.net/funding_opps/htmls/rfp.htm). Applications must be received by ISBE no later than March 4, 2011. For questions about the RFP, please contact Pamela Reising Rechner at 217-524-4835 or [preising@isbe.net](mailto:preising@isbe.net).

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## **Department of Public Health**

### **Heartsaver AED Fund Grant Applications Now Available**

The General Assembly has appropriated \$100,000 for the Heartsaver AED Fund Grant. The grant program will provide matching funds for AEDs to any school, public park district, municipal recreation department, conservation district, forest preserve district, college or

university in Illinois. The application and guidance are available at <http://www.idph.state.il.us/fundop.htm#aed>.

Awards will be made to qualified applicants who demonstrate they have the funds to pay 50 percent of the costs of the AEDs for which the matching grant moneys are sought as that cost is determined by the State Master Contract. Deadline for submission of applications to the Division of EMS and Highway Safety is by close of business Feb. 14, 2011. All applications must be made on department-approved forms. Only mailed applications will be accepted. Grants will be limited to one unit per recipient. All AEDs purchased between July 1, 2010, and June 30, 2011, will qualify for the grant.

Completed applications should be submitted to: Paula Atteberry, RN, BSN, Division of Emergency Medical Services and Highway Safety, Illinois Department of Public Health, 422 S. Fifth St., Third Floor, Springfield, IL 62701. Applications can also be requested at the same address.

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## Special Education Services

### Request for Proposals for Illinois RtI Network

In October 2010, ISBE received a five-year grant award under the federal State Personnel Development Grant program to implement the Illinois Response to Intervention Network, or I-RtI Network. In order to establish and carry out this project, ISBE has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) titled “State Personnel Development Grant: Illinois RtI Network.” As detailed in the RFP (see link below), the I-RtI Network will provide regionally-based professional development, technical assistance and coaching to educators and parents throughout the state. These services will focus on improving student performance in grades K-12 through the implementation of a multi-tiered system of instruction, intervention and assessment, with an emphasis on administrative leadership; scientific, research-based reading and math curricula and instruction at grades K-12; data-based decision making; universal screening and progress monitoring; and parent involvement.

The RFP, application forms and other pertinent materials are posted at [http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/grant\\_info.htm](http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/grant_info.htm). Applications must be received by ISBE no later than Feb. 25, 2011. Questions about the RFP may be submitted to the Online Bidders’ Forum at

[rtirfp@isbe.net](mailto:rtirfp@isbe.net) (preferred) or by contacting Kathryn Cox at 217-782-5589.

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## Educator and School Development

### Sixth Annual INTC Induction and Mentoring Conference Coming Up

Registration closes Jan. 31 for the sixth annual Illinois New Teacher Collaborative Induction and Mentoring Conference.

The statewide conference for educators, which is set for March 1-2 in Springfield, is titled “Continuing the Continuum.” The conference will examine the use of the Illinois Induction Program Continuum in new teacher induction and mentoring programs. The Continuum was unveiled at last year’s conference.

More information and registration are available at <http://intc.education.illinois.edu/conference>. Questions? Contact Nancy Johnson at [njohnsn@illinois.edu](mailto:njohnsn@illinois.edu) or 217-244-3166.

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## Rules and Waivers

### Notice of Completed Rulemaking

Please be advised that a set of amendments recently adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education is now in effect. These rules have been posted on the agency’s website at <http://www.isbe.net/rules>. Please choose “Rules Currently in Effect” and scroll to Part 1.

#### Part 1 (Public Schools Evaluation, Recognition and Supervision)

Amends provisions addressing annual measurable achievement objections for English language learners, the Student Information System and participation of nonpublic schools, teacher evaluations, and qualifications for bilingual education teachers (for both transitional bilingual education programs and transitional programs of instruction)

*Affected Section: 1.75, 1.88, 1.100, 1.320, 1.780, 1.781, and 1.782*

*Effective Date: Jan. 3, 2011*

### Invitation to Comment on Rules

A proposed rulemaking recently reviewed by the Illinois State Board of Education is available for public comment. The proposal has been posted on the agency’s

website 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 226 (Special Education)**

Sets the qualifications for qualified workers and noncertified employees for which reimbursement may be requested under Section 14-13.01 of the School Code, as per P.A. 96-257, effective August 11, 2009.

*Deadline for Public Comment: March 16*

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## **Illinois EPA**

### **Governor’s Green Youth Awards to Recognize Environmental Projects**

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Director Doug Scott is encouraging Illinois youth to apply for the annual Governor’s Green Youth Awards. The program recognizes outstanding environmental protection projects created by Illinois students.

Classrooms or individual students currently enrolled in K-12 school, Scouts, 4-H or others, and who have participated in an environmental project started no earlier than 2009 are eligible for the award.

The project must involve one or more of the following categories: waste reduction; prevention/reduction of pollution in the air (climate change/global warming), land or water; restoration, preservation or enhancement of natural areas; and energy or water efficiency.

An application and additional information about the program are available from the Illinois EPA website at <http://www.epa.state.il.us/green-youth/index.html> or by calling Deirdre McQuillen at 217-558-0073 or e-mailing [deirdre.mcquillen@illinois.gov](mailto:deirdre.mcquillen@illinois.gov). The deadline for applications is Friday, March 18, 2011.

An awards ceremony will be held April 21 at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield. Winners will receive a ticket to the museum.

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## **U.S. Department of Education**

### **Series of National Conversations on English Learner Education Scheduled**

The Office of English Language Acquisition (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/index.html>) announced a series of National Conversations on English Learner Education.

Across several weeks, these stakeholder conversations will be held in six locations: (three primary locations, including Dallas, Feb. 10-11; Los Angeles, March 7-8; and New York City, April 11-12; with secondary satellite locations for each event in Chicago, Feb. 10-11; Seattle, March 7-8; and Charlotte, N.C., April 11-12). Visit <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/meetings/2011elconversation/> for more information.

The main goal is to bring together key stakeholders (practitioners, parents and researchers) to engage in a dialogue on how to achieve a quality English Learner education for the 21st century.

Download the save-the-date flyer at [http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/files/uploads/24/ELC\\_save-the-date.pdf](http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/files/uploads/24/ELC_save-the-date.pdf).

For inquiries, contact [askncela@gwu.edu](mailto:askncela@gwu.edu) or call 800-321-6223.

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## **Curriculum and Instruction**

### **Lincoln Inaugural Sesquicentennial Event Set for March 4 in Chicago**

The Union League Club of Chicago will host the Lincoln Inaugural Sesquicentennial on from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, March 4. The event celebrates the 150th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln’s inauguration as president of the United States and brings together Lincoln scholars from across the country.

Some of the speakers include Thomas F. Schwartz, chief historian for exhibits and content at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum and director of research and the Lincoln Collection at the presidential library; Michael Burlingame, author of “Abraham Lincoln: A Life”; and David Zarefsky, author of “Lincoln, Douglas and Slavery: In the Crucible of Public Debate.”

This event is presented in partnership with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Chicago History Museum, Chicago Public Library, Civil War Round Table of Chicago, Lincoln Academy of Illinois, Newberry Library and Pritzker Military Library.

Attendance for all sessions, including a luncheon, costs \$45. Visit <http://www.ulcc.org/files/Lincoln.pdf> for complete details.



## History Teacher of the Year Award Nominations Sought

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History is seeking nominations for the annual \$10,000 National History Teacher of the Year Award, given to the best American history teacher in the United States. The National History Teacher of the Year is chosen from outstanding history teachers in each state, district and U.S. territory. The award is sponsored by the Gilder Lehrman Institute, Preserve America and the History Channel.

Nominations for the National History Teacher of the Year can be made by a student, parent, colleague, supervisor (including department head, principal, superintendent or curriculum director) or other education professional familiar with the teacher's work. State winners receive \$1,000 and an archive of books and other resources for their school. Each winner is honored in a ceremony in his or her home state.

In 2011, the Gilder Lehrman Institute will honor an elementary teacher of grades K-6. Middle and high school teachers are honored every other year.

To nominate a teacher and learn more about the award, visit <http://www.gilderlehrman.org/nhtoy> or contact the Gilder Lehrman National History Teacher of the Year coordinator at [nhtoy@gilderlehrman.org](mailto:nhtoy@gilderlehrman.org) or 646-366-9666. You can also contact your state coordinator, Mike Hatfill of the Illinois State Board of Education, at 217-557-7323 or [dhatfill@isbe.net](mailto:dhatfill@isbe.net).

The nomination deadline is Feb. 1, 2011.

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## Black History Month

### Museum to Host 'Race, Freedom and Equality: From Lincoln to the Present Day'

The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield will host Charles R. Branham on Tuesday, Feb. 15, for a presentation on "Race, Freedom and Equality: From Lincoln to the Present Day."

Branham will address such questions as "Should Lincoln get all the credit he receives for freedom and equality?" and "Was Lincoln forced by military necessity to issue the Emancipation Proclamation?"

Branham, who earned his Ph.D. in history from the University of Chicago, won an Emmy Award as the

writer, co-producer and host of "The Black Experience," the first nationally televised series on African American history. He is the senior historian at the DuSable Museum of Afro-American History and has been a professor of history at various colleges in Chicago, including the University of Illinois at Chicago, where he received the Silver Circle Excellence in Teaching Award.

The event is set for 7 p.m. at the Union Theater in the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum. The event is free but reservations are required. Call 217-558-8934.

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## Classroom Opportunities

### National Park Foundation Offers Electronic Field Trip

The National Park Foundation will air its next Electronic Field Trip, "Sea Change: Gulf Islands National Seashore," on Tuesday, March 1, 2011. Two live shows, one at 9 a.m. and another at noon, will look at the science of understanding change as seen daily on the barrier islands of Gulf Islands National Seashore and in how the recent oil spill has impacted wildlife and the habitat.

The show is targeted toward students in fourth through eighth grades. Lesson plans for classroom use and interactive games for youth will be available online. Visit <http://www.nationalparks.org/npf-at-work/our-programs/electronic-field-trip/> for more information and to register.

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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>.

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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/2011/newsclips/110124.htm>.